

NOTES ON THE PENTATEUCH

VOLUME 1

GENESIS, EXODUS & LEVITICUS

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” – 2 Tim 3:16

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by



C. H. Mackintosh

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NOTES
ON THE
BOOK OF GENESIS

Genesis 1

There is something peculiarly striking in the manner in which the Holy Ghost opens this sublime book. He introduces us, at once, to God, in the essential fullness of His Being, and the solitariness of His acting. All prefatory matter is omitted. It is to God we are brought. We hear Him, as it were, breaking earth's silence, and shining in upon earth's darkness, for the purpose of developing a sphere in which He might display His eternal power And Godhead.

There is nothing here on which idle curiosity may feed — nothing on which the poor, human mind may speculate. There is the sublimity and reality of DIVINE TRUTH, in its moral power to act on the heart, and on the understanding. It could never come within the range of the Spirit of God to gratify idle curiosity, by the presentation of curious theories. Geologists may explore the bowels of the earth, and draw forth from thence materials from which to add to, and, in some instances, to contradict, the divine record. They may speculate upon fossil remains; but the disciple hangs, with sacred delight, over the page of inspiration. He reads, believes, and worships. In this spirit may we pursue our study of the profound book which now lies open before us. May we know what it is to "enquire in the temple" May our investigations of the precious contents of holy scripture be ever prosecuted in the true spirit of worship.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." The first sentence in the divine canon sets us in the presence of Him who is the infinite source of all true blessedness. There is no elaborate argument in proof of the existence of God. The Holy Ghost could not enter upon anything of the kind. God reveals Himself. He makes Himself known by His works. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord." "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty." None but an infidel or an atheist would seek an argument in proof of the Being of One who, by the word of His mouth, called worlds into existence, and declared Himself the All wise, the Almighty, and the everlasting God. Who but "God" could "create" anything. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath

created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." (Isa. 40: 26) "The gods of the heathen are idols, but the Lord made the heavens." In the Book of Job 38-41 we have an appeal of the very grandest description, on the part of Jehovah Himself, to the work of creation, as an unanswerable argument in proof of His infinite superiority; and this appeal, while it sets before the understanding the most vivid and convincing demonstration of God's omnipotence, touches the heart, also, by its amazing condescension. The majesty and the love, the power and the tenderness, are all divine.

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Here was, in good truth, a scene in which God alone could act. Man, in the pride of his heart, has since proved himself but too ready to interfere with God in other and far higher spheres of action; but, in the scene before us, man had no place until, indeed, he became, like all the rest, the subject of creative power. God was alone in creation. He looked forth from His eternal dwelling-place of light upon the wild waste, and there beheld the sphere in which His wondrous plans and counsels were yet to be unfolded and brought out — where the Eternal Son was yet to live, and labour, and testify, and bleed, and die, in order to display, in the view of wondering worlds, the glorious perfections of the Godhead. All was darkness and chaos; but God is the God of light and order. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Darkness and confusion cannot live in His presence, whether we look at it in a physical, moral, intellectual, or spiritual point of view.

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." He sat brooding over the Scene of His future operations. A dark scene, truly; and one in which there was ample room for the God of light and life to act. He alone could enlighten the darkness, cause life to spring up, substitute order for chaos, open an expanse between the waters, where life might display itself without fear of death. These were operations worthy of God.

"God said, Let there be light: and there was light." How simple! And yet how Godlike! "He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast." Infidelity may ask, "How? where?"

when?" The answer is, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. 11: 3) This satisfies the teachable spirit. Philosophy may smile contemptuously at this, and pronounce it rude ignorance, or blind credulity, suitable enough for an age of semi-barbarism, but quite unworthy of men living in an enlightened age of the world's history, when the museum and the telescope have put us in possession of facts of which the inspired penman knew nothing. What wisdom? What learning? Yea, rather, what folly What nonsense What total inability to grasp the scope and design of sacred scripture? It, assuredly, is not God's object to make us astronomers or geologists; or to occupy us with details which the microscope or the telescope lays before every school-boy. His object is to lead us into His presence, as worshippers, with hearts and understandings taught and duly governed by His holy Word. But this would never do for the so-called philosopher, who, despising what he terms the vulgar and narrow-minded prejudices of the devout disciple of the Word, boldly seizes his telescope, and therewith scans the distant heavens, or travels into the deep recesses of earth in search of strata, formations, and fossils — all of which, according to his account, greatly improve, if they do not flatly contradict, the inspired narrative.

With such "oppositions of science, falsely so called," we have nothing to do. We believe that all true discoveries, whether "in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth," will harmonise with that which is written in the word of God; and if they do not thus harmonise, they are perfectly contemptible in the judgement of every true lover of scripture. This gives great rest to the heart in a day like the present, so productive of learned speculations and high-sounding theories, which, alas in too many instances, savour of rationalism and positive infidelity. It is most needful to have the heart thoroughly established as to the fullness, the authority, the completeness, the majesty, the plenary inspiration of the sacred volume. This will be found to be the only effectual safeguard against the rationalism of Germany and the superstition of Rome. Accurate acquaintance with, and profound subjection to, the Word, are the great *desiderata* of the present moment. May the

Lord, in His great grace, abundantly increase, in our midst, both the one and the other.

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." Here we have the two great symbols so largely employed throughout the Word. The presence of light makes the day; the absence thereof makes the night. Thus it is in the history of souls. There are "the sons of light" and "the sons of darkness." This is a most marked and solemn distinction. All upon whom the light of Life has shone — all who have been effectually visited by "the dayspring from on high" — all who have received the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ — all such, whoever and wherever they may be, belong to the first class, are "the sons of light, and the sons of the day."

On the other hand, all who are still in nature's darkness, nature's blindness, nature's unbelief — all who have not yet received into their hearts, by faith, the cheering beams of the Sun of righteousness, all such are still wrapped in the shades of spiritual night, are "the sons of darkness," "the sons of the night."

Reader, pause and ask yourself, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, to which of these two classes do you, at this moment, belong. That you belong to either the one or the other is beyond all question. You may be poor, despised, unlettered; but if, through grace, there is a link connecting you with the Son of God, "the light of the world," then you are, in very deed, a son of the day, and destined, ere long, to shine in that celestial sphere, that region of glory, of which "the slain Lamb" will be the central sun, for ever. This is not your own doing. It is the result of the counsel and operation of God Himself, who has given you light and life, joy and peace, in Jesus, and His accomplished sacrifice. But if you are a total stranger to the hallowed action and influence of divine light, if your eyes have not been opened to behold any beauty in the Son of God, then, though you had all the learning of a Newton, though you were enriched with all the treasures of human philosophy, though you had drunk in with avidity all the streams of human science, though your name were adorned with all the learned titles which the schools and universities of this world could bestow, yet are you "a

Son Of the night," "a son of darkness;" and, if you die in your present condition, you will be involved in the blackness and horror of an eternal night. Do not, therefore, my friend, read another page, until you have fully satisfied yourself as to whether you belong to the "day" or the "night."

The next point on which I would dwell is the creation of lights. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also."

The sun is the great centre of light, and the centre of our system. Round him the lesser orbs revolve. From him, too, they derive their light. Hence, he may, very legitimately, be viewed as an apt symbol of Him who is soon to arise, with healing in His wings, to gladden the hearts of those that fear the Lord. The aptness and beauty of the symbol would fully appear to one who, having spent the night in watching, beholds the rising sun gilding, with his bright beams, the eastern sky. The mists and shades of night are all dispersed, and the whole creation seems to hail the returning orb of light. Thus will it be, by and by, when the Son of righteousness arises. The shadows of night shall flee away, and the whole creation shall be gladdened by the dawning of "a morning without clouds," the opening of a bright and never-ending day of glory.

The moon, being in herself opaque, derives all her light from the sun. She always reflects the sun's light, save when earth and its influences intervene.* No sooner has the sun sunk beneath our horizon than the moon presents herself to receive his beams and reflect them back upon a dark world, or should she be visible during the day, she always exhibits a pale light, the necessary result of appearing in the presence of superior brightness. True it is, as has been remarked, the world sometimes intervenes; dark clouds, thick mists, and chilling vapours, too, arise from earth's surface, and hide from our view her silvery light.

{*It is an interesting fact that the moon, as viewed through a powerful telescope, presents the appearance of one vast ruin of nature.}

Now, as the sun is a beautiful and an appropriate symbol of Christ, so the moon strikingly reminds us of the Church. The fountain of her light is hidden from view. The world seeth Him not, but she sees Him; and she is responsible to reflect His beams upon a benighted world. The world has no other way in which to learn anything of Christ but by the Church. "Ye," says the inspired apostle, "are our epistle,....known and read of all men." And again, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ." (2 Cor. 3: 2, 3.)

What a responsible place! How earnestly should she watch against everything that would hinder the reflection of the heavenly light of Christ, in all her ways! But how is she to reflect this light? By allowing it to shine upon her, in its undimmed brightness. If the Church only walked in the light of Christ, she would, assuredly, reflect His light; and this would ever keep her in her proper position. The light of the moon is not her own. So is it with the Church. She is not called to set herself before the world. She is a simple debtor to reflect the light which she herself receives. She is bound to study, with holy diligence, the path which He trod, while down here; and by the energy of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in her, to follow in that path. But, alas! earth with its mists, its clouds, and its vapours, intervenes, and hides the light and blots the epistle. The world can see but little of the traits of Christ's character in those who call themselves by His name; yea, in many instances, they exhibit an humbling contrast, rather than a resemblance. May we study Christ more prayerfully, that so we may copy Him more faithfully.

The stars are distant lights. They shine in other spheres, and have little connection with this system, save that their twinkling can be seen. "One star differeth from another star in glory." Thus will it be in the coming kingdom of the Son. He will shine forth in living and everlasting lustre. His body, the Church, will faithfully reflect His beams on all around; while saints individually shall shine in those spheres which a righteous Judge shall allot to them, as a reward of service during the dark night of His absence. This thought

should animate us to a more ardent and vigorous pursuit after conformity to our absent Lord. (see Luke 19: 12-19.)

The lower orders of creation are next introduced. The sea and the earth are made to team with life. Some may feel warranted in regarding the operations of each successive day, as foreshadowing the various dispensations, and their great characteristic principles of action. I would only remark, as to this, that there is great need, when handling the word in this way, to watch, with holy jealousy, the working of imagination; and also to pay strict attention to the general analogy of scripture, else we may make sad mistakes. I do not feel at liberty to enter upon such a line of interpretation; I shall therefore confine myself to what I believe to be the plain sense of the sacred text.

We shall now consider man's place, as set over the works of God's hands. All having been set in order, one was needed to take the headship. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he *them*. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." My reader will observe the change from "him" to "them." We are not presented with the actual fact of the formation of the woman, until the next chapter; though here we find God blessing "them" and giving "them" jointly the place of universal government. All the inferior orders of creation were set under their joint dominion. Eve received all her blessings in Adam. In him, too, she got her dignity. Though not yet called into actual existence, she was, in the purpose of God, looked at as part of the man. "In thy book were all my members written, which, in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

Thus it is with the Church — the bride of the Second Man. She was viewed from all eternity in Christ, her Head and Lord; as we read in the first chapter of Ephesians, "According as He hath

chosen us in him, *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Before a single member of the Church had yet breathed the breath of life, all were, in God's eternal mind, predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son." The counsels of God render the Church necessary to complete the mystic man. Hence the Church is called "the fullness [*pleroma*] of Him that filleth all in all." This is an amazing title, and it develops much of the dignity, importance, and glory of the Church.]

It is too common to view redemption as bearing merely upon the blessedness and security of individual souls. This is entirely too low a view to take of the matter. That all which pertains, in any way, to the individual is, in the fullest manner, secured, is, blessed be God, most true. This is the least part of redemption. But that Christ's glory is involved in, and connected with, the Church's existence, is a truth of far more dignity, depth, and power. If I am entitled, on the authority of Holy Scripture, to regard myself as a constituent part of that which is actually needful to Christ, I can no longer entertain a doubt as to whether there is the fullest provision for all my personal necessities. And is not the Church thus needful to Christ? Yes, truly. "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." And, again, "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.... Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman. neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God." (1 Cor. 11: 8-12) Hence, it is no longer the mere question whether God can save a poor, helpless sinner — whether He can blot out his sins, and receive him in the power of divine righteousness. God has said, "it is not good that the man should be alone." He left not "the first man" without "an help meet;" neither would He leave the "Second." As, in the case of the former, there would have been a blank in the creation without Eve, so stupendous thought! — in the case of the latter, there would be a blank in the new creation without the Bride, the Church.

Let us, now, look at the manner in which Eve was brought into being, though, in so doing, we shall have to anticipate part of the

contents of the next chapter. Throughout all the orders of creation there was not found an help meet for Adam. "A deep sleep" must fall on him, and a partner be formed, out of himself, to share his dominion and his blessedness. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, builded* he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." (Gen. 2: 21-23.)

{*The Hebrew word which is rendered "builded" in the margin the LXX. render by οικοδομεσεν]. A reference to the original of Eph. 2: 20, 22 will show the reader that the words rendered "built" and "builded together" are inflexions of the same verb.}

Looking at Adam and Eve as a type of Christ and the Church, as scripture fully warrants us to do, we see how that the death of Christ needed to be an accomplished fact, ere the Church could be set up; though, in the purpose of God, she was looked at, and chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world. There is, however, a vast difference between the secret purpose of God and the revelation and accomplishment thereof. Before the divine purpose could be actualised in reference to the constituent parts of the Church, it was necessary that the Son should be rejected and crucified — that He should take His seat on high — that He should send down the Holy Ghost to baptise believers into one body. It is not that souls were not quickened and saved, previous to the death of Christ. They assuredly were. Adam was saved, and thousands of others, from age to age, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, though that sacrifice was not yet accomplished. But the salvation of individual souls is one thing; and the formation of the Church, as a distinctive thing, by the Holy Ghost, is quite another.

This distinction is not sufficiently attended to; and even where it is in theory maintained, it is accompanied with but little of those practical results which might naturally be expected to flow from a truth so stupendous. The Church's unique place her special relationship to "the Second Man, the Lord from heaven" her distinctive privileges and dignities — all these things would, if

entered into by the power of the Holy Ghost, produce the richest, the rarest, and the most fragrant fruits. (See Eph. 5: 23-32.)

When we look at the type before us, we may form some idea of the results which ought to follow from the understanding of the Church's position and relationship. What affection did not Eve owe to Adam? What nearness she enjoyed! What intimacy of communion! What full participation in all his thoughts! In all his dignity, and in all his glory, she was entirely one. He did not rule over, but with her. He was Lord of the whole creation, and she was one with him. Yea, as has already been remarked, she was looked at, and blessed in him. "The man" was the object; and as to "the woman," she was needful to him, and therefore she was brought into being. Nothing can be more profoundly interesting as a type. Man first set up, and the woman viewed in, and then formed out of him—all this forms a type of the most striking and instructive character. Not that a doctrine can ever be founded upon a type, but when we find the doctrine fully and clearly laid down in other parts of the Word, we are then prepared to understand, appreciate, and admire the type.

Psalm 8 furnishes a fine view of man set over the work of God's hands: "when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained: what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." Here man is looked at, without any distinctive mention of the woman; and this is quite in character, for the woman is looked at *in* the man.

There is no direct revelation of the mystery of the Church, in any part of the Old Testament. The apostle expressly says, "in other ages it was not made known to the sons of men us it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets (of the New Testament) by the Spirit." (Eph. 3: 1-11) Hence, in the Psalm just quoted, we have only "the man" presented to us; but we know that the man and the woman

are looked at under one head. All this will find its full anti type in the ages to come. Then shall the True Man, the Lord from heaven, take His seat on the throne, and, in companionship with His bride, the Church, rule over a restored creation. His Church is quickened out of the grave of Christ, is Part "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." He the Head and she the body, making one Man, as we read in the fourth chapter of Ephesians.

"Till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The Church, being thus part of Christ, will occupy a place, in the glory, quite unique. There was no other creature so near to Adam as Eve, because no other creature was part of himself. So, in reference to the Church, she will hold the very nearest place to Christ, in His coming glory.

Nor is it merely what the Church will be that commands our admiration; but what the Church is. She is now the body of which Christ is the Head; she is now the temple of which God is the Inhabitant. Oh what manner of people ought we to be? If such is the present, such the future dignity of that of which we, through God's grace, form a part, surely a holy, a devoted, a separated, an elevated walk is what becomes us.

May the Holy Ghost unfold these things, more fully and powerfully, to our hearts, that so we may have a deeper sense of the conduct and character which are worthy of the high vocation wherewith we are called. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope, of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 18-23.)

Genesis 2

The chapter introduces to our notice two prominent subjects, namely, "the seventh day" and "the river." The first of these demands special attention.

There are few subjects on which so much misunderstanding and contradiction prevails as the doctrine of "the Sabbath." Not that there is the slightest foundation for either the one or the other; for the whole subject is laid down in the word, in the simplest possible manner. The distinct commandment, to "keep holy the Sabbath day" will come before us, the Lord permitting, in our meditations on the book of Exodus. In the chapter now before us, there is no command given to man, whatever; but simply the record that, "God rested on the seventh day." "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." There is no commandment given to man, here. We are simply told that God enjoyed His rest, because all was done, so far as the mere creation was concerned. There was nothing more to be done, and, therefore, the One who had, during six days, been working, ceased to work, and enjoyed His rest. All was complete; all was very good; all was just as He Himself had made it; and He rested in it. "The morning stars sang together; and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The work of creation was ended, and God was celebrating a Sabbath.

And, be it observed, that this is the true character of a Sabbath. This is the only Sabbath which God ever celebrated, so far as the inspired record instructs us. After this, we read of God's commanding man to keep the Sabbath, and man utterly failing so to do; but we never read again the words, "God rested;" on the contrary, the word is, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5: 17) The Sabbath, in the strict and proper sense of the term, could only be celebrated when there really was nothing to be done. It could only be celebrated amid an undefiled creation — a creation on which no spot of sin could be discerned. God can have no rest

where there is sin; and one has only to look around him in order to learn the total impossibility of God's enjoying a rest in creation now. The thorn and the thistle, together with the ten thousand other melancholy and humiliating fruits of a groaning creation, rise before us, and declare that God must be at work and not at rest. Could God rest in the midst of thorns and briars? Could He rest amid the sighs and tears, the groans and sorrows, the sickness and death, the degradation and guilt of a ruined world? Could God sit down, as it were, and celebrate a Sabbath in the midst of such circumstances?

Whatever answer may be given to these questions, the word of God teaches us that God has had no Sabbath, as yet, save the one which the 2nd of Genesis records. "The seventh day," and none other, was the Sabbath. It showed forth the completeness of creation work; but creation work is marred, and the seventh day rest interrupted; and thus, from the fall to the incarnation, God was working; from the incarnation to the cross, God the Son was working; and from Pentecost until now, God the Holy Ghost has been working.

Assuredly, Christ had no Sabbath when He was upon this earth. True, He finished His work — blessedly, gloriously finished it but where did He spend the Sabbath day? *In the tomb!* Yes, my reader, the Lord Christ. God manifest in the flesh, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Maker and Sustainer of heaven and earth, spent the seventh day in the dark and silent tomb. Has this no voice for us? Does it convey no teaching? Could the Son of God lie in the grave on the seventh day, if that day were to be spent in rest and peace; and in the full sense that nothing remained to be done? impossible! We want no farther proof of the impossibility of celebrating a Sabbath than that which is afforded at the grave of Jesus. We may stand beside that grave amazed to find it occupied by such an one on the seventh day; but, oh! the reason is obvious. Man is a fallen, ruined, guilty creature. His long career of guilt has ended in crucifying the Lord of glory; and not only crucifying Him, but placing a great stone at the mouth of the tomb, to prevent, if possible, His leaving it.

And what was man doing while the Son of God was in the grave? He was observing the Sabbath day! What a thought! Christ in

His grave to repair a broken Sabbath, and yet man attempting to keep, the Sabbath as though it were not broken at all! It was man's Sabbath, and not God's. It was a Sabbath without Christ — an empty, powerless, worthless, because Christless and Godless, form.

But some will say, "the day has been changed, while all the principles belonging to it remain the same." I do not believe that scripture furnishes any foundation for such an idea. Where is the divine warrant for such a statement? Surely if there is scripture authority, nothing can be easier than to produce it. But the fact is, there is none; on the contrary, the distinction is most fully maintained in the New Testament. Take one remarkable passage, in proof: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week." (Matt. 28: 1) There is, evidently, no mention here of the seventh day being changed to the first day; nor yet of any transfer of the Sabbath from the one to the other. The first day of the week is not the Sabbath changed, but altogether a new day. It is the first day of a new period, and not the last day of an old. The seventh day stands connected with earth and earthly rest; the first day of the week, on the contrary, introduces us to heaven and heavenly rest.

This makes a vast difference in the principle; and when we look at the matter in a practical point of view, the difference is most material. If I celebrate the seventh day, it marks me as an earthly man, inasmuch as that day is, clearly, the rest of earth — creation rest; but if I am taught by the Word and Spirit of God to understand the meaning of the first day of the week, I shall at once apprehend its immediate connection with that new and heavenly order of things, of which the death and resurrection of Christ form the everlasting foundation. The seventh day appertained to Israel and to earth. The first day of the week appertains to the Church and to heaven. Further, Israel was *commanded* to observe the Sabbath day; the Church is *privileged* to enjoy the first day of the week. The former was the *test* of Israel's moral condition; the latter is the significant *proof* of the Church's eternal acceptance. That made manifest what Israel *could do* for God; this perfectly declares what God *has done* for us.

It is quite impossible to over-estimate the value and importance of the Lord's day, (*e kuriake emera*,) as the first day of

the week is termed, in the first chapter of the Apocalypse. Being the day on which Christ rose from the dead, it sets forth, not the completion of creation, but the full and glorious triumph of redemption. Nor should we regard the celebration of the first day of the week as a matter of bondage, or as a yoke put on the neck of a Christian. It is his delight to celebrate that happy day. Hence we find that the first day of the week was pre-eminently the day on which the early Christians came together to break bread; and at that period of the Church's history, the distinction between the Sabbath and the first day of the week was fully maintained. The Jews celebrated the former, by assembling in their synagogues, to read "the law and the prophets;" the Christians celebrated the latter, by assembling to break bread. There is not so much as a single passage of scripture in which the first day of the week is called the Sabbath day; whereas there is the most abundant proof of their entire distinctness.

Why, therefore, contend for that which has no foundation in the Word? Love, honour, and celebrate the Lord's day as much as possible; seek, like the apostle, to be "in the spirit" thereon; let your retirement from secular matters be as profound as ever you can make it; but while you do all this, call it by its proper name; give it its proper place; understand its proper principles; attach to it its proper characteristics; and, above all, do not bind down the Christian, as with an iron rule, to observe the seventh day, when it is his high and holy privilege to observe the first. Do not bring him down from heaven, where he can rest, to a cursed and bloodstained earth, where he cannot. Do not ask him to keep a day which his Master spent in the tomb, instead of that blessed day on which He left it. (see, carefully, Matt. 28: 1-6; Mark 16: 1-2; Luke 24: 1; John 20: 1, 19, 26; Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 2; Rev. 1: 10; Acts 13: 14; Acts 17: 2; Col. 2: 16.)

But let it not be supposed that we lose sight of the important fact that the Sabbath will again be celebrated, in the land of Israel, and over the whole creation. It assuredly will. "There remaineth a rest (*sabbatismos*) for the people of God." (Heb. 4: 9) When the Son of Abraham, Son of David, and Son of man, shall assume his position of government over the whole earth, there will be a glorious Sabbath rest which sin shall never interrupt. But now, He is rejected,

and all who know and love Him are called to take their place with Him in His rejection; they are called to "go forth to Him without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Heb. 13: 13) If earth could keep a Sabbath, there would be no reproach; but the very fact of the professing church's seeking to make the first day of the week the Sabbath, reveals a deep principle. It is but the effort to get back to an earthly standing, and to an earthly code of morals.

Many may not see this. Many true Christians may, most conscientiously, observe the Sabbath day, as such; and we are bound to honour their consciences, though we are perfectly warranted in asking them to furnish a scriptural basis for their conscientious convictions. We would not stumble or wound their conscience, but we would seek to instruct it. However, we are not now occupied with conscience or its convictions, but only with the principle which lies at the root of what may be termed the Sabbath question; and I would only put the question to the Christian reader, which is more consonant with the entire scope and spirit of the New Testament, the celebration of the seventh day or Sabbath, or the celebration of the first day of the week or the Lord's day?*

{*This subject will, if the Lord permit, come before us again in Exodus 20; but I would, here, observe, that very much of the offence and misunderstanding connected with the important subject of the Sabbath, may be justly traced to the inconsiderate and injudicious conduct of some who, in their zeal for what they termed Christian liberty, in reference to the Sabbath, rather lose sight of the claims of honest consciences and also of the place which the Lord's day occupies in the New Testament. Some have been known to enter upon their weekly avocations, simply to show their liberty, and thus they caused much needless offence. Such acting could never have been suggested by the Spirit of Christ. If I am ever so clear and free, in my own mind, I should respect the consciences of my brethren: and, moreover, I do not believe that those who so carry themselves, really understand the true and precious privileges connected with the Lord's day. We should only be too thankful to be rid of all secular occupation and distraction, to think of having recourse to them, for the purpose of showing our liberty. The good providence of our God has so arranged for His people throughout the British Empire, that

they can, without pecuniary loss, enjoy the rest of the Lord's day, inasmuch as all are obliged to abstain from business. This must be regarded, by every well-regulated mind, as a mercy; for, if it were not thus ordered, we know how man's covetous heart would, if possible, rob the Christian of the sweet privilege of attending the assembly, on the Lord's day. And who can tell what would be the deadening effect of uninterrupted engagement with this world's traffic? Those Christians who, from Monday morning to Saturday night, breathe the dense atmosphere of the mart, the market, and the manufactory, can form some idea of it.

It cannot be regarded as a Good sign to find men introducing measures for the public profanation of the Lord's day. It, assuredly, marks the progress of infidelity and French influence.

But there are some who teach that the expression *e kuriake emera*, which is rightly enough translated, "the Lord's day," refers to "the day of the Lord" and that the exiled apostle found himself carried forward, as it were, into the Spirit of the day of the Lord. I do not believe the original would bear such an interpretation; and, besides, we have in 1 Thess. 5: 2, and 2 Peter 3: 10, the exact words, "the day of the Lord," the original of which is quite different from the expression above referred to, being not *e kuriake emera*, but *e emera kurion*. This entirely settles the matter, so far as the mere criticism is concerned; and as to interpretation, it is plain that by far the greater portion of the Apocalypse is occupied, not with "the day of the Lord" but with events prior thereto.}

We shall now consider the connection between the Sabbath, and the river flowing out of Eden. There is much interest in this. It is the first notice we get of "the river of God" which is, here, introduced in connection with God's rest. When God was resting in His works, the whole world felt the blessing and refreshment thereof. It was impossible for God to keep a Sabbath, and earth not to feel its sacred influence. But alas, the streams which flowed forth from Eden—the scene of earthly rest — were speedily interrupted, because the rest of creation was marred by sin.

Yet, blessed be God, sin did not put a stop to His activities but only gave them a new sphere; and wherever He is seen acting, the

river is seen flowing. Thus when we find Him, with a strong hand, and an outstretched arm, conducting His ransomed hosts across sterile sand of the desert, there we see the stream flowing forth, not from Eden, but from the smitten Rock — apt and beautiful expression of the ground on which sovereign grace ministers to the need of sinners! This was redemption and not merely creation. "That rock was Christ," Christ smitten to meet His people's need. The smitten rock was connected with Jehovah's place in the Tabernacle; and truly there was moral beauty in the connection. God dwelling in curtains, and Israel drinking from a smitten rock, had a voice for every opened ear, and a deep lesson for every circumcised heart. (Ex. 17: 6)

Passing onward, in the history of God's ways, we find the river flowing in another channel. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7: 37, 38.) Here, then, we find the river emanating from another source, and flowing through another channel; though, in one sense, the source of the river was ever the same, being God Himself; but, then, it was God, known in a new relationship and upon a new principle. Thus in the passage just quoted, the Lord Jesus was taking His place, in spirit, outside of the whole existing order of things, and presenting Himself as the source of the river of living water, of which river the person of the believer was to be the channel. Eden, of old, was constituted a debtor to the whole earth, to send forth the fertilising streams. And in the desert, the rock, when smitten, became a debtor to Israel's thirsty hosts. Just so, now, every one who believes in Jesus, is a debtor to the scene around him, to allow the streams of refreshment to flow forth from him.

The Christian should regard himself as the channel, through which the manifold grace of Christ may flow out to a needy world; and the more freely he communicates, the more freely will he receive, "for there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." This places the believer in a place of sweetest privilege, and, at the same time, of the most solemn responsibility. He is called to be the

constant witness and exhibitor of the grace of Him on whom He believes.

Now, the more he enters into the privilege, the more will he answer the responsibility. If he is habitually feeding upon Christ, he cannot avoid exhibiting Him. The more the Holy Spirit keeps the Christian's eyes fixed on Jesus, the more will his heart be occupied with His adorable Person, and his life and character bear unequivocal testimony to His grace. Faith is, at once, the power of ministry, the power of testimony, and the power of worship. If we are not living "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us" we shall neither be effectual servants, faithful witnesses, nor true worshippers. We may be doing a great deal, but it will not be service to Christ. We may be saying a great deal, but it will not be testimony for Christ. We may exhibit a great deal of piety and devotion, but it will not be spiritual and true worship.

Finally, we have the river of God, presented to us in the last chapter of the Apocalypse.* "And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." This is the last place in which we find river. Its source can never again be touched — its channel never again interrupted. "The throne of God" is expressive of eternal stability; and the presence of the Lamb marks it as based upon the immediate ground of accomplished redemption. It is not God's throne in creation, nor in providence; but in redemption. When I see the Lamb, I know its connection with me as a sinner. "The throne of God," as such, would but deter me; but when God reveals Himself in the Person of the Lamb, the heart is attracted, and the conscience tranquillised.

{*Compare also Ezek. 47: 1-12; Zech 14: 8.}

The blood of the Lamb cleanses the conscience from every speck and stain of sin, and sets it, in perfect freedom in the presence of a holiness which cannot tolerate sin. In the cross, all the claims of divine holiness were perfectly answered; so that the more I understand the latter, the more I appreciate the former. The higher our estimate of holiness, the higher will be our estimate of the work

of the cross. "Grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Hence the Psalmist calls on the saints to give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness. This is a precious fruit of a perfect redemption. Before ever a sinner can give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness, he must look at it by faith, from the resurrection side of the cross.

Having thus traced the river, from Genesis to Revelation, we shall briefly look at Adam's position in Eden. We have seen him as a type of Christ; but he is not merely to be viewed typically, but personally; not merely as absolutely shadowing forth "the second man, the Lord from heaven," but also as standing in the place of personal responsibility. In the midst of the fair scene of creation, the Lord God set up a testimony, and this testimony was also a test for the creature. It spoke of *death* in the midst of *life*. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Strange, solemn sound. Yet, it was a needed sound. Adam's life was suspended upon his strict obedience. The link which connected him with the Lord God* was obedience, based on implicit confidence in the One, who had set him in his position of dignity — confidence in His truth — confidence in His love. He could obey only while he confided. We shall see the truth and force of this, more fully, when we come to examine the next chapter.

{*My reader will observe the change in the second chapter from the expression "God" to Lord God." There is much importance in the distinction. When God is seen acting in relation with man, He takes the title Lord God," — (Jehovah Elohim;) but until man appears on the scene, the word "Lord": is not used. I shall just point out three out of many passages in which the distinction is very strikingly presented. "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God (Elohim) had commanded him; and the Lord (Jehovah) shut him in (Gen. 7: 16) Elohim was going to destroy the world which He had made; but Jehovah took care of the man with whom He stood in relation. Again, "that all the earth may know that there is a God (Elohim) in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord (Jehovah) saveth," &c. (1 Sam. 17: 46, 47) All the earth was to recognise the presence of Elohim; but Israel was called to recognise the actings of Jehovah, with whom they stood in

relation. Lastly, "Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord (Jehovah) helped him; and God (Elohim) moved them to depart from him." (2 Chr. 18: 31) Jehovah took care of His poor erring servant; but Elohim, though unknown, acted upon the hearts of the uncircumcised Syrians.}

I would here suggest to my reader the remarkable contrast between the testimony set up in Eden, and which is set up now. Then, when all around was *life*, God spoke of *death*; now, on the contrary, when all around is death, God speaks of life: then the word "in the day thou eatest thou shalt *die*;" now the word is, "believe and *live*." And, as in Eden, the enemy sought to make void God's testimony, as to the result of eating the fruit, so now, he seeks to make God's testimony as to the result of believing the gospel. God had said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *die*. But the serpent said, Ye shall not surely *die*." And now, when God's word plainly declares that "he that believeth on the *hath* everlasting *life*," (John 3: 16) the same serpent seeks to persuade people that they have not everlasting life, nor should they presume to think of such a thing, until they have, first, *done*, *felt*, and *experienced* all manner of things.

My beloved reader, if you have not yet heartily believed the divine record, let me beseech you to allow "the voice of the Lord" to prevail above the hiss of the serpent. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5: 24)

Genesis 3

This section of our book sets before us the breaking up of the whole scene on which we have been dwelling. It abounds in very weighty principles; and has, very justly, been, in all ages, resorted to as a most fruitful theme for those who desired to set forth the truth as to man's ruin and God's remedy. The serpent enters, with a bold question as to divine revelation — terrible model and forerunner of all infidel questions since raised by those who have, alas! too faithfully served the serpent's cause in the world questions which are only to be met by the supreme authority and divine majesty of Holy Scripture.

"Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" This was Satan's crafty enquiry; and had the word of God been dwelling richly in Eve's heart, her answer might have been direct, simple, and conclusive. The true way in which to meet Satan's questions and suggestions, is to treat them as his, and repel them by the word. To let them near the heart, for a moment, is to lose the only power by which to answer them. The devil did not openly present himself and say, "I am the devil, the enemy of God, and I am come to traduce Him, and ruin you." This would not be serpent-like; and, yet, he really did all this, *by raising questions* in the mind of the creature. To admit the question, "hath God said?" when I know that God has spoken, is positive infidelity; and the very fact of my admitting it, proves my total incapacity to meet it. Hence, in Eve's case, the form of her reply evidenced the fact that she had admitted to her heart serpent's crafty enquiry. Instead of adhering strictly to the exact words of God, she, in her reply, actually adds thereto.

Now, either to add to, or take from, God's word, proves very clearly, that His word is not dwelling in my heart, or governing my conscience. If a man is finding his enjoyment in obedience, if it is his meat and his drink, if he is living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah, he will, assuredly, be acquainted with, and fully alive to, His word. He could not be indifferent to it. The Lord Jesus, in His conflict with Satan, accurately applied the word, because He lived upon it, and esteemed it more than His necessary

food. He could not misquote or misapply the word, neither could He be indifferent about it. Not so Eve. She added to what God had said. His command was simple enough, "Thou shalt not eat of it." To this Eve adds her own words, "neither shall ye touch it." These were Eve's words, and not God's. He had said nothing about touching; so that whether her misquotation proceeded from ignorance, or indifference, or a desire to represent God in an arbitrary light, or from all three together, it is plain that she was entirely off the true ground of simple confidence in, and subjection to, God's holy word. "By the words of thy mouth, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer."

Nothing can possess more commanding interest than the way in which the word is everywhere put forward throughout the sacred canon, together with the immense importance of strict obedience thereto. Obedience is due from us to God's word, simply because it is His word. To raise a question, when He has spoken, is blasphemy. We are in the place of the creature. He is the Creator; He may, therefore, justly claim obedience from us. The infidel may call this "blind obedience;" but the Christian calls it intelligent obedience, inasmuch as it is based upon the knowledge that it is God's word to which he is obedient. If a man had not God's word, he might well be said to be in blindness and darkness, for there is not so much as a single ray of divine light, within or around us, but what emanates from God's pure and eternal word. ALL that we want to know is that God has spoken, and then obedience becomes the very highest order of intelligent acting. When the soul gets up to God, it has reached the very highest source of authority. No man, nor body of men, can claim obedience to their word, because it is theirs ; and hence the claims of the Church of Rome are arrogant and impious. In her claiming obedience, she usurps the prerogative of God; and all who yield it, rob God of His right. She presumes to place herself between God and the conscience; and who can do this with impunity? When God speaks, man is bound to obey. Happy is he if he does so. Woe be to him if he does not. Infidelity may question if God has spoken; superstition may place human authority between my conscience and what God has spoken; by both I like I am effectually robbed of the word, and, as a consequence, of the deep blessedness of obedience.

There is blessing in every act of obedience; but the moment the soul hesitates, the enemy has the advantage; he will, assuredly, use it, to thrust the soul further and further from God. Thus, in the chapter before us, the question, "Hath God said?" was followed up, "Ye shall not surely die." That is to say, there was first the question raised, as to whether God had spoken, and then followed the open contradiction of what God had said. This solemn fact is abundantly sufficient to show how dangerous it is to admit near the heart a question as to divine revelation, in its fullness and integrity. A refined rationalism is very near akin to bold infidelity; and the infidelity that dares to judge God's Word is not far from the atheism that denies His existence. Eve would never have stood by to hear God contradicted, if she had not previously fallen into looseness and indifference as to His word. She, too, had her "phases of Faith," or, to speak more correctly, her phases of Infidelity: she suffered God to be contradicted by a creature, simply because? His word had lost its proper authority over her heart, her conscience, and her understanding.

This furnishes a most solemn warning to all who are in danger of being ensnared by an unhallowed rationalism. There is no true security, save in a profound faith in the plenary inspiration and supreme authority of "ALL SCRIPTURE." The soul that is endowed with this has a triumphant answer to every objector, whether he issue from Rome or Germany. "There is nothing new under the sun." The self-same evil which is now corrupting the very springs of religious thought and feeling, throughout the fairest portion of the continent of Europe, was that which laid Eve's heart in ruins, in the garden of Eden. The first step in her downward course was her hearkening to the question, "Hath God said." And then, onward she went, from stage to stage, until, at length, she bowed before the serpent, and owned him as her god, and the fountain of truth. Yes, my reader, the serpent displaced God, and the serpent's lie God's truth. Thus it was with fallen man; and thus it is with fallen man's posterity. God's word has no place in the heart of the unregenerated man; but the lie of the serpent has. Let the formation of man's heart be examined, and it will be found that there is a place therein for Satan's lie, but none whatever for the truth of God. Hence the force of the word to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again."

But, it is important to observe the mode in which the serpent sought to shake Eve's confidence in God's truth, and thus bring her under the power of infidel "*reason*." It was by shaking her confidence in God's love. He sought to shake her confidence in what God had said by showing that the testimony was not founded in love. "For," said he, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." (Ver. 6.) In other words, "There is positive advantage connected with the eating of that fruit of which God is seeking to deprive you; why, therefore, should you believe God's testimony? you cannot place confidence in one who, manifestly, does not love you, for, if He loved you, why should He prohibit your enjoying a positive privilege?"

Eve's security against the influence of all this reasoning, would have been simple repose in the infinite goodness of God. She should have said to the serpent, "I have the fullest confidence in God's goodness, therefore, I deem it impossible that He could withhold any real good from me. If that fruit were good for me, I should surely have it; but the fact of being forbidden by God proves that I would be no better, but much worse off by the eating of it. I am convinced of God's love and I am convinced of God's truth, and I believe, too, that you are an evil one come to draw my heart away from the fountain of goodness and truth. Get thee behind me, Satan." This would have been a noble reply. But it was not given. Her confidence in truth and love gave way, and all was lost; and so we find that there is just as little place in the heart of fallen man for God's love, as there is for God's truth. The heart of man is a stranger to both the one and the other, until renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now, it is deeply interesting to turn from Satan's lie in reference to the truth and love of God, to the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came from the bosom of the Father in order to reveal what He really is. "Grace and truth" — the very things which man lost, in his fall — "came by Jesus Christ." (John 1: 17) He was "the faithful witness" of what God was. (Rev. 1: 5) Truth reveals God as He is; but this truth is connected with the revelation of perfect grace; and thus the sinner finds, to his, unspeakable joy, that

the revelation of what God is, instead of being his destruction, becomes the basis of his eternal salvation. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John 17: 3.) I cannot know God and not have life. The loss of the knowledge of God was death; but the knowledge of God is life. This, necessarily, makes life a thing entirely outside of ourselves, and dependent upon what God is. Let me arrive at what amount of self-knowledge I may, it is not said that "this is life eternal, to know themselves;" though, no doubt, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self-will go very much together; still, "eternal life" is connected with the former, and not with the latter. To know God as He is, is life; and "all who know not God" shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from His presence."

It is of the utmost importance to see that what really stamps man's character and condition is his ignorance or knowledge of God. This it is that marks his character here, and fixes his destiny hereafter. Is he evil in his thoughts, evil in his words, evil in his actions? It is all the result of his being ignorant of God. On the other hand, is he pure in thought, holy in conversation, gracious in action? It is but the practical result of his knowledge of God. So also as to the future. To know God is the solid ground of endless bliss — everlasting glory. To know Him not is "everlasting destruction." Thus the knowledge of God is everything. It quickens the soul, purifies the heart, tranquillises the conscience, elevates the affections, sanctifies the entire character and conduct.

Need we wonder, therefore, that Satan's grand design was to rob the creature of the true knowledge of the only true God? He misrepresented the blessed God: he said He was not kind. This was the secret spring of all the mischief. It matters not what shape sin has since taken it matters not through what channel it has flowed, under what head it has ranged itself, or in what garb it has clothed itself; it is all to be traced to this one thing, namely, ignorance of God. The most refined cultivated moralist, the most devout religionist, the benevolent philanthropist, if ignorant of God, is as far from life and true holiness, as the publican and harlot. The prodigal was just as much a sinner, as positively awry from the Father, when he had crossed the threshold, as when he was feeding swine in the

far country. (Luke 15: 13-15.) So, in Eve's case. The moment she took herself out of the hands of God, out of the position of absolute dependence upon, and subjection to, His word, she abandoned herself to the government of sense, as used of Satan for her entire overthrow.

The sixth verse presents three things; namely, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:" which three, as the apostle states, comprehend "all that is in the world." These things necessarily took the lead, when God was shut out. If I do not abide in the happy assurance of God's love and truth, His grace and faithfulness, I shall surrender myself to the government of some one, or it may be all, of the above principles; and this is only another name for the government of Satan. There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as man's free-will. If man be self-governed, he is really governed by Satan; and if not, he is governed by God.

Now, the three great agencies by which Satan works are "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." These are the things presented by Satan to the Lord Jesus, in the temptation. He began by tempting the Second Man to take Himself out of the position of absolute dependence upon God. "Command these stones that they be made bread" He asked Him to do this, not, as in the case of the first man, to make Himself what He was not, but to prove what He was. Then followed the offer of the kingdoms of the world, with all their Glory. And, finally, conducting Him to a pinnacle of the temple, he tempted Him to give Himself, suddenly and miraculously, to the Admiration of the assembled people below. (Comp. Matt. 4: 1-11 with Luke 4: 1-13.) The plain design of each temptation was to induce the Blessed One to step from the position of entire dependence upon God, and perfect subjection to His will. But all in vain. "it is written," was the unvarying reply of the only dependent, self-emptied, perfect man. Others might undertake to manage for themselves; none but God should manage for Him.

What an example for the faithful, under all their circumstances! Jesus kept close to scripture, and thus conquered; without any other weapon, save the sword of the Spirit, He stood in the conflict, and gained a glorious triumph. What a contrast with the first Adam! The one had everything to plead for God; the other had

everything to plead against Him. The garden, with all its delights, in the one case; the wilderness, with all its privations, in the other: confidence in Satan, in the one case; confidence in God in the other: complete defeat in the one case; complete victory in the other. Blessed for ever be the God of all grace, who has laid our help on One so mighty to conquer — mighty to save!

Let us now inquire how far Adam and Eve realised the serpent's promised advantage. This inquiry will lead us to a deeply important point in connection with the fall of man. The Lord God had so ordered it, that in and by the fall, man should get, what previously, he had not, and that was, a conscience, a knowledge of both good and evil. This, man, evidently, could not have had before. He could not have known ought about evil, inasmuch as evil was not there to be known. He was in a state of innocence, which is a state of ignorance of evil. Man got a conscience in, and by, fall; and we find that the very first effect of conscience was to make him a coward. Satan had utterly deceived the woman. He had said, "your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil! But he had left out a material part of the truth, that they should know good, without the power to do it; and that they should know evil, without the power to avoid it. Their very attempt to elevate themselves in the scale of moral existence, involved the lose of true elevation. They became degraded, powerless, Satan-enslaved, conscience-smitten, terrified, creatures. "The eyes of them both were opened," no doubt; but alas! to what a sight! It was only to discover their own nakedness. They opened their eyes upon their own condition, which was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." "They knew that they were naked" — sad fruit of the tree of knowledge! It was not any fresh knowledge of divine excellence they had attained, no fresh beam of divine light from the pure and eternal fountain thereof — alas! no; the very earliest result of their disobedient effort after knowledge, was the discovery, that they were naked.

Now, it is well to understand this; well, too, to know how conscience works, — to see that it can only make cowards of us, as being the consciousness of what we are. Many are astray as to this; they think that conscience will bring us to God. Did it operate thus,

in the case of Adam and Eve? Assuredly not, nor will it, in the case of any sinner. How could it? How could the sense of what *I am* ever bring me to God, if not accompanied by the faith of what *God is*? Impossible; it will produce shame, self-reproach, remorse, anguish. It may, also, give birth to certain efforts, on my part, to remedy the condition which it discloses; but these very efforts, so far from drawing us to God, rather act as a blind to hide Him from our view. Thus, in the case of Adam and Eve, the discovery of their nakedness was followed by an effort of their own to cover it. "They sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons." This is the first record we have of man's attempt to remedy, by his own device, his condition; and the attentive consideration thereof will afford us not a little instruction as to the real character of human religiousness in all ages. In the first place we see, not only in Adam's case, but in every case, that man's effort to remedy his condition is based upon the sense of his nakedness. He is, confessedly, naked, and all his works are the result of his being so. This can never avail. I must know that I am clothed, before I can do anything acceptable in the sight of God.

And this, be it observed, is the difference between true Christianity and human religiousness. The former is founded upon the fact of a man's being clothed; the latter, upon the fact of his being naked. The former for its starting post what the latter has for its goal. that a true Christian does, is because he is clothed — perfectly clothed; all that a mere religionist does, in order that he may be clothed. This makes a vast difference. The more we examine the genius of man's religion, in all its phases, the more we shall see its insufficiency to remedy his state, or even to meet his own sense thereof. It may do very well for a time. It may avail so long as death, judgement, and wrath of God are looked at from a distance, if at all; but, when a man comes to look these realities straight in the face, he will find, in truth, that his religion is a bed too short for him to stretch himself upon, and a covering too narrow for him wrap himself in.

The moment Adam heard the voice of the Lord in Eden, "*he was afraid*," because, as he himself confessed, "I was naked." Yes, naked, although he had his apron on him. But it is plain that that

covering did not even satisfy His own conscience. Had his conscience been divinely satisfied, he would not have been afraid. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John 3: 20, 21.) But if even the human conscience cannot find repose in man's religious efforts, how much less can the holiness of God. Adam's apron could not screen him from the eye of God; and he could not stand in His presence naked; therefore he fled to hide himself. This is what conscience will do at all times. It will cause man to hide himself from God; and, moreover, all that his own religiousness offers him is a hiding-place from God. This is a miserable provision, inasmuch as he must meet God, some time or other; and if he has nought save the bad Conscience of what he is, he must be afraid — yea, he must be wretched. Indeed, nothing is needed, save hell itself, to complete the misery of one who feels he has to meet God, and knows only his own unfitness to meet Him.

Had Adam known God's perfect love, he would not have been afraid. "There is no tear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4: 17, 18.) But Adam knew not this, because he had believed the serpent's lie. He thought that God was anything but love; and, therefore, the very last thought of his heart would have been to venture into His presence. He could not do it. Sin was there, and God and sin can never meet; so long as there is sin on the conscience, there must be the sense of distance from God. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity." (Hab. 1: 13) Holiness and sin cannot dwell together. Sin, wherever it is found, can only be met by the wrath of God.

But, blessed be God, there is something beside the *conscience of what I am*. There is *the revelation of what He is*; and this latter the fall of man really brought out. God had not revealed Himself, fully, in creation: He had shown "His eternal power and Godhead,"* *Theiotes* but He had not told out all the deep secrets of His nature and character. Wherefore Satan made a grand mistake in coming to meddle with God's creation. He only proved to be the instrument of his own eternal defeat, and confusion, and "his violent dealing" shall for ever "come down upon his own pate." His lie Only gave occasion for the displays of the full 'truth in reference to God.

Creation never could have brought out what God was. There was infinitely more in Him than power and wisdom. There was love, mercy, holiness, righteousness, goodness, tenderness, long-suffering. Where could all these be displayed, in a world of sinners? God, at the first, came to create; and, then, when the serpent presumed to meddle with creation, God came down to save. This brought out in the first words uttered by the Lord God, after man's fall. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" This question proved two things. It proved that man was lost, and that God had come to seek. It proved man's sin, and God's grace. "Where art thou?" Amazing faithfulness? Amazing grace Faithfulness, to disclose, in the very question itself, the truth as to man's condition: grace, to bring out, in the very fact of God's asking such a question, the truth as to His character and attitude, in reference to fallen man. Man was lost; but God had come down to look for him — to bring him out of his hiding place, behind the trees of the garden, in order that, in the happy confidence of faith, he might find a hiding place in Himself. This was grace. To create man out of the dust of the ground was power; but to seek man in his lost estate was grace. But who can utter all that is wrapped up in the idea of God's being a seeker? God seeking a sinner? What could the Blessed One have seen in man, to lead Him to seek for him? Just what the shepherd saw in the lost sheep; or what the woman saw in the lost piece of silver; or what the father saw in the lost son. The sinner is valuable to God; but why he should be so eternity alone will unfold.

{*There is a profoundly interesting thought suggested by comparing the word *Theiotes* (Rom. 1: 20) with the word *Theotes* (Col. 2: 9 They are both rendered "Godhead;" but they present a very different thought. The heathen might have seen that there was something superhuman, something divine, in creation; but pure, essential, incomprehensible Deity dwelt in the Adorable Person of the Son.)

How, then, did the sinner reply to the faithful and gracious inquiry of the Blessed God? alas! the reply only reveals the awful depth of evil into which he had fallen. "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid

myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Here, we find him actually laying the blame of his shameful fall on the circumstances in which God had placed him, and thus, indirectly, upon God Himself. This has ever been the way with fallen man. Everyone and everything is blamed but self. In the case of true conviction, the very reverse is exhibited. "Is it not I that have sinned" is the inquiry of a truly humbled soul. Had Adam known himself, how different would have been his style! But he neither knew himself nor God, and, instead of throwing the blame entirely upon himself, he threw it upon God.

Here, then, was man's terrible position. He had lost all. His dominion — his dignity — his happiness — his purity — his peace — all was gone from him; and, what was still worse, he accused God of being the cause of it.* There he stood, a lost, ruined, guilty, and yet, *self-vindicating*, and, therefore, *God-accusing* sinner.

{*Man not only accuses God of being the author of his fall, but also blames Him for his non-recovery. How often do we hear persons say that they cannot believe unless God give them the power to believe; and, further, that unless they are the subjects of God's eternal decree, they cannot be saved.

Now it is perfectly true, that no man can believe the gospel, except by the power of the Holy Ghost; and it is also true, that who so believe the gospel are the happy subjects of God's eternal counsels. But does all this set aside man's responsibility to believe a plain testimony set before him in God's Word. It most certainly does no such thing. But it does reveal the sad evil of man's heart, which leads him to reject Gods testimony which is plainly revealed, and to give as a reason for so doing God's decree which is a profound secret, known only to Himself However it will not avail, for we read in 1 Thess. 1: 8, 9, that those "Who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Men are responsible to believe the gospel, and they will be punished for not believing it. They are not responsible to know anything about God's counsels, inasmuch as they are not revealed, and, therefore,

there can be no guilt attached to ignorance concerning them. The apostle could say to the Thessalonians, "knowing brethren beloved, our election of God." How did he know it? Was it by having access to the page of God's secret and eternal decrees? By no means. How then? "Because (*hoti*) our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power." (1 Thess. 1: 4, 5) This is the way to know the election of any. When the gospel comes in power, it is a plain proof of God's election.

But, I doubt not, the people who draw a plea from the divine counsels for rejecting the divine testimony, only want some flimsy excuse to continue in sin. They really do not want God; and it would be far more honest in them to say so, plainly, than to put forward a plea which is not merely flimsy, but positively blasphemous. Such a plea will not avail them much amid the terrors of the day of judgement now fast approaching. }

But, just at this point, God began to reveal Himself, and His purposes of redeeming love; and herein lay the true basis of man's peace and blessedness. when man has come to the end of himself, God can show what He is; but not until then. The scene must be entirely cleared of man, and all his vain pretensions, empty boastings, and blasphemous reasonings, ere God can or will reveal Himself. Thus it was when man was hidden behind the trees of the garden, that God unfolded His wondrous plan of redemption through the instrumentality of the bruised seed of the woman. Here we are taught a valuable principle of truth as to what it is which alone will bring a man, peacefully and confidingly, into the presence of God.

It has been already remarked that conscience will never effect this. Conscience drove Adam behind the trees of the garden; revelation brought him forth into the presence of God. The consciousness of what he was terrified him; the revelation of what God was tranquillised him. This is truly consolatory for a poor sin burdened heart. The reality of what I am is met by the reality of what God is; and this is salvation.

There is a point where God and man must meet, whether in grace or judgement, and that point is where both are revealed *as they are*. Happy are they who reach that point in grace! Woe be to

them who will have to reach it in judgement! It is with what we are that God deals; and it is as He is that He deals with us. In the cross, I see God descending in grace to the lowest depths, not merely of my negative, but my positive condition, as a sinner. This gives perfect peace. If God has met me, in my actual condition, and Himself provided an adequate remedy, all is eternally settled. But all who do not thus, by faith, see God, in the cross, will have to meet Him, by and by, in judgement He will have to deal, according to what He is, with what they are.

The moment a man is brought to know his real state, he can find no rest until He has found God, in the cross, and then he rests in God Himself. He, blessed be His name is the rest and hiding-place of the believing soul. This at once, puts human works and human righteous in their proper place. We can say, with truth, that those who rest in such things cannot possibly have arrived at the true knowledge of themselves. It is quite impossible that a divinely quickened conscience can rest in ought save the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God. All effort to establish one's own righteousness must proceed from ignorance of the righteousness of God. Adam might learn, in the light of the divine testimony about "the seed of the woman," the worthlessness of his fig-leaf apron. The magnitude of that which had to be done, proved the sinner's total inability to do it. Sin had to be put away Could man do that? Nay, it was by him it had come in. The serpent's head had to be bruised Could man do that? Nay, he had become the serpent's slave. God's claims had to be met. Could man do that? Nay, he had, already, trampled them under foot. Death had to be abolished. Could man do that? Nay, he had, by sin, introduced it, and imparted to it its terrible sting.

Thus, in whatever way we view the matter, we see the sinner's complete impotency, and, as a consequence, the presumptuous folly of all who attempt to assist God in the stupendous work of redemption, as all assuredly do who think to be saved in any other way but "by grace, through faith."

However, though Adam might, and, through grace, did, see and feel that he could never accomplish all that had to be done, yet God revealed Himself as about to achieve every jot and tittle thereof, by the seed of the woman. In short, we see that He

graciously took the entire matter into His own hands. He made it, altogether, a question between Himself and the serpent; for although the man and the woman were called upon, individually, to reap, in various ways, the bitter fruits of their sin, yet it was to the serpent that the Lord God said, "Because thou hast done this." The serpent was the source of the ruin; and the seed of the woman was to be the source of the redemption. Adam heard all this, and believed it; and, in the power of that belief, "he called his wife's name the mother of *all living*. This was a precious fruit of faith in God's recreation. Looking at the matter from nature's point of view, Eve might be mother called, "the mother of all *dying*." But, in the judgement of faith, she was the mother of all *living*. "His mother called him Benoni; (the son of my sorrow;) but his father called him Benjamin (the son of my right hand)."

It was through the sustaining energy of faith that Adam was enabled to endure the terrible results of what he had done. It was God's wondrous mercy to allow him to hear what He said to the serpent, before he was called to listen to what He had to say to himself. Had it not been so, he must have been plunged in despair. It is despair to be called upon to look at myself, without being able to look at God, as revealed in the cross, for my salvation. There is no child of fallen Adam who could bear to have his eyes opened to the reality of what he is, and what he has done, without being plunged in despair, unless he could take refuge in the cross. Hence, in that place to which all who reject Christ must finally be consigned, hope cannot come. There, men's eyes will be opened to the reality of what they are, and what they have done; but they will not be able to find relief and refuge in God. What God is, will, then, involve hopeless perdition; as truly as what God is, doth, now, involve eternal salvation. The holiness of God will, then, be eternally against them; as it is now that in which all who believe are called to rejoice. The more I realise the holiness of God, now, the more I know my security; but, in the case of the lost, that very holiness will be but the ratification of their eternal doom. Solemn — unspeakably solemn — reflection!

We shall, now, briefly glance at the truth presented to us in God's providing a coats for Adam and Eve. "Unto Adam, also, and

to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." We have here, in figure, the great doctrine of divine righteousness set forth. The robe which God provided was an effectual covering, because He provided it just as the apron was an ineffectual covering, because man had provided it. Moreover, God's coat was founded upon blood-shedding. Adam's apron was not. So also, now God's righteousness is set forth in the cross; man's righteousness is set forth in the works, the sin-stained works of his own hands. When Adam stood clothed in the coat of skin he could not say, "I was naked," nor had he any occasion to hide himself. The sinner may feel perfectly at rest, when, by faith, he knows that God has clothed him: but to feel at rest till then, can only be the result of presumption or ignorance. To know that the dress I wear, and in which I appear before? God, is of His own providing, must set my heart at perfect rest. There can be no true, permanent rest in ought else.

The closing verses of this chapter are full of instruction. Fallen man, in his fallen state, must not be allowed to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, for that would entail upon him endless wretchedness in this world. To take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever, in our present condition, would be unmingled misery. The tree of life can only be tasted in resurrection. To live for ever, in a frail tabernacle, in a body of sin and death, would be intolerable. Wherefore, the Lord God "drove out the man." He drove him out into a world which, everywhere, exhibited the lamentable results of his fall. The Cherubim and the flaming sword, too, forbid fallen man to pluck the fruit of the tree of life; while God's revelation pointed him to the death and resurrection of the seed of the woman, as that wherein life was to be found beyond the power of death.

Thus Adam was a happier and a safer man, outside the bounds of Paradise, than he had been within, for this reason — that, within, his life depended upon himself whereas, outside, it depended upon another, even a promised Christ. And as he looked up, and beheld "the Cherubim and the flaming sword," he could bless the hand that had set them there, "to keep the way of the tree of life," inasmuch as the same hand had opened a better, a safer, and a happier way to that tree. If the Cherubim and flaming sword stopped up the way to

Paradise, the Lord Jesus Christ has opened "a new and living way" into the holiest of all. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Compare John 14: 6; Heb. 10: 20.) In the knowledge of this, the believer now moves onward through a world which is under the curse — where the traces of sin are visible on all hands. He has found his way, by faith, to the bosom of the Father; and while he can secretly repose there, he is cheered by the blessed assurance that the one who has conducted him thither, is gone to prepare a place in the many mansions of the Father's house, and that he will soon come again and receive him unto Himself, amid the glory of the Father's kingdom. Thus, in the bosom, the house, and the kingdom of the Father, the believer finds his present portion, his future home and reward.

Genesis 4 - 5

As each section of the Book of Genesis opens before us, we are furnished with fresh evidence of the fact that we are travelling over, what a recent writer has well termed, "the seed-plot of the whole Bible;" and not only so, but the seed-plot of man's entire history.

Thus, in the fourth chapter, we have, in the persons of Cain and Abel, the first examples of a religious man of the world, and of a genuine man of faith. Born, as they were, outside of Eden, and being the sons of fallen Adam, they could have nothing, natural, to distinguish them, one from the other. They were both sinners. Both had a fallen nature. Neither was innocent. It is well to be clear in reference to this, in order that the reality of divine grace, and the integrity of faith, may be fully and distinctly seen. If the distinction between Cain and Abel were founded in nature, then it follows, as an inevitable conclusion, that they were not the partakers of the fallen nature of their father, nor the participators in the circumstances of his fall; and, hence, there could be no room for the display of grace, and the exercise of faith.

Some would teach us that every man is born with qualities and capacities which, if rightly used, will enable him to work his way back to God. This is a plain denial of the fact so clearly set forth in the history now before us. Cain and Abel were born, not inside, but outside of Paradise. They were the sons, not of innocent, but of fallen Adam. They came into the world as the partakers of the nature of their father; and it mattered not in what ways that nature might display itself, it was nature still — fallen, ruined, irremediable nature. "That which is born of the flesh is (not merely fleshly, but) flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is, (not merely spiritual, but) spirit." (John 3)

If ever there was a fair opportunity for the distinctive qualities, capacities, resources, and tendencies of nature to manifest themselves, the lifetime of Cain and Abel furnished it. If there were ought in nature, whereby it could recover its lost innocence, and establish itself again within the bounds of Eden, this was the moment for its display. But there was nothing of kind. They were both lost. They were "flesh. They were not innocent. Adam lost his

innocence and never regained it. He can only be looked at as the head of a fallen race, who, by his "disobedience," were made "sinners." (Rom. 5: 19) He became, so far as he was personally concerned, the corrupt source, from whence have emanated the corrupt streams of ruined and guilty humanity — the dead trunk from which have shot forth the branches of a dead humanity, morally and spiritually dead.

True, as we have already remarked, he himself was made a subject of grace, and the possessor and exhibitor of a lively faith in a promised Saviour; but this was not anything natural, but something entirely divine. And, inasmuch as it was not natural, neither was it within the range of nature's capacity to communicate it. It was not, by any means, hereditary. Adam could not bequeath nor impart his faith to Cain or Abel. His possession thereof was simply the fruit of love divine. It was implanted in his soul by divine power; and he had not divine power to communicate it to another. Whatever was natural Adam could, in the way of nature, communicate; but nothing more. And seeing that he, as a father, was in a condition of ruin, his son could only be in the same. As is the begetter, so are they also that are begotten of him. They must, of necessity, partake of the nature of him from whom they have sprung. "as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy." (1 Cor. 15: 48)

Nothing can be more important, in its way, than a correct understanding of the doctrine of federal headship. If my reader will turn, for a moment, to Rom. 5: 12-21, he will find that the inspired apostle looks at the whole human race as comprehended under two heads. I do not attempt to dwell on the passage; but merely refer to it, in connection with the subject in hand. The fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians will also furnish instruction of a similar character. In the first man, we have sin, disobedience, and death. In The Second man, we have righteousness, obedience, and life. As we derive a nature from the former, so do we also from the latter. No doubt, each nature will display, in each specific case, its own peculiar energies; it will manifest in each individual possessor thereof, its own peculiar powers. Still, there is the absolute possession of a real, abstract, positive nature.

Now, as the mode in which we derive a nature from the first man is by birth, so the mode in which we derive a nature from the Second man is by *new* birth. Being born, we partake of the nature of the former; being "born *again*," we partake of the nature of the latter. A newly born infant, though entirely incapable of performing the act which reduced Adam to the condition of a fallen being, is, nevertheless, a partaker of his nature; and so, also, a newly born child of God — a newly regenerated soul, though having nothing whatever to do with the working out of the perfect obedience of "the man Christ Jesus," is, nevertheless, a partaker of His nature. True it is that, attached to the former nature, there is sin; and attached to the latter, there is righteousness. man's sin, in the former case; God's righteousness in the latter: yet, all the while, there is actual, *bona fide* participation of a real nature, let the adjuncts be what they may. The child of Adam partakes of the human nature and its adjuncts; the child of God partakes of the divine nature and its adjuncts. The former nature is according to "the will of man," (John 1) the latter is according to "the will of God;" as St. James, by the Holy Ghost, teaches us, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, (James 1: 18)

From all that has been said, it follows, that Abel was not distinguished from his brother Cain by anything natural. The distinction between them was not grounded upon ought in their nature or circumstances, for, as to these, "there was no difference." What, therefore, made the vast difference? The answer is as simple as the gospel of the grace of God can make it. The difference was not in themselves, in their nature, or their circumstances; it lay, *entirely*, in their *sacrifices*. This makes the matter most simple, for any truly convicted sinner — for any one who truly feels that he not only partakes of a fallen nature, but is himself, also, a sinner. The history of Abel opens, to such an one, the only true ground of his approach to, his standing before, and his relationship with, God. It teaches him, distinctly, that he cannot come to God on the ground of anything in, of, or pertaining to, nature; and he must seek, *outside himself*, and in the person and work of another, the true and everlasting basis of his connection with the Holy, the Just, and only True God. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews sets the whole subject before us, in the most distinct and comprehensive way. "By faith

Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice (*pleiona thusian*) than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God bearing witness (*parturountos*) to his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Here we are taught that it was, in no wise, a question as to the men, but only as to their "Sacrifice" — it was not a question as to the offerer, but as to his offering. Here lay the grand distinction between Cain and Abel. My reader cannot be too simple in his apprehension of this point, for therein lies involved the truth as to any sinner's standing before God.

And, now, let us enquire what the offerings were. "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fruit thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering, he had not respect." (Gen. 4: 3-5) This sets the difference clearly before us: Cain offered Jehovah the fruit of a cursed earth, and that, moreover, without any blood to remove the curse. He presented "An unbloody sacrifice," simply because he had no faith. Had he possessed that divine principle, it would have taught him, even at this early moment, that "Without shedding of blood, there is no remission." (Heb 9) This is a great cardinal truth. The penalty of sin is death. Cain was a sinner, and, as such, death stood between him and Jehovah. But, in his offering, there was no recognition whatever of this fact. There was no presentation of a sacrificed life, to meet the claims of divine holiness, or to answer to his own true condition as a sinner. He treated Jehovah as though He were, altogether, such an one as himself, who could accept the sin-stained fruit of a cursed earth.

All this, and much more, lay involved in Cain's "unbloody sacrifice." He displayed entire ignorance, in reference to divine requirements, in reference to his own character and condition, as a lost and guilty sinner, and in reference to the true state of that ground, the fruit of which he presumed to offer. No doubt, reason might say, "what more acceptable offering could a man present, than that which he had produced by the labour of his hands, and the sweat of his brow?" Reason, and even man's religious mind, may think thus; but God thinks quite differently; and faith is always sure

to agree with God's thoughts. God teaches, so faith believes, that there must be a sacrificed life, else there can be no approach to God.

Thus, when we look at the ministry of the Lord Jesus, we see, at once, that, had He not died upon the cross, all His services would have proved utterly unavailing as regards the establishment of our relationship with God. True, "He went about doing good" all His life; but it was His death that rent the veil. (Matt. 27: 61) Nought but His death could have done so. Had he continued, to the present moment, "going about doing good," the veil would have remained entire, to bar the worshipper's approach into "the holiest of all." Hence we can see the false ground on which Cain stood as an offerer and a worshipper. An unpardoned sinner coming into the presence of Jehovah, to present "an unbloody sacrifice," could only be regarded as guilty of the highest degree of presumption. True, he had toiled to produce his offering; but what of that? Could a sinner's toil remove the curse and stain of sin? Could it satisfy the claims of an infinitely holy God! Could it furnish a proper ground of acceptance for a sinner? Could it set aside the penalty which was due to sin? Could it rob death of its sting, or the grave of its victory? Could it do any or all of these things? Impossible. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Cain's "unbloody sacrifice," like every other unbloody sacrifice, was not only worthless, but actually abominable, in the divine estimation. It not only demonstrated his entire ignorance of his own condition, but also of the divine character. "God is not worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything." And yet Cain thought he could be thus approached. And every mere religionist thinks the same. Cain has had many millions of followers, from age to age. Cain-worship has abounded all over the world. It is the worship of every unconverted son, and is maintained by every false system of religion under the sun.

Man would fain make God a receiver instead of a giver; but this cannot be; for, "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" and, assuredly, God must have the more blessed place. "Without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better." "Who hath *first* given to him?" God can accept the smallest gift from a heart which has learnt the deep truth contained in those words, "Of thine own have

we given thee;" but, the moment a man presumes to take the place of the "first" giver, God's reply is, "if I were hungry, I would not tell thee;" for "He is not worshipped with men's hands, as though he *needed anything*, seeing he *giveth* to *all* "life and breath and *all* things." The great Giver of "all things" cannot possibly "need anything." Praise is all that we can offer to God; but this can only offered in the full and clear intelligence that our sins are all put away; and this again can only be known by faith in the virtue of an accomplished atonement.

My reader may pause, here, and read prayerfully the following scriptures, namely, Psalm 1; Isaiah 1: 11-18; Acts 17: 22-34, in all of which he will find distinctly laid down the truth as to man's true position before God, as also the proper ground of worship.

Let us now consider Abel's sacrifice. "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." In other words, he entered, by faith, into the glorious truth, that God could be approached by sacrifice; that there was such a thing as a sinner's placing the death of another between himself and the consequence of his sin, that the claims of God's nature and the attributes of His character could be met by the blood of a spotless victim — a victim offered to meet God's demands, and the sinner's deep necessities. This is, in short, the doctrine of the cross, in which alone the conscience of a sinner can find repose, because, therein, God is fully glorified.

Every divinely convicted sinner must feel that death and judgement are before him, as "the due reward of his deeds;" nor can he, by ought that he can accomplish, alter that destiny. He may toil and labour; he may, by the sweat of his brow, produce an offering; he may make vows and resolutions; he may alter his way of life; he may reform his outward character; he may be temperate, moral, upright, and, in the human acceptance of the word, religious; he may, though entirely destitute of faith, read, pray, and hear sermons. In short, he may do anything, or everything which lies within the range of human competency; but, notwithstanding all, "death and judgement" are before him. He has not been able to disperse those two heavy clouds which have gathered upon the horizon. There they stand; and, so far from being able to remove them, by all his doings,

he can only live in the gloomy anticipation of the moment. Then they shall burst upon his guilty head. It is impossible for a sinner, by his own works, to place himself in life and triumph, at the other side of "death and judgement — yea, his very works are only performed for the purpose of preparing him, if possible, for those dreaded realities.

Here, however, is exactly where the cross comes in. In that cross, the convicted sinner can behold a divine provision for all his guilt and all his need. There, too, he can see death and judgement entirely removed from the scene, and life and glory set in their stead. Christ has cleared the prospect of death and judgement, so far as the true believer is concerned, and filled it with life, righteousness, and glory. "He hath abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light, through the gospel." (2 Tim. 1: 10) He has glorified God in the putting away of that which would have separated us for ever, from His holy and blissful presence. "He has put away sin," and, hence it is gone. (Heb. 9: 26) all this is, in type, set forth in Abel's "more excellent sacrifice." There was no attempt, on Abel's part, to set aside the truth as to his own condition, and proper place as a guilty sinner — no attempt to turn aside the edge of the flaming sword, and force his way back to the tree of life — no presumptuous offering of an unbloody sacrifice" — no presentation of the fruit of a cursed earth to Jehovah — he took the real ground of a sinner, and, as such, set the death of a victim between him and his sins, and between his sins and the holiness a sin-hating God. This was most simple. Abel deserved death and judgement, but he found a substitute.

This is it with every poor, helpless, self-condemned, conscience-smitten sinner. Christ is his substitute, his ransom, his most excellent sacrifice, his ALL. Such an one will feel, like Abel, that the fruit of the ground could never avail for him; that were he to present to God the fairest fruits of earth, he would still have a sin-stained conscience, inasmuch as "without shedding of blood is no remission." The richest fruits, and the most fragrant flowers, in the greatest profusion, could not remove a single stain from the conscience. Nothing but the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God can give ease to the heart and conscience. All who by faith lay hold of that divine reality, will enjoy a peace which the world can neither

give nor take away. It is faith which puts the soul in present possession of this peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5: 1) "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

It is not a question of feeling, as so many would make it. It is entirely a question of faith in an accomplished fact, faith wrought in the soul of a sinner, by the power of the Holy Ghost. This faith is something quite different from a mere feeling of the heart, or an assent of the intellect. Feeling is not faith. Intellectual assent is not faith. Some would make faith to be the mere assent of the intellect to a certain proposition. This is fearfully false. It makes the question of faith human, whereas it is really divine. It reduces it to the level of man, whereas it really comes from God. Faith is not a thing of today or tomorrow. It is an imperishable principle, emanating from an eternal source, even God Himself; it lays hold of God's truth, and sets the soul in God's presence.

Mere feeling and sentimentality can never rise above the source from whence they emanate; and that source in self; but faith has to do with God and His eternal word, and is a living link, connecting the heart that possesses it with God who gives it. Human feelings, however intense; human sentiments, however refined, could not connect the soul with God. They are neither divine nor eternal, but are human and evanescent. They are like Jonah's gourd, which sprang up in a night, and perished in a night. Not so faith. That precious principle partakes of all the value, all the power, and all the reality of the source from whence it emanates, and the object with which it has to do. It justifies the soul; (Rom. 5: 1) it purifies the heart; (Acts 15: 9) it works by love; (Gal. 5: 6) it overcomes the world. (1 John 5: 4) Feeling and sentiment never could accomplish such results; they belong to nature and to earth, faith belongs to God and to heaven; they are occupied with self, faith is occupied with Christ; they look inward and downward, faith looks outward and upward; they leave the soul in darkness and doubt, faith leads it into light and peace; they have to do with one's own fluctuating condition, faith has to do with God's immutable truth, and Christ's eternally enduring sacrifice.

No doubt, faith will produce feelings and sentiments spiritual feelings and truthful sentiments — but the fruits of faith must never be confounded with faith "itself. I am not justified by feelings, nor yet by faith feelings, but simply by faith. And why? Because faith believes God when He speaks; it takes Him at His word; it apprehends Him as He has revealed Himself in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is life, righteousness, and peace. To apprehend God as He is, is the sum of all present and eternal blessedness. When the soul finds out God, it has found out all it can possibly need, here or hereafter; but He can only be known by His own revelation, and by the faith which He Himself imparts, and which, moreover, always sees divine revelation as its proper object.

Thus, then, we can, in some measure, enter into the meaning and power of the statement, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Cain had no faith, and, therefore, he offered an unbloody sacrifice. Abel had faith, and, therefore, he offered both "blood, and fat," which, in type, set forth the presentation of the life, and also the inherent excellency of the Person of Christ. "The blood," set forth the former; "the fat," shadowed forth the latter. Both blood and fat were forbidden to be eaten, under the Mosaic economy. The blood is the life; and man, under law, had no title to life. But, in the sixth of John, we are taught, that unless we eat blood, we have no life in us. Christ is the life. There is not a spark of life outside of Him. ALL out of Christ is death. "In him was life," and in none else.

Now, He gave up His life on the cross; and, to that life, sin was, by imputation, attached, when the blessed One was nailed to the cursed tree. Hence, in giving up His life, He gave up, also, the sin attached thereto, so that it is, effectually, put away, having been left in His grave from which He rose triumphant, in the power of a new life, to which righteousness as distinctly attaches itself, us did sin to that life which He gave up on the cross. This will help us to an understanding of an expression used by our blessed Lord, after His resurrection, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see we have." He did not say, "flesh and blood;" because, in resurrection, He had not assumed, into His sacred person, the blood which He had shed out upon the cross, as an atonement for sin. "The life of the flesh is

in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood which maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. 17: 11) Close attention to this point will have the effect of deepening, in our souls, the sense of the completeness of the putting away of sin, by the death of Christ; and we know that whatever tends to deepen our sense of that glorious reality, must, necessarily, tend to the fuller establishment of our peace, and to the more effectual promotion of the glory of Christ, as connected with our testimony and service.

We have, already, referred to a point of much interest and value, in the history of Cain and Abel, and that is, the entire identification of each with the offering which he presented. My reader cannot possibly bestow too much attention upon this. The question, in each case, was not as to the person of the offerer; but, entirely, as to the character of his offering. Hence, of Abel we read that "God testified of his gifts." He did not bear witness to Abel, but to Abel's sacrifice; and this fixes, distinctly, the proper ground of a believer's peace and acceptance before God.

There is a, constant tendency, in the heart, to ground our peace and acceptance upon something in or about ourselves even though we admit that that something is wrought by the Holy Ghost. Hence arises the constant looking *in*, when the Holy Ghost would ever have us looking *out*. The question for every believer is not, "what am I" but, "what is Christ?" Having come to God "in the name of Jesus," he is wholly identified with Him, and accepted in His name, and, moreover, can no more be rejected than the One in whose name he has come. Before ever a question can be raised as to the feeblest believer, it must be raised as to Christ Himself. But this latter is clearly impossible, and thus the security of the believer is established upon a foundation which nothing can possibly move. Being in himself a poor worthless sinner, he has come in the name of Christ, he is identified with Christ, accepted in and as Christ, bound up in the same bundle of life with Christ. God testifies, not of him, but of his gift, and his gift is Christ. ALL this is most tranquillising and consolatory. It is our happy privilege to be able, in the confidence of faith, to refer every objection, and every objector, to Christ, and His finished atonement. ALL our springs are in Him.

In Him we boast all the day long. Our confidence is not in ourselves, but in Him who hath wrought everything for us. We hang on His name, trust in His work, gaze on His Person, and wait for His coming.

But the carnal mind, at once, displays its enmity against all this truth which so gladdens and satisfies the heart of a believer. Thus it was with Cain. "He was very wroth, and his countenance fell." That which filled Abel with peace, filled Cain with wrath. Cain in unbelief, despised the only way in which a sinner could come to God. He refused to offer blood, without which there can be no remission; and, then, because *he* was not received, *in his sins*, and because Abel was accepted, *in his gift*, "he was wroth, and his countenance fell." And yet, how else could it be? He should either be received with his sins, or without them; but God could not receive him with them, and he would not bring the blood which alone maketh atonement; and, therefore, he was rejected, and, being rejected, he manifests in his ways, the fruits of corrupt religion. He persecutes and murders the true witness — the accepted, justified man — the man of faith; and, in so doing, he stands as the model and forerunner of all false religionists, in every age. At all times, and in all places, men have shown themselves more ready to persecute on religious grounds, than on any other. This is Cain-like. Justification — full, perfect, unqualified justification, by faith only, makes God everything, and man nothing: and man does not like this; it causes his countenance to fall, and draws out his anger. Not that he can give any reason for his anger; for it is not, as we have seen, a question of man at all, but only of the ground on which he appears before God. Had Abel been accepted on the ground of ought in himself, then, indeed, Cain's wrath, and his fallen countenance, would have had some just foundation; but, inasmuch as he was accepted, exclusively, on the ground of his offering; and, inasmuch as it was not to him, but to his gift, that Jehovah bore testimony, his wrath was entirely without any proper basis. This is brought out in Jehovah's word to Cain: "If thou doest well, (or, as the LXX reads it, if thou offer correctly, (*orthos prosenegkes*) shalt thou not be accepted?" The well-doing had reference to the offering. Abel did well by hiding himself behind an acceptable sacrifice. Cain did

badly by bringing an offering without blood; and all his after-conduct was but the legitimate result of his false worship.

"And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." Thus has it ever been; the Cains have persecuted and murdered the Abels. At all times, man and his religion are the same; faith and its religion are the same: and wherever they have met, there has been conflict.

However, it is well to see that Cain's act of murder was the true consequence — the proper fruit — of his false worship. His foundation was bad, and the superstructure erected thereon was also bad. Nor did he stop at the act of murder; but having heard the judgement of God thereon, despairing of forgiveness through ignorance of God, he went forth from His blessed presence, and built a city, and had in his family the cultivators of the useful and ornamental sciences—agriculturists, musicians, and workers in metals. Through ignorance of the divine character, he pronounced his sin too great to be pardoned.* It was not that he really knew his sin, but that he knew not God. He fully exhibited the terrible fruit of the fall in the very thought of God to which he gave utterance. He did not want pardon, because he did not want God. He had no true sense of his own condition; no aspirations after God; no intelligence as to the ground of a sinner's approach to God. He was radically corrupt — fundamentally wrong; and all he wanted was to get out of the presence of God, and lose himself in the world and its pursuits. He thought he could live very well without God, and he therefore set about decorating the world as well as he could, for the purpose of making it a respectable place, and himself a respectable man therein, though in God's view it was under the curse, and he was a fugitive and a vagabond.

{*The word used by Cain occurs in Ps. 32: 1 whose transgression is *forgiven*. The LXX renders it by *aphethenai*, to be remitted.}

Such was "*the way of Cain*" in which way millions are, at this moment, rushing on. Such persons are not, by any means, divested of the religious element in their character. They would like to offer

something to God; to do something for Him. They deem it right to present to Him the results of their own toil. They are ignorant of themselves, ignorant of God; but with all this there is the diligent effort to improve the world; to make life agreeable in various ways; to deck the scene with the fairest colours. God's remedy to *cleanse* is rejected, and man's effort to *improve* is put in its place. This is "the way of Cain." (Jude 11)

And, my reader, you have only to look around you to see how this "WAY is prevailing at the present moment. Though the world is stained with the blood of "a greater than" Abel, even with the blood of Christ; yet see what an agreeable place man seeks to make of it. As in Cain's day, the grateful sounds of "the harp and organ," no doubt, completely drowned, to man's ear, the cry of Abel's blood; so now, man's ear is filled with other sounds than those which issue from Calvary; and his eye filled with other objects than a crucified Christ. The resources of his genius, too, are put forth to render this world a hot-house, in which are produced, in their rarest form, all the fruits for which nature so eagerly longs. And not merely are the real wants of man, as a creature, supplied, but the inventive genius of the human mind has been set to work for the purpose of devising things, which, the moment the eye sees, the heart desires, and not only desires, but imagines that life would be intolerable without them. Thus, for instance, some years ago, people were content to devote three or four days to the accomplishing of a journey of one hundred miles; but now they can accomplish it in three or four hours; and not only so, but they will complain sadly if they happen to be five or ten minutes late. In fact, man must be saved the trouble of living. He must travel without fatigue, and he must hear news without having to exercise patience for it. He will lay iron rails across the earth, and electric wires beneath the sea, as if to anticipate, in his own way, that bright and blissful age, when "there shall be no more sea."*

{*True, the Lord is using all those things for the furtherance of His own gracious ends; and the Lord's servant can freely use them also; but this does not hinder our seeing the spirit which originates and characterises them.}

In addition to all this, there is abundance of religion, so called; but, alas charity itself is compelled to harbour the apprehension, that very much of what passes for religion is but a screw in the vast machine, which has been constructed for man's convenience, and man's exaltation. Man would not be without religion. It would not be respectable; and, therefore, he is content to devote one-seventh of his time to religion; or, as he thinks and professes, to his eternal interests; and then he has six-sevenths to devote to his temporal interests; but whether he works for time or eternity, it is for *himself*, in reality. such is "the way of Cain." Let my reader ponder it well. Let him see where this way begins, whither it tends, and where it terminates.

How different the way of the man of faith! Abel felt and owned the curse; he saw the stain of sin, and, in the holy energy of faith, offered that which met it, and met it thoroughly — met it divinely. He sought and found a refuge in God Himself; and instead of building a city on the earth, he found but a grave in its bosom. The earth, which on its surface displayed the genius and energy of Cain and his family, was stained underneath with the blood of a righteous man. Let the man of the world remember this; let the man of God remember it; let the worldly-minded Christian remember it. The earth which we tread upon is stained by the blood of the Son of God. The very blood which justifies the Church condemns the world. The dark shadow of the cross of Jesus may be seen by the eye of faith, looming over all the glitter and glare of this evanescent world. "The fashion of this world passeth away." It will soon all be over, so far as the present scene is concerned. "The way of Cain" will be followed by "the error of Balaam," in its consummated form; and then will come "the gainsaying of Core;" and what then "The pit" will open its mouth to receive the wicked, and close it again, to shut them up in "blackness of darkness for ever." (Jude 13)

In full confirmation of the foregoing lines, we may run the eye over the contents of Chapter 5 and find therein the illuminating record of man's weakness, and subjection to the rule of death. He might live for hundreds of years, and "beget sons and daughters;" but, at last, it must be recorded that "*he died*." "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." "It is appointed unto men once to die." Man

cannot get over this. He cannot, by steam, or electricity, or anything else within the range of his genius, disarm death of its terrible sting. He cannot, by his energy, set aside the sentence of *death*, although he may produce the comforts and luxuries of *life*.

But whence came this strange and dreaded thing, death? Paul gives us the answer: "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*." (Rom. 5: 12) Here we have the origin of death. It came by sin. Sin snapped asunder the link which bound the creature to the living God; and, that being done, he was handed over to the dominion of death, which dominion he had no power whatever to shake off. And this, be it observed, is one of the many proofs of the fact of man's total inability to meet God. There can be no fellowship between God and man, save in the power of life; but man is under the power of death; hence, on natural grounds, there can be no fellowship. Life, can have no fellowship with death, no more than light with darkness, or holiness with sin. Man must meet God on an entirely new ground, and on a new principle, even faith; and this faith enables him to recognise his own position, as "sold under sin," and, therefore, subject to death; while, at the same time, it enables him to apprehend God's character, as the dispenser of a new life — life beyond the power of death — a life which can never be touched by the enemy, nor forfeited by us.

This it is which marks the security of the believer's life — a risen, glorified Christ — a Christ victorious over everything that could be against us. Adams life was founded upon his own obedience; when he disobeyed, life was forfeited. But Christ, having life in Himself, came down into this world and fully met all the circumstances of man's sin, in ever possible form; and, by submitting to death, destroyed him who had the power thereof, and, in resurrection, becomes the life and righteousness of all who believe in His most excellent name.

Now, it is impossible that Satan can touch this life, either in its source, its channel, its power, heaven its sphere, or its duration. God is its source; a risen Christ, its channel, The Holy Ghost, its power; heaven, its sphere; and eternity its duration. Hence, therefore, as might to one possessing this wondrous life, the whole scene is changed; and while, in one sense, it must be said, "in the midst of

life we are in death," yet, in another sense it can be said, "in the midst of death we are in life". There is no death in the sphere into which a risen Christ introduces His people. How could there be? Has not he abolished it? It cannot be an abolished and an existing thing at the same time, and to the same people; but God's word tells us it is abolished. -Christ emptied the scene of death, and filled it with life and, therefore, it is not death, but glory that lies before the believer, death is behind him for ever. As to the future, it is all glory, cloudless glory. True, it may be his lot to "fall asleep" — to "sleep in Jesus" — but that is not death, but "life in earnest." The mere matter of departing to be with Christ cannot alter the specific hope of the believer, which is to meet Christ in the air, to be with Him, and like Him, for ever.

Of this we have a very beautiful exemplification in Enoch, who forms the only exception to the rule of Gen. 5. The rule is, "he died;" the exception is, "he should not see death." "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb. 11: 5.) Enoch was "the seventh from Adam;" and it is deeply interesting to find, that death was not suffered to triumph over "the seventh;" but that, in his case, God interfered, and made him a trophy of His own glorious victory over all the power of death. The heart rejoices, after reading, six times, the sad record, "he died," to find, that the seventh did not die; and when we ask, how was this? the answer is, "by faith." Enoch lived in the faith of his translation, and walked with God three hundred years. This separated him, practically, from all around. To walk with God must, necessarily, put one outside the sphere of this world's thoughts. Enoch realised this; for, in his day, the spirit of the world was manifested; and then, too, as now, it was opposed to all that was of God. The man of faith felt he had nought to do with the world, save to be a patient witness, therein, of the grace of God, and of coming judgement. The sons of Cain might spend their energies in the vain attempt to improve a cursed world, but Enoch found a better world and lived in the power of it.* His faith was not given him to improve the world, but to walk with God.

{*It is very evident, that Enoch knew nothing whatever about of "making the best of both worlds." To him there was but one world. Thus it should be with us}

And, oh! how much is involved in these three words, "walked with God!" What separation and self-denial! what holiness and moral purity! what grace and gentleness what humility and tenderness! and yet, what zeal energy? What patience and long-suffering! and yet what faithfulness and uncompromising decision! To walk with God comprehends everything within the range of the divine life, whether active or passive. It involves the knowledge of God's character as He has revealed it. It involves, too, the intelligence of the relationship in which we stand to Him. It is not a mere living by rules and regulations! nor laying down plans of action; nor in resolutions to go hither and thither to do this or that. To walk with God is far more than any or all of these things. Moreover, it will sometimes carry us right athwart the thoughts of men, even of our brethren, if they are not themselves walking with God. It may, sometimes, bring against us the charge of doing too much; at other times, of doing too little; but the faith that enables one to "walk with God," enables him also to attach the proper value thoughts of man.

Thus we have, in Abel and Enoch, most valuable instruction as to the sacrifice on which faith rests; and, as to the prospect which hope now anticipates; while, at the same time, "the walk with God" takes in all the details of actual life which lie between those two points. Lord will give grace and glory;" and between the grace that has been, and the glory that is to be, revealed, there is the happy assurance, that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Psalm 84: 11)

It, has been remarked, that "the cross and the coming of the Lord form the termini of the Church's existence on earth," and these termini are prefigured in the sacrifice of Abel, and the translation of Enoch. The Church knows her entire justification through the death and resurrection of Christ, and she waits for the day, when He shall come and receive her to Himself. She, "through the Spirit, waits for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Gal. 5: 5) She does not wait for righteousness, inasmuch as she, by grace, has that already; but she

waits for the hope which properly belongs to the condition into which she has been introduced.

My reader should seek to be clear as to this. Some expositors of prophetic truth, from not seeing the Church's specific place, portion, and hope, have made sad mistakes. They have, in effect, cast so many dark clouds and thick mists around "the bright and morning star," which is the proper hope of the Church, that many saints, at the present moment, seem unable to rise above the hope of the God-fearing remnant of Israel, which is to see "the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4) Nor is this all. Very many have been deprived of the moral power of the hope of Christ's appearing, by being taught to look for various events and circumstances previous to the moment of His manifestation to the Church. The restoration of the Jews, the development of Nebuchadnezzar's image, the revelation of the man of sin — all these things, it is maintained, must take place ere Christ comes. That this is not true, might be proved from numerous passages of New Testament scripture, were this the fitting place to adduce them.

The Church, like Enoch, will be taken away from the evil around, and the evil to come. Enoch was not left to see the world's evil rise to a head, and the judgement of God poured forth upon it. He saw not the fountains of the great deep broken up, nor "the windows of heaven opened." He was taken away before any of these things occurred; and he stands before eye of faith as a beautiful figure of those, "who shall not all sleep, but shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye." (1 Cor. 15: 51, 52) Translation, not death, was the hope of Enoch; and, as to the Church's hope, it is thus briefly expressed by the apostle, "To wait for the Son from heaven." (Thess. 1: 10) This, the simplest and most unlettered Christian can understand and enjoy. Its power, too, can, in some measure, be experienced and manifested. He may not be able to study prophecy very deeply, but he can, blessed be God, taste the blessedness, the reality, the comfort, the power, the elevating and separating virtue of that celestial hope, which properly belongs to him as a member of that heavenly body, the Church; which hope is not merely to see "the Sun of Righteousness" how blessed soever that may be in its place, but to see "the bright and morning star."

(Rev. 2: 28.) And as in the natural world, the morning star is seen, by those who watch for it, before the sun rises, so Christ, as the morning star, will be seen by the Church, before the remnant of Israel can behold the beams of the Sun.

Genesis 6 - 9

We have, now, arrived at a deeply-important and strongly-marked division of our book. Enoch has passed off the scene. His walk, as a stranger on earth, has terminated in his translation to heaven. He was taken away before human evil had risen to a head, and, therefore, before the divine judgement had been poured out. How little influence his course and translation had upon the world, is manifest from the first two verses of chapter 6. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

The mingling of that which is of God with that which is of man, is a special form of evil, and a very effectual engine, in Satan's hand, for marring the testimony of Christ on the earth. This mingling may frequently wear the appearance of something very desirable; it may often look like a wider promulgation of that which is of God — a fuller and a more vigorous outgoing of a divine influence — a something to be rejoiced in rather than to be deplored: but our judgement as to this will depend entirely upon the point of view from which it is contemplated. If we look at it in the light of God's presence, we cannot possibly imagine, that an advantage is gained when the people of God mingle themselves with the children of this world; or when the truth of God is corrupted by human admixture. Such is not the divine method of promulgating truth, advancing the interests of those, who ought to occupy the place of witnesses for Him on the earth. Separation from all evil is God's principle; and this principle can never be infringed without serious damage to the truth.

In the narrative now before us, we see that the union of the sons of God with the daughters of men led to the most disastrous consequences. True, the fruit of that union seemed exceedingly fair, in man's judgement, as we read, "the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown;" yet, God's judgement was quite different. He seeth not as man seeth. His thoughts are not as ours. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

continually." Such was man's condition before God — "evil *only*" — "evil continually." So much for the mingling of the holy with the profane. Thus it must ever be. If the holy seed will not maintain its purity, all must be forfeited as regards testimony on the earth. Satan's first effort was to frustrate God's purpose by putting the holy seed to death, and when that failed; he sought to gain his end by corrupting it.

Now it is of the deepest moment, that my reader should clearly understand the aim, the character, and the result of this union between "the sons of God" and the daughters of men. There is great danger, at the present day of compromising truth for the sake of union. This should be carefully guarded against. There can be no union attained at the expense of truth. The true Christian's motto should ever be — "maintain truth at all cost; if union can be promoted in this way, so much the better, but maintain the truth." The principle of expediency, on the contrary may be thus enunciated, — "promote union at all cost; if truth can be maintained as well, so much the better, but promote union." This latter principle can only be carried out at the expense of all that is divine in the way of testimony.* There can, evidently, be no true testimony where truth is forfeited; and hence, in the case of the antediluvian world, we see that the unhallowed union between the holy and the profane—between that which was divine and that which was human, only had the effect of bringing the evil to a head, and then God's judgement was poured out.

{*We should ever bear in mind, that "the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable." (James 3: 17) The wisdom which is from beneath would put "peaceable" first, and, therefore, it can never be pure.}

"The Lord said, I will destroy man." Nothing less would do. There must be the entire destruction of that which had corrupted God's way on the earth. "The mighty men, and men of renown," must all be swept away, without distinction. "all flesh" must be set aside, as utterly unfit for God. "The end of all flesh is come before me." It was not merely the end of some flesh; no, it was all corrupt, in the sight of Jehovah — all irrecoverably bad. It had been tried,

and found wanting; and the Lord announces His remedy to Noah in these words, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood."

Thus was Noah put in possession of God's thoughts about the scene around him. The effect of the word of God was to lay bare the roots of all that which man's eye might rest upon with complacency and pride. The human heart might swell with pride, and the bosom heave with emotion, as the eye ran down along the brilliant ranks of men of art, men of skill, "men of might" "men of renown." The sound of the harp and the organ might send a thrill through the whole soul, while at the same time, the ground was cultivated, and man's necessities were provided for in such a way as to contradict every thought in reference to approaching judgement. But oh I those solemn words, "*I will destroy*"; What a heavy gloom they would necessarily cast over the glittering scene! Could not man's genius invent some way of escape? Could not "the mighty man deliver himself by his much strength?" Alas! no: there was ONE way of escape, but it was revealed to faith, not to sight, not to reason, not to imagination.

By faith Noah, being *warned of God*, of things *not seen as yet*, moved with fear (*eulabetheis*) prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is of faith; (Heb 11: 7) The word of God brings His light to shine upon all that by which man's heart is deceived. It removes completely the gilding with which the serpent covers a vain, deceitful, passing world over which hangs the sword of divine judgement. But it is only faith that will be "warned of God," when the things of which He speaks are "not seen as yet; Nature is governed by what it sees — it is governed by it's senses, Faith is governed by the pure word of God; (inestimable treasure in this dark world!) This gives stability, let outward appearances be what they may. When God spoke to Noah of judgement impending, there was no sign of it. It was "not seen as yet;" but the word of God made it a present reality to the heart that was enabled to mix that word with faith. Faith does not wait to see a thing, ere it believes, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

All that the man of faith needs, is to know that God has spoken; this imparts perfect certainty to his soul. "Thus saith the

Lord," settles everything. A single line of Sacred Scripture is an abundant answer to all the reasonings and all the imaginations of the human mind; and when one has the word of God as the basis of his convictions, he may calmly stand against the full tide of human opinion and prejudice. It was the word of God which sustained the heart of Noah during his long course of service; and the same word has sustained the millions of God's saints, from that day to this, in the face of the world's contradiction. Hence, we cannot set too high a value upon the word of God. Without it, all is dark uncertainty; with it, all is light and peace. Where it shines, it marks out for the man of God a sure and blessed path; where it shines not, one is left to wander amid the bewildering mazes of human tradition. How could Noah have "preached righteousness," for 120 years, if he had not had the word of God as the ground of his preaching? How could he have withstood the scoffs and sneers of an infidel world? How could he have persevered in testifying of "judgement to come," when not a cloud appeared on the world's horizon? Impossible. The word of God was the ground on which he stood, and "the Spirit of Christ" enabled him to occupy, with holy decision, that elevated and immovable ground.

And now, my beloved Christian reader, what else have we wherewith to stand, in service for Christ, in an evil day, like the present? Surely, nothing; nor do we want ought else. The word of God, and the Holy Ghost by whom, alone, that word can be understood, applied or used, are all we want to equip us perfectly-to furnish us thoroughly, "to all good works," under whatever head those works may range themselves. (2 Tim 3: 16, 17) What rest for the heart? What relief from all Satan's imagery, and man's imaginations! God's pure, incorruptible, eternal word May our hearts adore Him for the inestimable treasure "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually;" but God's word as the simple resting-place of Noah's heart.

"God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me.....Make thee an ark of gopher wood. Here was man's ruin, and God's remedy. Man had been allowed to pursue his career to the utmost limit, to bring his principles and ways to maturity. The leaven had worked and filled the mass. The evil had reached its

climax. "All flesh" had become so bad that it could not be worse; wherefore nothing remained but for God to destroy it totally; and, at the same time, to save all those who should be found, according to His eternal counsels, linked with "the eighth person" — the only righteous man then existing. This brings out the doctrine of the cross, in a very vivid manner. There we find, at once, God's judgement of nature with all its evil; and, at the same time, the revelation of His saving grace, in all its fullness, and in all its perfect adaptation to those who have really reached the lowest point of their moral condition, as judged by Himself. (The day-spring from on high hath visited us." (Luke 1: 78) Where? Just *where we are*, as sinners. God has come down to the very deepest depths of our ruin. There is not a point in all the sinner's state to which the light of that blessed day-spring has not penetrated; but, if it has thus penetrated, it must, by virtue of what it is, reveal our true character. The light must judge everything contrary to itself; but, while it does so, it also "gives the knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins." The cross, while it reveals God's judgement upon" all flesh," reveals His salvation for the lost and guilty sinner. Sin is perfectly judged — the sinner perfectly saved — God perfectly revealed, and perfectly glorified, in the cross.

If my reader will turn, for a moment, to the First Epistle of Peter, he will find much light thrown upon this entire subject. At the third chapter, verse 18, we read, "for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which (Spirit) he went and preached (through Noah) to the spirits (now) in prison; which once were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved through water (*diudatos*); to which the anti type (*antitupon*) baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, (as by water,)* but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who, having gone into heaven, is at the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him."

{*It is impossible to over-estimate the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, as seen in the way in which He treats the ordinance of baptism, in the above remarkable passage. We know the evil use which has been made of baptism, — we know the false place it has gotten in the thoughts of many, — we know how that the efficacy, which belongs only to the blood of Christ, has been attributed to the water of baptism, — we know how the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost has been transferred to water baptism; and, with the with the knowledge of all this, we cannot but be struck with the way in which the Spirit of God guards the subject, by stating, that it is not the mere washing away of the filth of the flesh, as by water, But the answer of a good conscience toward God," which "answer" we get, not by baptism, how important soever it may be, as an ordinance of the kingdom, but "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

Baptism, I need hardly say, as an ordinance of divine institution, and in its divinely-appointed place, is most important and deeply significant; but when we find men, in one way or another, putting the figure in place of the substance, we are bound to expose the work of Satan by the light of the word of God.}

This is a most important passage. It sets the doctrine of the ark and its connection with the death of Christ very distinctly before us. As in the deluge, so in the death Christ, all the billows and waves of divine judgement passed over that which, in itself, was without sin. The creation was buried beneath the flood of Jehovah's righteous wrath; and the Spirit of Christ exclaims, "All thy billows and thy waves have gone over me." (Ps. 42: 7) Here is a profound truth for the heart and conscience of a believer. "All God's billows and waves" passed over the spotless Person of the Lord Jesus, when He hung upon the cross; and, as a most blessed consequence, not one of them remains to pass over the person of the believer. At Calvary we see, in good truth, "the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven opened." "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts." Christ drank the cup, and endured the wrath perfectly. He put Himself, judicially, under the full weight of all His people's liabilities, and gloriously discharged them. The belief of this gives settled peace to the soul. If the Lord Jesus has

met all that could be against us, if He has removed out of the way every hindrance, if He has put away sin, if He has exhausted the cup of wrath and judgement on our behalf, if He has cleared the prospect of every cloud, should we not enjoy settled peace? Unquestionably. Peace is our unalienable portion. To us belong the deep and untold blessedness, and holy security, which redeeming love can bestow on the righteous ground of Christ's absolutely accomplished work.

Had Noah any anxiety about the billows of divine judgement? None whatever. How could he? He knew that "*all*" had been poured forth, while he himself was raised, by those very outpoured billows, into a region of cloudless peace. He floated in peace on that very water by which "*all flesh*" was judged. He was put, beyond the reach of judgement; and put there, too, by God Himself. He might have said, in the triumphant language of Romans 8, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He had been invited in by Jehovah Himself, as we read in Genesis 7: 1, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark;" and when he had taken his place there, we read, "*the Lord shut him in*" Here assuredly, was full and perfect security for all within. Jehovah kept the door, and no one could go in or out without him. There was both a window and a door to the ark. The Lord secured, with His own omnipotent hand, the door, and left Noah the window from which he might look upward to the place from whence all the judgement had emanated, and see that no judgement remained for him. The saved family could only look *upward*, because the window was "*above*" (Gen. 6: 16) They could not see the waters of judgement, nor the death and desolation which those waters had caused. God's salvation — the "*gopher wood*," stood between them and all these things. They had only to gaze upward into a cloudless heaven, the eternal dwelling-place of the One who had condemned the world, and saved them.

Nothing can more fully express the believer's perfect security in Christ than those words, "*the Lord shut him in.*" Who could open what God had shut? None. The family of Noah were as safe as God could make them. There was no power, angelic, human, or diabolical, which could possibly burst open the door of the ark, and let the waters in. That door was shut by the selfsame hand that had opened the windows of heaven, and broken up the fountains of the

great deep. Thus Christ is spoken of as the One" that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." (Rev. 3: 7) He also holds in His hand" the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. 1: 18) None can enter the portals of the grave, nor go forth there from, without him. He has "all power in heaven and on earth." He is head over all things to the Church," and in Him the believer is perfectly secure. (Matt. 28: 18; Eph. 1: 22) Who could touch Noah? What wave could penetrate that ark which was "pitched within and without with pitch?" Just so now, who can touch those who have, by faith, retreated into the shadow of the cross? Every enemy has been met and silenced — yes, silenced for ever. The death of Christ has triumphantly answered every demur; while, at the same time, His resurrection is the satisfactory declaration of God's infinite complacency in that work which is, at once, the basis of His righteousness in receiving us, and of our confidence in drawing nigh unto Him.

Hence, therefore, the door of our ark being secured, by the hand of God Himself, nothing remains for us but to enjoy the window; or, in other words, to walk in happy and holy communion with Him, who has saved us from coming wrath, and made us heirs and expectants of coming glory. Peter speaks of those, who "are blind, and cannot see afar off and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins." (2 Peter 1: 9.) This is a lamentable condition for any to be in, and it is the sure result of not cultivating diligent, prayerful communion with Him, who has eternally shut us in in Christ.

Let us, now, ere we proceed further with Noah's history, glance, for a little, at the condition of those, to whom he had so long preached righteousness. We have been looking at the *saved*, let us now look at the *lost*; we have been thinking of those *within* the ark, let us now think of those *without*. No doubt, many an anxious look would be cast after the vessel of mercy, as it rose with the water; but, alas! "the door was shut" the day of grace was over — the time of testimony closed, and that for ever, so far as they were concerned. The same hand which had shut Noah in, had shut them out, and it was as impossible for those without to get in, as it was for those within to get out. The former were irrecoverably lost; the latter,

effectually saved. The long-suffering of God, and the testimony of His servant had both been slighted. Present things had engrossed them. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage, until the day that Nosh entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." (Luke 17: 26, 27) There was nothing wrong in any of these things, abstractedly looked at. The wrong was not in the things done, but in the doers of them. Every one of them might be done in the fear of the Lord, and to the glory of His Holy name, were they only done in faith. But, alas! they were not so done. The word of God was rejected. He told of judgement; but they did not believe. He spoke of sin and ruin; but they were not convinced. He spoke of a remedy; but they would not give heed. They went on with their own plans and speculations, and had no room for God. They acted as if the earth belonged to them, by a lease, for ever. They forgot that there was a clause of surrender. They thought not of that solemn "*until*." God was shut out. "Every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually;" and hence, they could do nothing right. They thought, spake, and acted for themselves. They did their own pleasure, and forgot God.

And, my reader, remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man." Some would have us to believe, that ere the Son of man appears in the clouds of heaven, this earth shall be covered, from pole to pole, with a fair mantle of righteousness. They would teach us to look for a reign of righteousness and peace, as the result of agencies now in operation; but the brief passage just quoted cuts up by the roots, in a moment, all such vain and delusive expectations. How was it in the days of Noah? Did righteousness cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea? Was God's truth dominant? Was the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord? Scripture replies, "the earth was filled with violence." "ALL flesh had corrupted his way on the earth." "The earth also was corrupt before God." Well, then, "*so shall it be* in the days of the Son of man." This is plain enough." "Righteousness" and "violence" are not very like each other. Neither is there any similarity between universal wickedness and universal peace. It only needs a heart subject to the Word, and freed from the influence of preconceived opinions, in order to understand the true character of the days

immediately preceding "the coming of the Son of man." Let not my reader be led astray. Let him reverently bow to Scripture. Let him look at the condition of the world, "in the days before the flood;" and let him bear in mind, that "*as*" it was then, "*so*" shall it be at the close of this present period. This is most simple — most conclusive. There was nothing like a state of universal righteousness and peace then, neither shall there be anything like it by and by.

No doubt, man displayed abundant energy in making the world a comfortable and an agreeable place for himself; but that was a very different thing from making it a suitable place for God. So, also, at this present time; man is as busy as he can be, in clearing the stones off the pathway of human life, and making it as smooth as possible; but this is not "making straight in the desert a highway for our God;" nor is it making "the rough places smooth," that all flesh may see the salvation of Jehovah. Civilisation prevails; but civilisation is not righteousness. The sweeping and garnishing are going forward; but it is not in order to fit the house for Christ, but for Antichrist. The wisdom of man is put forth in order to cover, with the folds of his own drapery, the blots and blemishes of humanity; but, though covered, they are not removed! They are and will, ere long, break out in more hideous deformity than ever. The painting of vermilion will soon be obliterated, and the carved cedar wood destroyed. The dams, by which man sedulously seeks to stem the torrent of human wretchedness, must soon give way before the overwhelming force thereof. All the efforts to confine the physical, the mental, and the moral degradation of Adams posterity within those enclosures, which human benevolence, if you please, has devised, must, in the sequel, prove abortive. The testimony has gone forth. "The end of all flesh has come before me." It has not come before man; but it has come before God; and, albeit, the voice of the scoffers may be heard, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation;" yet the moment is rapidly hastening on, when those scoffers will get their answer. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." (2 Peter 3: 4-10) This, my reader, is the answer to the

intellectual scoffs of the children of this world, but not to the spiritual affections and expectations of the children of God. These latter, thank God, have a totally different prospect, even to meet the Bridegroom in the air, before evil shall have reached its culminating point, and, therefore, before the divine judgement shall be poured forth thereon. The Church of God looks not for the burning up of the world, but for the arising of "the bright and morning Star."

Now, in whatever way we look at the future, from whatever point of view we contemplate it, whether the object, which presents itself to the soul's vision be the Church in glory, or the world in flames, the coming of the Bridegroom, or the breaking in of the thief, the morning Star, or the scorching sun, the translation, or the deluge, we must feel the unspeakable importance of attending to God's present testimony in grace, to lost sinners. "*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6: 2) "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. 5: 19) He is reconciling now, He will be judging by and by; it is all grace now; it will be all wrath then; He is pardoning sin now, through the cross; He will punish it then, in hell, and that for ever. He is sending out a message of purest, richest, freest grace. He is telling sinners of an accomplished redemption through the precious sacrifice of Christ. He is declaring that all is done. He is waiting to be gracious. "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3) All this makes the present moment one of peculiar solemnity. Unmingled grace declared! — unmingled wrath impending. How solemn! How deeply solemn!

And, then, with what profound interest should we mark the unfolding of the divine purposes! Scripture sheds its light upon these things; and such a light, too, that we need not, as another has said, "vacantly stare on passing events, as those, who know not where they are, and whither they are going." We should accurately know our bearings. We should fully understand the direct tendency of all the principles now at work. We should be well aware of the vortex, toward which all the tributary streams are rapidly flowing on. Men

dream of a golden age; they promise themselves a millennium of the arts and science; they feed upon the thought, that "tomorrow shall be as this day, and more abundant." But, oh! how utterly vain are all those thoughts, dreams, and promises. Faith can see the clouds gathering thickly around the world's horizon. Judgement is coming. The day of wrath is at hand. The door will soon be shut. The "strong delusion" will soon set in, with terrible intensity. How needful, then, it is, to raise a warning voice — to seek, by faithful testimony, to counteract man's pitiable self-complacency. True, in so doing, we shall be exposed to the charge which Ahab brought against Micaiah, of always prophesying evil: but no matter for that. Let us prophesy what the word of God prophesies, and let us do this simply for the purpose of "persuading men." The Word of God only removes from beneath our feet a hollow foundation, for the purpose of placing instead thereof, a foundation which can never be moved. It only takes away from us a delusive hope, to give us, instead, "a hope which maketh not ashamed." It takes away "a broken reed," to give us "the rock of ages." It sets aside "a broken cistern, which can hold no water," to set in its place "the fountain of living waters." This is true love. It is God's love. He will not cry "peace, peace, when there is no peace;" nor "daub with untempered mortar." He would have the sinner's heart resting; sweetly in His own eternal Ark of safety, enjoying a present communion with Himself, and fondly cherishing; the hope, that, when all the ruin, the desolation, and the judgement, have passed away, it shall rest with him in a restored creation.

We shall now return to Noah, and contemplate him in a new position. we have seen him building the ark, we have seen him in the ark, and we shall now view him going forth of the ark, and taking his place in the new world.* "And God remembered Noah." The strange work of judgement being over, the saved family, and all in association with them, come into remembrance. "God made a wind to pass over the earth; and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. The beams of sun now begin to act upon a world that had been baptised with a baptism of judgement. Judgement is God's "strange work." He delights not in, though He is glorified by, it. Blessed be His name, He is ever ready to leave the

place of judgement, and enter that of mercy, because He delights in mercy.

{*I would here mention, for my reader's prayerful consideration, a thought very familiar to the minds of those who have especially given themselves to the study of what is called "dispensational truth." It has reference to Enoch and Noah. The former was taken away, as we have seen, before the judgement came; whereas the latter was carried through the judgement. Now, it is thought that Enoch is a figure of the Church, who shall be taken away before human evil reaches its climax, and before the divine judgement falls thereon. Noah, on the other hand, is a figure of the remnant of Israel, who shall be brought through the deep waters of affliction, and through the fire of judgement, and led into the full enjoyment of millennial bliss, in virtue of God's everlasting covenant. I may add, that I quite receive this thought in reference to those two Old Testament fathers. I consider that it has the full support of the general scope and analogy of Holy Scripture.}

"And it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth, to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth." The unclean bird made its escape, and found, no doubt, a resting-place on some floating carcass. It sought not the ark again. Not so the dove. "She found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark: and the dove came in to him, in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, pluckt off." Sweet emblem of the renewed mind, which, amid the surrounding desolation, seeks and finds its rest and portion in Christ; and not only so, but also lays hold of the earnest of the inheritance, and furnishes the blessed proof, that judgement has passed away, and that a renewed earth is coming fully into view. The carnal mind, on the contrary, can rest in anything and everything but Christ. It can feed upon all uncleanness. "The olive leaf" has no attraction for it. It can find all it needs in a scene of death, and hence is not occupied with the thought of a new world and its glories; but the heart, that is taught and exercised by the Spirit of God, can only rest and rejoice in that in which He rests and rejoices. It rests in the Ark of His salvation "until the times of

the restitution of all things." May it be thus with you and me, beloved reader; may Jesus be the abiding rest and portion of our hearts, that so we may not seek them in a world which is under the judgement of God. The dove went back to Noah, and waited for his time of rest: and we should ever find our place with Christ, until the time of His exaltation, and glory, in the ages to come. "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." ALL we want, as to this, is a little patience. May God direct our hearts into His love, and into "the patience of Christ."

"And God spake unto Noah, saying, go forth of the ark." The same God that had said, "make thee an ark," and "come thou into the ark," now says, "go forth of the ark." "And Noah went forth . . . and builded an altar unto the Lord." ALL is simple obedience. There is the obedience of faith and the worship of faith: both go together. The altar is erected, where, just before, all had been a scene of death and judgement. The ark had borne Noah and his family safely over the waters of judgement. It had carried him from the old into the new world, where he now takes his place as a worshipper.* And, be it observed, it was "unto the Lord" he erected his altar. Superstition would have worshipped the ark, as being the means of salvation. It is ever the tendency of the heart to displace God by His ordinances. Now, the ark was a very marked and manifest ordinance; but Noah's faith passed beyond the ark to the God of the ark; and, hence, when he stepped out of it, instead of casting back a lingering look at it, or regarding it as an object of worship or veneration, he built an altar unto the Lord, and worshipped Him: and the ark is never heard of again.

{*It is interesting to look at this entire subject of the ark and deluge in connection with that most important and deeply significant ordinance of baptism. A truly baptised person, that is, one who as the apostle says, "obeys from the heart that type of doctrine to which he is delivered" is one who has passed from the old world into the new, in spirit and principle, and by faith. The water rolls over his person, signifying that his old man is buried, that his place in nature is ignored — that his old nature is entirely set aside; in short, that he is a dead man. When he is plunged beneath the water, expression is given to the fact, that his name, place and existence, in nature, are

put out of sight; that the flesh, with all that pertained thereto, its sins, its iniquities, its liabilities, is buried in the grave of Christ, and never can come into God's sight again.

Again when he rises up out of the water, expression is given to the truth that he only comes up as the possessor of a new life, even the resurrection of Christ. If Christ had not been raised from the dead, the believer could not come up out of the water, but should remain buried beneath its surface, as the simple expression of the place which righteously belongs to nature. But inasmuch as Christ rose from the dead in the power of a new life, having entirely put away our sins, we also come up out of the water; and, in so doing set, forth the fact that we are put, by the grace of God, and through the death of Christ, in full possession of a new life to which divine righteousness inseparably attaches. "We are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (See Rom 6 and Col 2. passim. Comp. also 1 Peter 3: 18-22) All this makes the institution of baptism one of immense importance, and pregnant with meaning}

This teaches us a very simple, but, at the same time, a very seasonable lesson. The moment the heart lets slip the reality of God Himself, there is no placing a limit to its declension; it is on the highway to the grossest forms of idolatry. In the judgement of faith, an ordinance is only valuable as it conveys God, in living power, to the soul; that is to say, so long as faith Can enjoy Christ therein, according to His own appointment. Beyond this, it is worth just nothing; and if it, in the smallest degree, comes between the heart and His precious work and His glorious Person, it ceases to be an ordinance of God, and becomes an instrument of the devil. In the judgement of superstition, the ordinance is everything, and God is shut out; and the name of God is only made use of to exalt the ordinance, and Give it a deep hold of the human heart, and a mighty influence over the human mind. Thus it was that the children of Israel worshipped the brazen serpent. That, which had once been a channel of blessing to them, because used of God, became, when their hearts had departed from the Lord, an object of superstitious veneration; and Hezekiah had to break it in pieces, and call it "a

piece of brass. In itself it was only a "Nehushtan," but, when used of God, it was a means of rich blessing. Now, faith owned it to be what divine revelation said it was; but superstition, throwing, as ever does, divine revelation overboard, lost the real purpose of God in the thing, and actually made a god of the thing itself. (See 2 Kings 18: 4)

And, my reader, is there not a deep lesson in all this for the present age? I am convinced there is. We live in an age of ordinances. The atmosphere, which enwraps the professing church, is impregnated with the elements of a traditionary religion, which robs the soul of Christ and His divinely full salvation. It is not that human traditions boldly deny that there is such a person as Christ, or such a thing as the cross of Christ: were they to do so, the eyes of many might be opened. However, it is not thus. The evil is of a far more invidious and dangerous character. Ordinances are added to Christ and the work of Christ, The sinner is not saved by Christ alone, but by Christ and ordinances. Thus he is robbed of Christ altogether; for it will, assuredly be found that *Christ and ordinances* will prove in the sequel, to be *ordinances, and not Christ*. This is a solemn consideration for all who stand up for a religion of ordinances. "If ye be circumcised Christ will profit you nothing." It must be Christ wholly, or not at all. The devil persuades men, that they are honouring Christ when they make much of His ordinances. whereas, all the while, he knows full well, that they are, in reality, setting Christ entirely aside, and deifying the ordinance. I would only repeat here a remark which I have made elsewhere, namely, that superstition makes *everything* of the ordinance; infidelity, and mysticism, make *nothing* of it; faith uses to divine appointment.

But I have already extended this section far beyond the limit which I had prescribed for it. I shall, therefore, close it with a hasty glance at the contents of Gen. 9. In it we have the new covenant, under which creation was set, after the deluge, together with the token of that covenant. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Observe, God's command to man, on his entrance into the restored earth, was to refill that earth; not parts of the earth, but the earth. He desired to have men dispersed abroad, over the face of the world,

and not relying upon their own concentrated energies. We shall see, in Gen. 11, how man neglected all this.

The fear of man is now lodged in the heart of every other creature. Henceforth the service, rendered by the inferior orders of creation to man, must be the constrained result of "fear and dread." In life, and in death, the lower animals were to be at the service of man. ALL creation is delivered, by God's everlasting covenant, from the fear of a second deluge. Judgement is never again to take that shape. "The world that then was, being overflowed with *water*, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto *fire* against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men." The earth was once purged with water; and it will be again purged by fire; and in this second purgation none will escape, save those, who have fled for refuge to Him, who has passed through the deep waters of death, and met the fire of divine judgement.

"And God said, This is the token of the covenant ..I do set my bow in the cloud.....and I will remember my covenant," The whole creation rests, as to its exemption from a second deluge, on the eternal stability of God's covenant, of which the bow is the token; and it is happy to bear in mind, that when the bow appears, the eye of God rests upon it; and man is cast not upon his own imperfect and most uncertain memory, but upon God's. "I" says God, "Will remember." "How sweet to think of what God will, and what He will not remember! He will remember His own covenant, but He will not remember His people's sins. The cross, which ratifies the former, puts away the latter. The belief of this gives peace to the troubled and uneasy conscience.

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that *the bow shall be seen in the cloud.*" Beautiful and most expressive emblem! The beams of the sun, reflected from that which threatens judgement, tranquillise the heart, as telling of God's covenant, God's salvation, and God's remembrance. Precious, most precious sunbeams, deriving additional beauty from the very cloud which reflects them! How forcibly does this bow in the cloud remind us of Calvary. There a cloud indeed — a dark, thick, heavy cloud of judgement discharging itself upon the sacred head of the

Lamb of God - a cloud so dark, that even at mid-day "there was darkness over all the earth." But, blessed be God, faith discerns, in that heaviest cloud that ever gathered, the most brilliant and beautiful bow that ever appeared, for it sees the bright beams of God's eternal love darting through the awful gloom, and reflected in the cloud. It hears, too, the words, "it is finished," issuing from amid the darkness, and in those words it recognises the perfect ratification of God's everlasting counsels, not only as to creation, but the tribes of Israel and the Church of God.

The last paragraph of this chapter presents a humiliating spectacle. The lord of creation fails to govern himself: "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent." What a condition for Noah, the only righteous man, the preacher of righteousness, to be found in. Alas! what is man? Look at him where you will, and you see only failure. In Eden, he fails; in the restored earth, he fails; in Canaan, he fails; in the Church, he fails; in the presence of millennial bliss and glory, he fails. He fails everywhere, and in all things: there is no good thing in him. Let his advantages be ever so great, his privileges ever so vast, his position ever so desirable, he can only exhibit failure and sin.

We must, however, look at Noah in two ways, namely, as a *type*, and as a *man*; and while the type is full of beauty and meaning, the man is full of sin and folly; yet the Holy Ghost has written these words, "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation; and Noah walked with God." Divine grace had covered all his sins, and clothed his person with a spotless robe of righteousness. Though Noah exposed his nakedness, God did not see it, for He looked not at him, in the weakness of his own condition, but in the full power of divine and everlasting righteousness. Hence we may see how entirely astray — how totally alienated from God and His thoughts, Ham was, in the course he adopted; he evidently knew nothing of the blessedness of the man, whose iniquity is forgiven, and his sin covered; on the contrary, Shem and Jepheth exhibit, in their conduct, a fine specimen of the divine method of dealing with human nakedness; wherefore they inherit a blessing, whereas Ham inherits a curse.

Genesis 10

This section of our book records the generations of Noah's three sons, noticing, especially, Nimrod, the founder of the kingdom of Babel, or Babylon, a name which occupies a very prominent place on the page of inspiration. Babylon is a well-known name — a well known influence. From Genesis 10 to Revelation 18 Babylon, again and again, appears before us, and always as something decidedly hostile to those who occupy, for the time being, the position of public testimony for God. Not that we are to look upon the Babylon of Old Testament scripture as identical with the Babylon of the apocalypse. By no means. I believe the former is a city; the latter, a system; But both the city and system exert a powerful influence against God's people. Hardly had Israel entered upon the wars of Canaan when "a Babylonish garment" brought defilement and sorrow, defeat and confusion, into the host. This is the earliest record of Babylon's pernicious influence upon the people of God; but every student of Scripture is aware of the place which Babylon gets throughout the entire history of Israel.

This would not be the place to notice, in detail, the various passages in which this city is introduced. I would only remark, here, that whenever God has a corporate witness on the earth, Satan has a Babylon to mar and corrupt that witness. When God connects His name with a city on the earth, then Babylon takes the form of a city; and when God connects His name with the Church, then Babylon takes the form of a corrupt religious system, called "the great whore," "the mother of abominations," &c. In a word, Satan's Babylon is always seen as the instrument moulded and fashioned by his hand, for the purpose of counteracting the divine operations, whether in Israel of old, or the Church now. Throughout the Old Testament Israel and Babylon are seen, as it were, in opposite scales: when Israel is up, Babylon is down; and when Babylon is up, Israel is down. Thus, when Israel had utterly failed, as Jehovah's witness, "the king of Babylon broke his bones," and swallowed him up. The vessels of the house of God, which ought to have remained in the city of Jerusalem, were carried away to the city of Babylon. But Isaiah, in his sublime prophecy, leads us onward to the opposite of all this. He presents, in most magnificent strains, a picture, in

which Israel's star is in the ascendant, and Babylon entirely sunk. "And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! . . . since *thou* art laid down, no *hewer* is come up against *us*." (Isa. 14: 3-8.)

Thus much as to the Babylon of the Old Testament. Then, as to the Babylon of Revelation, my reader has only to turn to Rev. 17 and Rev. 18 to see her character and end. She is presented in marked contrast with the bride, the Lamb's wife; and as to her end, she is cast as a great millstone into the sea; after which we have the marriage of the Lamb, — with all its accompanying bliss and glory.

However, I could not attempt to pursue this most interesting subject here: I have merely glanced at it in connection with the name of Nimrod. I feel assured that my reader will find himself amply repaid, for any trouble he may take in the close examination of all those scriptures, in which the name of Babylon is introduced. We shall now return to our chapter.

"And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a *mighty one in the earth*. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, *in the land of Shinar*." Here, then, we have the character of the founder of Babylon. He was "a mighty one *in the earth*" — "a mighty hunter before the Lord." Such was the origin of Babylon; and its character, throughout the entire book of God, remarkably corresponds therewith. It is always seen as a mighty influence in the earth, acting in positive antagonism to everything which owes its origin to heaven; and it is not until this Babylon has been totally abolished, that the cry is heard, amid the hosts above, "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" Then all Babylon's mighty hunting will be over for ever, whether it be its hunting of wild beasts, to subdue them; or its hunting of souls, to destroy them. ALL its might, and all its glory, all its pomp and pride, its wealth and luxury, its light and joy, its glitter and glare, its powerful attractions and wide-spread influence, shall have passed away for ever. She

shall be swept with the besom of destruction, and plunged in the darkness, the horror and desolation, of an everlasting night. "How long, O Lord?"

Genesis 11

This is a chapter of very deep interest to the spiritual mind. It records two great facts, namely, the building of Babel, and the call of Abraham; or, in other words, man's effort to provide for himself, and God's provision made known to faith; man's attempt to establish himself *in the earth*, and God's calling a man *out of it*, to find his portion and his home *in heaven*.

"And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there..... And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The human heart ever seeks a name, a portion, and a centre in the earth. It knows nothing of aspirations after heaven, heaven's God, or heaven's glory. Left to itself, it will ever and find its objects in this lower world; ever "build beneath the skies." It needs God's call, God's revelation, and God's power, to lift the heart above this present world, for man is a grovelling creature, alienated from heaven, and allied to earth. In the scene now before us, there is no acknowledgement no looking up to, or waiting on, Him; nor was it the thought of the human heart to set up a place in which God might dwell — to gather materials for the purpose of building a habitation for Him — alas! no; His name is never once mentioned. To make a name for himself was man's object on the plain of Shinar; and such has been his object ever since. Whether we contemplate man on the plain of Shinar, or on the banks of the Tiber, we find him to be the same self-seeking, self-exalting, God-excluding creature, throughout. There is a melancholy consistency in all his purposes his principles, and his ways; he ever seeks to shut out God, and exalt himself.

Now, in what light soever we view this Babel confederacy, it is most instructive to see in it the early display of mans genius and energies regardless of God. In looking down along the stream of human history, we may easily perceive a marked tendency to confederacy or association. Man seeks, for the most part to compass his great ends in this way. Whether it be in the way of Philanthropy,

Religion, or Politics, nothing can be done without an association of men regularly organised. It is well to see this principle — well to mark its incipient working — to see the earliest model which the page of inspiration affords of a human association, as exhibited on the plain of Shinar, in its design, its object, its attempt, its overthrow. If we look around us, at the present moment, we see the whole scene filled with associations. To name them were useless, for they are as numerous as are the purposes of the human heart. But it is important to mark, that the first of all these was the Shinar association, for the establishment of the human interests, and the exaltation of the human name — objects which may well be set in competition with any that engage the attention of this enlightened and civilised age. But, in the judgement of faith, there is one grand defect, namely, God is shut out; and to attempt to exalt man, without God, is to exalt him to a dizzy height, only that he may be dashed down into hopeless confusion, and irretrievable ruin. The Christian should only know one association, and that is, the Church of the living God, incorporated by the Holy Ghost, who came down from heaven as the witness of Christ's glorification, to baptise believers into one body, and constitute them God's dwelling-place. Babylon is the very opposite of this, in every particular; and she becomes at the close, as we know, "the habitation of devils." (See Rev. 18)

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city." Such was the end of man's first association. Thus it will be to the end, "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces..... gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces." (Isa. 8: 9) How different it is when God associates men! In the second chapter of Acts, we see the blessed One coming down, in infinite grace, to meet man, in the very circumstances in which his sin had set him. The Holy Ghost enabled the messengers of grace to deliver their message in the very tongue wherein each was born. Precious proof this, that God desired to reach man's heart with the sweet story of

grace! The law from the fiery mount was not thus promulgated. When God was telling what man ought to be, He spoke in one tongue; but when He was telling what He Himself was, He spoke in many. Grace broke through the barrier which man's pride and folly had caused to be erected, in order that every man might hear and understand the glad tidings of salvation — the wonderful works of God." And to what end was this? Just to associate men on God's ground, round God's centre, and on God's principles. It was to give them, in reality, one language, one centre, one object, one hope, one life. It was to gather them in such a way as that they never should be scattered or confounded again; to give them a name and a place which should endure for ever; to build for them a tower and city which should not only have their top reaching to heaven, but their imperishable foundation laid in heaven, by the omnipotent hand of God Himself. It was to gather them around the glorious Person of a risen and highly exalted Christ, and unite them all in one grand design of magnifying and adoring Him.

If my reader will turn to Revelation 7, he will find, at the close thereof, "ALL nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," standing round the Lamb; and, with one voice, ascribing all praise to Him. Thus the three scriptures may be read in most interesting and profitable connection. In Gen. 11 God gives various tongues as an expression of His *judgement*; in Acts 2 He gives various tongues as an expression of *grace*; and in Rev. 7 we see all those tongues gathered round the Lamb, in *glory*. How much better it is, therefore, to find our place in God's association than in man's! The former ends in glory, the latter in confusion; the former is carried forward by the energy of the Holy Ghost, the latter by the unhallowed energy of fallen man; the former has for its object the exaltation of Christ, the latter has for its object the exaltation of man, in some way or other.

Finally, I would say, that all who sincerely desire to know the true character, object, and issue of human associations, should read the opening verses of Genesis 11; and, on the other hand, all who desire to know the excellency, the beauty, the power, the enduring character of divine association, should look at that holy, living, heavenly corporation, which is called, in the New Testament, the Church of the living God, the body of Christ, the bride of the Lamb.

May the Lord enable us to look at, and apprehend, all these things, in the power of faith; for only in this way can they profit our souls. Points of truth, however interesting; scriptural knowledge, however profound and extensive; Biblical criticism, however accurate and valuable, may all leave the heart barren, and the affections cold. We want to find Christ in the Word; and, having found Him, to feed on Him by faith: This would impart freshness, unction, power, vitality, energy, and intensity, all of which we deeply stand in need of, in this day of freezing formalism. What is the value of a chilling orthodoxy without a living Christ, known in all His powerful, personal attractions? No doubt, sound doctrine is immensely important. Every faithful servant of Christ will feel himself imperatively called upon to "hold fast the form of sound words." But, after all, a living Christ is the very soul and life, the joints and marrow, the sinews and arteries, the essence and substance of sound doctrine. May we, by the power of the Holy Ghost, see more beauty and preciousness in Christ, and thus be weaned from the spirit and principles of Babylon.

We shall, God willing, consider the remainder of Gen. 11 in the next section.

Genesis 12

The book of Genesis is, for the most part, taken up with the history of seven men, namely, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. There is, I doubt not, a specific line of truth brought out in connection with each of those men. Thus, for example, In Abel we have the great foundation truth of man's coming to God, in the way of atonement — atonement apprehended by faith. In Enoch, we have the proper portion and hope of the heavenly family; while Noah presents to us the destiny of the earthly family. Enoch was taken to heaven before the judgement came; Noah was carried through the judgement into a restored earth. Thus, in each, we have a distinct character of truth, and, as a consequence, a distinct phase of faith. My reader can pursue the subject fully, in connection with Hebrews 11; and I feel assured he will find much interest and profit, in so doing. We shall now proceed with our immediate theme, namely, the call of Abraham.

By comparing Gen. 12: 1, Gen. 11: 31, with Acts 7: 2-4, we learn a truth of immense practical value to the soul. "The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and *from thy kindred*, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. (Gen. 12: 1) Such was the communication made to Abraham — a communication of the most definite character, designed of God to act upon Abraham's heart and conscience. "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into a land that I shall show thee. Then went he forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran, (or Haran;) and from thence, *when his father was dead*, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell." (Acts 7: 2-4) The result of this communication is given in Gen. 11: 31, "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, *to go the land of Canaan*: and they *came unto Haran, and dwelt there*..... and Terah died in Haran."

From all these passages taken together, we learn that ties of nature hindered the full response of Abraham's soul to the call of God. Though called to Canaan, he, nevertheless, tarried at Haran, till nature's was snapped by death, and then, with unimpeded step he made his way to the place to which "the God glory" had called him. This is full of meaning. influences of nature are ever hostile to the full and practical power of "the calling of God." We are sadly prone to take lower ground than that which the divine call would set before us. It needs great simplicity and integrity of faith to enable the soul to rise to the height of God's thoughts, and to make our own of that which He reveals.

The apostle's prayer (Eph. 1: 15-22) demonstrates how fully he, by the Holy Ghost, entered into the difficulty with which the Church would ever have to contend in seeking to apprehend "the hope of *God's calling* and the riches of the glory of *his inheritance* in the saints;" because, evidently, if we fail to apprehend the calling, we cannot walk worthy" thereof. I must know where I am called to go, before I can go thither. Had Abraham's soul been fully under the power of the truth" that God's calling was to Canaan, and that too, lay "his inheritance," he could not have remained in Charran. And so with us. If we are led by the Holy Ghost into the understanding of the truth, that we are called with a heavenly calling; that our home, our portion, our hope, our inheritance, are all above, where Christ sitteth at God's right hand," we could never be satisfied to maintain a standing, seek a name, or lay up an inheritance, on the earth. The two things are incompatible: this is the true way to look at the matter. The heavenly calling is not an empty dogma, a powerless theory, nor a crude speculation. It is either a divine reality, or it is absolutely nothing. Was Abraham's call to Canaan a speculation? Was it a mere theory about which he might talk or argue, while, at the same time, he continued in Charran? Assuredly not. It was a truth, a divine truth, a powerfully practical truth. He was called to Canaan, and God could not, possibly, sanction his stopping short thereof. Thus it was with Abraham, and thus it is with us. If we would enjoy the divine sanction and the divine presence, we must be seeking, by faith, to act upon the divine call. That is to say, we must seek to reach, in experience, in practice, and moral character, the point to which God has called us, and that point is full fellowship

with His own Son — fellowship with Him in His rejection below, fellowship with Him in His acceptance above.

But, as in Abraham's case, it was death that broke the link by which nature bound him to Charran; so, in our case, it is death which breaks the link by which nature ties us down to this present world. We must realise the truth that we have died in Christ, our head and representative — that our place in nature, and in the world, is amongst the things that were — that the cross of Christ is to us what the Red sea was to Israel, namely, that which separates us, for ever, from the land of death and judgement. Thus only shall we be able to walk, in any measure, "worthy of the calling wherewith we are called" — our high, our holy, our heavenly calling — our "calling of God in Christ Jesus."

And, here, I would dwell, for a little, on the cross of Christ in its two grand, fundamental phases, or in other words, the cross as the basis of our worship and our peace and our testimony, our relation with God, and our relation with the world. If, as a convicted sinner, I look at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ I behold in it the everlasting foundation of my peace, I see my "sin" put away, as to the root or principle thereof, and I see my "sins" borne. I see God to be in very deed, "for me," and that, moreover, in the very condition in which my convicted conscience tells me I am. The cross unfolds God as the *sinner's* Friend. It reveals Him in that most wondrous character, as the righteous Justifier of the most ungodly sinner. Creation never could do this. Providence never could do this. Therein I may see God's power, His majesty, and wisdom: but what if all these things should be ranged against me? Looked at, in themselves, abstractly they would be so, for I am a sinner; and power, majesty, and wisdom, could not put away my sin, nor justify God in receiving me.

The introduction of the cross, however, changes the aspect of things entirely. There I find God dealing with sin in such a manner as to glorify Himself infinitely. There I see the magnificent display and perfect harmony of all the divine attributes. I see love, and such love as captivates and assures my heart, and weans it, in proportion as I realise it, from every other object. I see wisdom, and such wisdom as baffles devils and astonishes angels. I see power, and

such power as bears down all opposition. I see holiness, and such holiness as repulses sin to the very furthest point of the moral universe, and gives the most intense expression of God's abhorrence thereof, that could possibly be given. I see grace, and such grace as sets the sinner in the very presence of God — yes, puts him into His bosom. Where could I see all these things but in the cross? Nowhere else. Look where you please, and you cannot find aught that so blessedly combines those two great points, namely, "glory to God in the highest," and "on earth peace."

How precious, therefore, is the cross, in this its first phase, as the basis of the sinner's peace, the basis of his worship, and the basis of his eternal relationship with the God who in there so blessedly and so gloriously revealed? How precious to God, as furnishing Him with a righteous ground on which to go in the full display of all His matchless perfections, and in His most gracious dealings with the sinner! So precious is it to God that, as a recent writer has well remarked, ALL that He has said — all that He has done, from the very beginning, indicates that it was ever uppermost in His heart. And no wonder! His dear and well-beloved Son was to hang there, between heaven and earth, the object of all the shame and suffering that men and devils could heap upon Him, because He loved to do His Father's will, and redeem the children of His grace. It will be the grand centre of attraction, as the fullest expression of His love, throughout eternity."

Then, as the basis of our practical discipleship and testimony, the cross demands our most profound consideration. In this aspect of it, I need hardly say, it is as perfect as in the former. The same cross which connects me with God, has separated me from the world. A dead man is, evidently, done with the world; and the believer, having died in Christ, is done with the world; and, having risen with Christ, is connected with God, in the power of a new life, a new nature. Being thus inseparably linked with Christ, he, of necessity, participates in His acceptance with God, and in rejection by the world. The two things go together. The former makes him a worshipper and a citizen in heaven, the latter makes him a witness and a stranger on earth. That brings him inside the veil; this puts him outside the camp. The one is as perfect as the other. If the cross has

come between me and sins, it has just as really come between me and the world. In the former case, it puts me into the place of peace with God; in the latter; it puts me into the place of hostility with the world, i.e., in a moral point of view; though, in another sense, it makes me the patient, humble witness of that precious, unfathomable, eternal grace which is set forth in the cross.

Now the believer should clearly understand, and rightly distinguish between, both the above phases the of cross of Christ. He should not profess to enjoy the one while he refuses to enter into the other. If his ear is open to hear Christ's voice within the veil, it will be open also to hear His voice outside the camp. he enters into the atonement which the cross has accomplished, he should also realise the rejection which it necessarily involves. The former flows out of the part which God had in the cross; the latter, out of the part which man had therein. It is our happy privilege, not only to be done with our sins, but to be done with the world also. ALL this is involved in the doctrine of the cross. Well, therefore, might the apostle say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Paul looked upon the world as a thing which ought to be nailed to the cross; and the world, in having crucified Christ, had crucified all who belonged to Him. Hence there is a double crucifixion, as regards the believer and the world; and were this fully entered into, it would prove the utter impossibility of ever amalgamating the two. Beloved reader, let us deeply, honestly, and prayerfully ponder these things; and may the Holy Ghost give us the ability to enter into the full practical power of both the phases of the cross of Christ.

We shall, now, return to our theme.

We are not told how long Abraham tarried at Haran; yet God graciously waited on His servant until, freed from nature's clog, he could fully obey His command. There was, however, no accommodation of that command to the circumstances of nature. This would never do. God loves His servants too well to deprive them of the full blessedness of entire obedience. There was no fresh revelation to Abraham's soul during the time of his sojourn in Haran. It is well to see this. We must act up to the light already

communicated, and then God will give us more. "To him that hath shall more be given." This is God's principle. Still, we must remember, that God will never drag us along the path of true-hearted discipleship. This would greatly lack the moral excellency which characterises all the ways of God. He does not drag, but draw, us along the path which leads to ineffable blessedness in Himself; and if we do not see that it is for our real advantage to break through all the barriers of nature, in order to respond to God's call, we forsake our own mercies. But, alas! our hearts little enter into this. We begin to calculate about the sacrifices, the hindrances, and the difficulties, instead of bounding along the path, in eagerness of soul, as knowing and loving the One whose call has sounded in our ears.

There is much true blessing to the soul in every step of obedience, for obedience is the fruit of faith; and faith puts us into living association and communion with God Himself. Looking at obedience, in this light, we can easily see how distinctly it is marked off, in every feature of it, from legality. This latter sets a man, with the entire burden of his sins on him, to serve God, by keeping the law; hence, the soul is kept in constant torture, and, so far from running in the path of obedience, it has not even taken the very first step. True obedience, on the contrary, is simply the manifestation or outflow of a new nature, communicated in grace. To this new nature God graciously imparts precepts for its guidance; and it is perfectly certain that the divine nature, guided by the divine precepts, can never, by any possibility, resolve itself into legality. What constitutes legality is the old nature taking up God's precepts and assaying to carry them out. To attempt to regulate man's fallen nature, by God's pure and Holy law, is as useless and absurd as anything can be. How could fallen nature breathe an atmosphere so pure? Impossible. Both the atmosphere and the nature must be divine.

But not only does the blessed God impart a divine nature to the believer, and guide that nature by His heavenly precepts, He also sets before it suited hopes and expectations. Thus, in Abraham's case, *The God of glory* appeared unto him." And for what purpose? To set before His soul's vision an attractive object — "a land that I will show thee." This was not compulsion, but attraction. God's land

was, in the judgement of the new nature — the judgement of faith far better than Ur, or Charran: and albeit, he had not *seen* the land, yet inasmuch as it was God's land, faith judged it to be worth having, and, not only worth having, but, also, fully worth the surrender of present things. Hence, we read, "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive as an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went." That is to say, "he walked by faith, not by sight." Though he had not seen with his eyes, he believed with his heart, and faith became the great moving spring in his soul. Faith rests on a far more solid ground than the evidence of our senses, and that is, the word of God. Our senses may deceive us, but Gods word never can.

Now, the entire truth of the divine nature, together with the precepts which guide, and the hopes which animate it — the whole of the divine doctrine respecting these things, is completely thrown overboard by the system of legalism. The legalist teaches that we must surrender earth in order to get heaven. But how can fallen nature surrender that to which it is allied? How can it be attracted by that in which it sees no charms? Heaven has no charms for nature; yea, it is the very last place it would like to be found in. Nature has no taste for heaven, its occupations, or its occupants. Were it possible for nature to find itself there, it would be miserable. Thus, then, nature has no ability to surrender earth, and no desire to get heaven. True, — it would be glad to escape hell and its ineffable torment, gloom, and misery. But the desire to escape hell, and the desire to get heaven, spring from two very different sources. The former may exist in the old nature; the latter can only be found in the new. Were there no "lake of fire," and no "worm" in hell, nature would not so shrink from it. The same principle holds good in reference to all of nature's pursuits and desires. The legalist teaches that we must give up sin before we can get righteousness. But nature cannot give up sin; and as to righteousness, it absolutely hates it. True, it would like a certain amount of religion; but it is only with the idea that religion will preserve it from hell fire. It does not love religion because of its introducing the soul to the present enjoyment of God and His ways.

How different from all this miserable system of Legalism, in every phase thereof, is "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God!" This gospel reveals God Himself coming down in perfect grace, and putting away sin by the sacrifice of the cross; putting it away, in the most absolute manner, on the ground of eternal righteousness, inasmuch as Christ suffered for it, having been made sin for us. And not only is God seen putting away sin, but also imparting a new life, even the risen life of His own risen, exalted, and glorified Son, which life every true believer possesses, in virtue of being linked, in God's eternal counsels, with Him who was nailed to the cross, but is now on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. This nature, as we have remarked, He graciously guides by the precepts of His holy word, applied in power by the Holy Ghost. He also animates it by the presentation of indestructible hopes. He reveals, in the distance, "the hope of glory" — "a city which hath foundations" — "a better country, that is an heavenly" — "the many mansions" of the Father's house, on high — "golden harps" — "green palms," and "white robes" — "a kingdom which cannot be moved" — everlasting association with Himself, in those regions of bliss and light, where sorrow and darkness can never enter — the unspeakable privilege of being led, throughout the countless ages of eternity, "beside the still waters, and through the green pastures" of redeeming love. How different is all this from the legalist's notion? Instead of calling upon me to educate and manage, by the dogmas of systematic religion, an irremediably corrupt nature, in order that thereby I may surrender an earth that I love, and attain to a heaven which I hate, He, in infinite grace, and on the ground of Christ's accomplished sacrifice, bestows upon me a nature which can enjoy heaven, and a heaven for that nature to enjoy; and, not only a heaven, but Himself the unfailing spring of all heavens joy.

Such is God's most excellent way. Thus He dealt with Abraham. Thus He dealt with Saul of Tarsus. Thus He deals with us. The God of glory showed Abraham a better country than Ur or Charran. He Saul of Tarsus a glory so bright, that it closed his eyes to all earth's brightest glories, and caused him to count them all "but dung," that He might win that Blessed One who had appeared to him, and whose voice spoken to his inmost soul. He saw a heavenly Christ in glory; and, throughout the remainder of his course,

notwithstanding the weakness of the earthen vessel, that heavenly Christ and that heavenly glory engrossed his whole soul.

"And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land." The presence of the Canaanite in God's land would, necessarily, prove a trial to Abraham. It would be a demand upon his faith and hope, an exercise of heart, a trial of patience. He had left Ur and Charran behind, and come into the country of which "the God of glory" had spoken to him, and there he finds "the Canaanite." But there, too, he finds the Lord. "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will give this land." The connection between the two statements is beautiful and touching. "The Canaanite was then in the land," and lest Abraham's eye should rest upon the Canaanite, the present possessor of the land, Jehovah appears to him as the One who was going to give the land to him and to his seed for ever. Thus Abraham was taken up with the Lord, and not with the Canaanite. This is a full of instruction for us. The Canaanite in the land is the expression of the power of Satan; but, instead of being occupied with Satan's power to keep us out of the inheritance, we are called to apprehend Christ's power to bring us in. "We wrestle, not with flesh and blood,.....but with spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies." The very sphere into which we are called is the sphere of our conflict. Should this terrify us? By no means. We have Christ there — a victorious Christ, in whom we are "more than conquerors." Hence, instead of indulging "a spirit of fear," we cultivate a spirit of worship. "And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." "And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and Pitched his tent." The altar and the tent give us the two great features of Abraham's character. A worshipper of God, a stranger in the world — most blessed characteristics! Having nothing on earth — having our all our all in God. Abraham had not so much as to set his foot upon;" but he had God to enjoy, and that was enough.

However, faith has its trials, as well as its answers. It is not to be imagined that the man of faith, having pushed out from the shore of circumstances, finds it all smooth and easy sailing. By no means. Again and again, he is called to encounter rough seas and stormy

skies; but it is all graciously designed to lead him into deeper and more matured experience of what God is to the heart that confides in Him. Were the sky always without a cloud, and the ocean without a ripple, the believer would not know so well the God with whom he has to do; for, alas! we know how prone the heart is to mistake the peace of circumstances for the peace of God. When everything is going on smoothly and pleasantly, our property safe, our business prosperous, our children and servants carrying themselves agreeably, our residence comfortable, our health excellent, everything, in short, just to our mind, how apt we are to mistake the peace which reposes upon such circumstances, for that peace which flows from the realised presence of Christ. The Lord knows this; and, therefore, He comes in, in one way or another, and stirs up the nest, that is, if we are found nestling in circumstances, instead of in Himself.

But, again, we are frequently led to judge of the rightness of a path by its exemption from trial, and *vice versa*. This is a great mistake. The path of obedience may often be found most trying to flesh and blood. Thus, in Abraham's case, he was not only called to encounter the Canaanite, in the place to which God had called him, but there was also "a famine in the land." Should he, therefore, have concluded that he was not in his right place? Assuredly not. That would have been to judge according to the sight of his eyes, the very thing which faith never does. No doubt it was a deep trial to the heart, an inexplicable puzzle to nature; but to faith it was all plain and easy. When Paul was called into Macedonia, almost the first thing he had to encounter was the prison at Philippi. This, to a heart out of communion, would have seemed a death-blow to the entire mission. But Paul never questioned the rightness of his position. He was enabled to "sing praises" in the midst of it all, assured that everything was just as it should be: and so it was; for in the prison of Philippi was one of God's vessels of mercy, who could not, humanly speaking, have heard the gospel, had not the preachers of it been thrust into the very place where he was. The devil was made, in spite of himself, the instrument of sending the gospel to the ears of one of God's elect.

Now, Abraham should have reasoned in the same way, in reference to the famine. He was in the very place in which God had set him; and, evidently, he received no direction to leave it. True, the famine was there; and, moreover, Egypt was at hand, offering deliverance from pressure; still the path of God's servant was plain. *It is better to starve in Canaan, if it should be so, than live in luxury in Egypt.* It is better far to suffer in God's path, than be at ease in Satan's. It is better to be poor with Christ, than rich without Him. Abraham had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and men servants, and maid servants, and she asses, and camels." Substantial proofs, the natural heart would, doubtless, say, of the rightness of his step, in going down to Egypt. But, ah! he had no altar — no communion. Egypt was not the place of God's presence. He lost more than he gained by going thither. This is ever the case. Nothing can ever make up for the loss of our communion with God. Exemption from temporary pressure, and the accession of the greatest wealth, are but poor equivalents for what one loses by diverging a hair's breadth from the straight path of obedience. How many of us can add our amen to this? How many, in order to avoid the trial and exercise connected with God's path, have slipped aside into the current of this present evil world, and thereby brought leanness and barrenness, heaviness and gloom, into their souls? It may be they have, to use the common phrase, "made money," increased their store, obtained the world's favour, been "entreated well" by its Pharaohs, gotten a name and a position amongst men; but are these a proper equivalent for joy in God, communion liberty of heart, a pure, uncondemning conscience, a thankful, worshipping spirit, vigorous testimony, and effectual service? Alas! for the man that can think so. And yet all the above incomparable blessings have been often sold for a little ease, a little influence, a little money.

Christian reader, let us watch against the tendency to slip aside from the narrow, yet safe, the *sometimes* rough, yet *always* pleasant, path of simple, wholehearted obedience. Let us keep guard — jealous, careful guard, over "faith and a pure conscience," for which nothing can compensate. Should trial come, let us, instead of turning aside into Egypt, wait on God; and thus the trial, instead of proving an occasion of stumbling, will prove an opportunity for obedience. Let us, when tempted to slip into the course of the world, remember

Him: who gave Himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father." (Gal. 1: 4) If such was His love for us, and such His sense of the true character of this present world, that He gave Himself, in order to deliver us from it, shall we deny Him by plunging again into that from which His cross has for ever delivered us? May God Almighty forbid! May He keep us in the hollow of His hand, and under the shadow of His wings, until we see Jesus as He is, and be like Him, and with Him for ever.

Genesis 13

The opening of this chapter presents to us a subject of immense interest to the heart, namely, the true character of divine restoration. When the child of God has, in any way, declined in his spiritual condition, and lost his communion, he is in great danger, when conscience begins to work, of failing in the apprehension of divine grace, and of stopping short of the proper mark of divine restoration. Now, we know that God does everything in a way entirely worthy of Himself. Whether He creates, redeems, converts, restores, or provides, He can only act like Himself. What is worthy of Himself is, ever and only, His standard of action. This is unspeakably happy for us, inasmuch as we would ever seek to "limit the Holy One of Israel;" and in nothing are we so prone to limit Him as in His restoring grace. In the case now before us, we see that Abraham was not only delivered out of Egypt, but brought back" unto the place where his tent had been *at the beginning*,..... unto the place of the altar which he had made there *at the first*: and there Abraham called on the name of the Lord." Nothing can satisfy God, in reference to a wanderer or backslider, but his being entirely restored. We, in the self-righteousness of our hearts, might imagine that such an one should take a lower place than that which he had formerly occupied; and so he should, were it a question of his merit or his character; but, inasmuch as it is, altogether, a question of grace, it is God's prerogative to fix the standard of restoration; and His standard is set forth in the following passage "If thou wilt return, O Israel, return to me." It is thus that God restores, and it would be unworthy of Himself to do anything else. He will either not restore at all, or else restore, in such a way, as to magnify and glorify the riches of His grace. Thus, when the leper was brought back, he was actually conducted "to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." When the prodigal returned, he was set down at the table with the father. When Peter was restored, he was able to stand before the men of Israel and say, "ye denied the Holy One, and the Just" — the very thing which he had done himself, under the most aggravated circumstances. In all these cases, and many more which might be adduced, we see the perfectness of God's restoration. He always brings the soul back to Himself, in the full power of grace, and the full confidence of faith. "If thou wilt return, return lo me."

"Abraham came unto the place where his tent had been *at the beginning*.

Then, as to the moral effect of divine restoration, it is most deeply practical. If legalism gets its answer in the *character* of the restoration, antinomianism gets its answer in the *effect* thereof. The restored soul will have a very deep and keen sense of the evil from which it has been delivered, and this will be evidenced by a jealous, prayerful, holy, and circumspect spirit. We are not restored in order that we may, the more lightly, go and sin again, but rather that we may "go and sin no more." The deeper my sense of the *grace* of divine restoration, the deeper will be my sense of the *holiness* of it also. This principle is taught and established throughout all scripture; but especially in two well-known passages, namely, Ps. 23: 3, and 1 John 1: 9; "He restoreth my soul: *He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness* for his name's sake." And, again, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" The proper path for a divinely-restored soul, is "the path of righteousness." In other words, having tasted divine grace, we walk in righteousness. To talk of grace, while walking in unrighteousness, is, as the apostle says, to turn "the grace of our God into lasciviousness." If grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life," it also manifests itself in righteousness, in the outflow of that life. The grace that forgives us our sins, cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Those things must never be separated. When taken together, they furnish a triumphant answer to the legalism and antinomianism of the human heart.

But there was a deeper trial for Abraham's heart than even the famine, namely, that arising from the company of one who, evidently, was not walking in the energy of personal faith, nor in the realisation of personal responsibility. It seems plain that Lot was, from the very beginning, borne onward rather by Abraham's influence and example, than by his own faith in God. This is a very common case. If we look down along the history of the people of God, we can easily see how that, in every great movement produced by the Spirit of God, certain individuals have attached themselves thereto who were not personally participators of the power which had produced the movement. Such persons go on for a time, either

as a dead weight upon the testimony. or an active hindrance to it. Thus, in Abraham's case, the Lord called him to leave his kindred; but he brought his kindred with him. Terah retarded him in his movement, until death took him out of the way. Lot followed him somewhat further, until "the lusts of other things" overpowered him, and he entirely broke down.

The same thing is observable in the great movement of Israel out of Egypt. "A mixed multitude" followed them, and caused much defilement, weakness, and sorrow, for we read, in Numbers 11, "the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel *also* wept again, and said, who shall give us flesh to eat." So also, in the early days of the Church; and not only so, but in every revival which has taken place therein, down to the present day, many have been acted upon by various influences, which, not being divine, proved evanescent; and the persons so acted upon, sooner or later, gave way, and found their proper level. Nothing will endure but that which is of God. I must realise the link between me and the living God. I must know myself as one called of Him into the position which I occupy, else I shall have no stability, and exhibit no consistency therein. It will not do for us to follow in the track of other people, merely because it is their track. God will graciously give each a path to walk in, a sphere to move in, and a responsibility to fulfil; and we are bound to know our calling and the functions thereof, that, by His grace ministered to our souls daily, we may work therein effectually, to His glory. It matters not what our measure may be, provided it be what God hath dealt to us. We may have "five talents," or we may have but "one;" still if we use the "one," with our eye fixed on the Master, we shall just be as sure to hear from His gracious lips the words, "well done," as if we had used the "five." This is encouraging. Paul, Peter, James, and John had each his peculiar measure, his special ministry; and so with all; none needs to interfere with another. A carpenter has a saw and a plane, a hammer and a chisel, and he uses each as he needs it. Nothing can be more worthless than imitation. If, in the natural world, we look at the various orders of creation, we see no imitation. ALL have their proper sphere, their proper functions. And if it be thus in the natural world, how much more in the spiritual. The field

is wide enough for all. In every house there are vessels of various sizes and various shapes. The master wants them all.

Let us, therefore, my beloved reader, search and see whether we are walking under a divine or a human influence; whether our faith stands in the wisdom of man, or in the power of God; whether we are doing things because others have done them, or because the Lord has called us to do them; whether we are merely propped up by the example and influence of our fellow, or sustained by personal faith in God. These are serious inquiries. It is, no doubt, a happy privilege to enjoy the fellowship of our brethren; but if we are propped up by them, we shall soon make shipwreck. So also, if we go beyond our measure, our action will be strained and unsightly, uneasy and unnatural. It is very easy to see when a man is working in his place, and according to his measure. ALL affectation, assumption, and imitation, is contemptible in the extreme. Hence, though we cannot be great, let us be honest; and though we cannot be brilliant, let us be genuine. If a person goes beyond his depth, without knowing how to swim, he will surely flounder. If a vessel put out to sea, without being sea-worthy and in trim, it will surely be beaten back into harbour, or lost. Lot left "Ur of the Chaldees," but he fell in the plains of Sodom. The call of God had not reached his heart, nor the inheritance of God filled his vision. Solemn thought! may we ponder it deeply? Blessed be God, there is a path for each of His servants, along which shines the light of His approving countenance, and to walk therein should be our chief joy. His approval is enough for the heart that knows Him. True, we may not always be able to command the approval and concurrence of our brethren; we may frequently be misunderstood; but we cannot help these things. "The day" will set all this to rights, and the loyal heart can contentedly wait for that day, knowing that then "every man shall have praise of God."

But it may be well to examine, more particularly, what it was that caused Lot to turn aside off the path of public testimony. There is a crisis in every man's history, at which it will, assuredly, be made manifest on what ground he is resting, by what motives he is actuated, and by what objects he is animated. Thus it was with Lot. He did not die at Charran; but he fell at Sodom. The *ostensible* cause

of his fall was the strife between his herdmen and those of Abraham; but the fact is, when one is not really walking with a single eye and purified affections, he will easily find a stone to stumble over. If he does not find it at one time, he will at another. If he does not find it here, he will find it there. In one sense, it makes little matter as to what may be the apparent cause of turning aside; the real cause lies underneath, far away, it may be, from common observation, in the hidden chambers of the heart's affections and desires, where *the world* in some shape or form, has been sought after. The strife between the herdmen might have been easily settled without spiritual damage to either Abraham or Lot. To the former, indeed, it only afforded an occasion for exhibiting the beautiful power of faith, and the moral elevation, the heavenly vantage ground, on which faith ever sets the possessor thereof. But to the latter, it was an occasion for exhibiting the thorough worldliness of his heart. The strife no more produced the worldliness in Lot than it produced the faith in Abraham; it only manifested, in the case of each, what was really there.

Thus it is always: controversies and divisions arise in the Church of God, and many are stumbled thereby, and driven back into the world, in one way or another. They then lay the blame on the controversy and division, whereas the truth is, that these things were only the means of developing the real condition of the soul, and the bent of the heart. The world was in the heart, and *would be* reached by some *route* or another; nor is there much of moral excellency exhibited in blaming men and things, when the root of the matter lies within. It is not that controversy and division are not to be deeply deplored: assuredly they are. To see brethren contending in the very presence of "the Canaanite and the Perizzite is truly lamentable and humiliating. Our language should ever be, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee..... for we are brethren." Still, why did not Abraham make choice of Sodom? Why did not the strife drive him into the world? Why was it not an occasion of stumbling to him? Because he looked at it from God's point of view. No doubt, he had a heart that could be attracted by "well-watered plains," just as powerfully as Lot's heart; but then he did not allow his own heart to choose. He first let Lot take his choice, and then left God to choose for him. This was heavenly

wisdom. This is what faith ever does: it allows God to fix its inheritance, as it also allows Him to make it good. It is always satisfied with the portion which God gives. It can say, the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." It matters not where "the lines" fall; for, in the judgement of faith, they always "fall in pleasant places," just because God casts them there.

The man of faith can easily afford to allow the man of sight to take his choice. Because, "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." What beautiful disinterestedness and moral elevation we have here! and yet what security! It is certain that, let nature range where it will, let it take its most comprehensive grasp, its boldest and highest flight, there is never the slightest danger of its laying its hand upon faith's treasure. It will seek its portion in quite an opposite direction. Faith lays up its treasure in a place which nature would never dream of examining; and, as to its approaching thereto, it could not if it would; and it would not if it could. Hence, therefore, faith is perfectly safe, as well as beautifully disinterested, in allowing nature to take its choice.

What, then, did Lot choose, when he got his choice. He chose Sodom. The very place that was about to be judged. But how was this? Why select such a spot? Because he looked at the outward appearance, and not at the intrinsic character and future destiny. The intrinsic character was "*wicked*." Its future destiny was "*judgement*" — to be destroyed by "fire and brimstone out of heaven." But, it may be said, "Lot knew nothing of all this." Perhaps not, nor Abraham either; but God did; and had Lot allowed God to "choose his inheritance for him," He, certainly, would not have chosen a spot that He Himself was about to destroy. He did not, however. He judged for himself. Sodom suited him, though it did not suit God. His eye rested on the "well-watered plains," and his heart was attracted by them. "He pitched his tent *toward* Sodom." Such is nature's choice! "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Lot forsook Abraham for the same reason. He left the place of testimony, and got into the place of judgement.

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where

thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will give it, and to thy Seed for ever." The strife" and "separation," so far from damaging Abraham's spiritual condition, rather brought out, in full relief, his heavenly principles, and strengthened, in his soul, the life of faith. Moreover, it cleared the prospect for him, and delivered him from the company of one who could only prove a dead weight. Thus it worked for good, and yielded a harvest of blessing. It is, at once, most solemn, and yet most encouraging, to bear in mind that, in the long run, men find their proper level. Men who run unsest, break down, in one way or another, and find their way back to that which they profess to have left. On the other hand, those who are called of God, and lean on Him, are, by His grace, sustained. "Their path is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The thought of this should keep us humble, watchful, and prayerful. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," for, truly, "there are first that shall be last, and there are last that shall be first." "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved," is a principle which, whatever be its specific application, has a wide moral bearing. Many a vessel has sailed out of harbour, in gallant style, with all its canvass spread, amid cheering and shouting, and with many fair promises of a first-rate passage; but, alas! storms, waves, shoals, rocks, and quicksands, have changed the aspect of things; and the voyage that commenced with hope, has ended in disaster. I am, here, only referring to the path of service and testimony, and, by no means, to the question of a man's eternal acceptance in Christ. This latter, blessed be God, does not, in any wise, rest with ourselves, but with Him who has said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." But, do we not know, that many Christians set out on some special course of service or testimony, under the impression that they are called of God thereto, and, after a time, they break down? Unquestionably. And, further, very many set out in the profession of some special principle of action, respecting which they have not been divinely taught, or the consequences of which they have not maturely considered in the presence of God, and, as a necessary result, they themselves have been found, after a time, in the open violation of those very principles. ALL this is deplorable, and should be carefully avoided. It tends to weaken the faith of

God's elect, and causes the enemies of the truth to speak reproachfully. Each one should receive his call and his commission directly from the Master Himself. ALL whom Christ calls into any special service, He will, infallibly, maintain therein, for He never sent any one a warfare at his own charges. But if we run unsest, we shall not only be left to *learn* our folly, but to *exhibit* it.

Yet, it is not that any one should set himself up as the impersonation of any principle, or as an example of any special character of service or testimony. God forbid. This would be the most egregious folly, and empty conceit. It is a teacher's business to set forth Gods Word; and it is a servant's business to set forth the Master's will; but while all this is fully understood and admitted, we must ever remember the deep need there is of counting the cost, ere we undertake to build a tower, or go forth to war. Were this more seriously attended to, there would be far less confusion and failure in our midst. Abraham was called of God from Ur to Canaan, and, hence, God led him forth on the way. When Abraham tarried at Charran, God waited for him; when he went down into Egypt, He restored him; when he needed guidance, He guided him; when there was a strife and a separation, He took care of him; so that Abraham had only to say, "Oh, how great is thy goodness *which thou hast laid up* for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men." He lost nothing by the strife. He had his tent and his altar before; and he had his tent and his altar afterwards. "Then Abram removed *his tent*, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there *an altar* unto the Lord." Lot might choose Sodom; but as for Abraham, he sought and found his all in God. There was no altar in Sodom. Alas! all who travel in that direction are in quest of something quite different from that. It is never the worship of God, but the love of the world, that leads them thither. And even though they should attain their object, what is it? How does it end? Just thus, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls."

Genesis 14

We are, here, presented with an historic record of the revolt of five kings from under the hand of Chederlaomer, and a battle consequent thereon. The Spirit of God can occupy himself with the movements of "kings and their armies," when such movements are in anywise connected with the people of God. In the present case, Abraham personally had nothing whatever to do with the revolt or its consequences. His "tent and altar" were not likely to furnish an occasion for the declaration of war, nor yet to be much affected by the outbreak or issue thereof. The proper portion of a heavenly man could never, by any possibility, tempt the cupidity nor excite the ambition of the kings and conquerors of this world.

However, although Abraham was not affected by the battle of "four kings with five," yet Lot was. His position was such as to involve him in the whole affair. So long as we are enabled, through grace, to pursue the path of simple faith, we shall be thrown completely outside the range of this world's circumstances; but if we abandon our high and holy position as those whose "citizenship" is in heaven," and seek a name, a place, and a portion in the earth, we must expect to participate in earth's convulsions and vicissitudes. Lot had taken up his abode in the plains of Sodom, and was, therefore, deeply and sensibly affected by the wars of Sodom. It must ever be thus. It is a bitter and a painful thing for the child of God to mingle himself with the children of this world. He can never do so without serious damage to his own soul, as well as to the testimony with which he is entrusted. What testimony had Lot in Sodom? A very feeble one, indeed, if one at all. The very fact of his settling himself there was the death blow to his testimony. To have spoken a word against Sodom and its ways, would have been to condemn himself, for why was he there? But, in truth, it does not, by any means, appear that, to testify for God, formed any part of his object in "pitching his tent toward Sodom." Personal and family interests seem to have been the leading springs of action in his heart: and though, as Peter tells us, "his righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, from day to day," yet had he but little power to act against it, even if inclined so to do.

It is important, in a practical point of view, to see that we cannot be governed by two objects at the same time. For example, I cannot have before my mind, as objects, my worldly interests and the interests of the gospel of Christ. If I go to a town for the purpose of setting up in business, then, clearly, business is my object, and not the gospel. I may, no doubt, propose to myself both to attend to business and to preach the gospel as well; but, all the while, either one or the other must be my object. It is not that a servant of Christ may not most blessedly and effectually preach the gospel and attend to business also; he assuredly may; but, in such a case, the gospel will be his object, and not business. Paul preached the gospel and made tents; but the gospel was his object, and not tent making. If I make business my object, the gospel preaching will speedily prove to be formal and unprofitable work; yea, it will be well if it be not made use of to sanctify my covetousness. The heart is very treacherous; and it is often truly astonishing to see how it deceives us when we desire to gain some special point. It will furnish, in abundance, the most plausible reasons; while the eyes of our understanding are so blinded by self-interest, or unjudged wilfulness, as to be incapable of detecting their plausibility. How frequently do we hear persons defending a continuance in a position which they admit to be wrong, on the plea that they thereby enjoy a wider sphere of usefulness. To all such reasoning, Samuel furnishes a pointed and powerful reply, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Which was, Abraham or Lot, able to do the more good? Does not the history of those two men prove, beyond a question, that the most effectual way to serve the world is to be faithful to it, by separating from, and testifying against it?

But, be it remembered, that genuine separation from the world can only be the result of communion with God. I may seclude myself from the world, and constitute myself the centre of my being, like a monk or a cynic; but separation to God is a totally different thing. The one chills and contracts, the other warms and expands. That drives us in upon ourselves; this draws us out in love and interest for others. That makes self and its interests our centre; this makes God and His glory our centre. Thus, in Abraham's case, we see that the very fact of his separation enabled him to render effectual service to one who had involved himself in trouble by his

worldly ways. "When Abraham heard that *his brother* was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan..... and he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." Lot was Abraham's brother, after all; and brotherly love must act. "A brother is born for adversity;" and it often happened that a season of Adversity softens the heart, and renders it susceptible of kindness, even from one with whom we have had to part company; and it is remarkable that, while, in verse 12, we read, "they took Lot, *Abraham's brother's son,*" yet, in verse 14, we read, "when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive." The claims of a brother's trouble are answered by the affections of a brother's heart. This is divine. Genuine faith, while it always renders us independent, never renders us indifferent. It will never wrap itself up in its fleece while a brother shivers in the cold. There are three things which faith does; it "purifies the heart;" it "works by love;" and it "overcomes the world;" and all these results of faith are beautifully exhibited in Abraham on this occasion. His heart was purified from Sodom's pollutions; he manifested genuine love to Lot his brother; and, finally, he was completely victorious over the kings. Such are the precious fruits of faith, that heavenly, Christ honouring principle.

However, the man of faith is not exempt from the assaults of the enemy; and it frequently happens that immediately after a victory, one has to encounter a fresh temptation. Thus it was with Abraham. "The king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chederlaomer, and of the kings that were with him." There was, evidently, a very deep and insidious design of the enemy in this movement. "The king of Sodom" presents a very different thought, and exhibits a very different phase of the enemy's power, from what we have in "Chederlaomer and the kings that were with him." In the former, we have rather the hiss of the serpent; in the latter, the roar of the lion; but whether it were the serpent or the lion, the Lord's grace was amply sufficient; and most seasonably was this grace ministered to the Lord's servant, at the exact moment of need. "And Melchisedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of

heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." we have, here, to remark, first, the peculiar point at which Melchisedek enters the scene; and, secondly, the double effect of his ministry. He did not come forth when Abraham was in pursuit of Chederlaomer, but when the king of Sodom was in pursuit of Abraham. This makes a great moral difference. A deeper character of communion was needed to meet the deeper character of conflict.

And, then, as to the ministry, the "bread and wine" refreshed Abraham's spirit, after his conflict with Chederlaomer; while the benediction prepared his heart for his conflict with the king of Sodom. Abraham was a conqueror, and yet he was about to be a combatant, and the royal priest refreshed the conqueror's spirit, and fortified the combatant's heart.

It is peculiarly sweet to observe the manner in which Melchizedek introduces God to the thoughts of Abraham. He calls Him "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth;" and, not only so, but pronounces Abraham "blessed" of that same God. This was effectually preparing him for the king of Sodom. A man who was "blessed" of God, did not need to take aught from the enemy; and if the possessor of heaven and earth" filled his vision, "the goods" of Sodom could have but little attraction. Hence, as might be expected, when the king of Sodom made his proposal, "give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself," Abraham replies, "I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." Abraham refuses to be enriched by the king of Sodom. How could he think of delivering Lot from the power of the world, if he himself were governed thereby? The only true way in which to deliver another is to be thoroughly delivered myself. So long as I am in the fire, it is quite impossible I can pluck another out of it. The path of separation is the path of power, as it is also the path of peace and blessedness.

The world, in all its various forms, is the great instrument of which Satan makes use, in order to weaken the hands, and alienate the affections, of the servants of Christ. But, blessed be God, when

the heart is true to Him, He always comes in to cheer, to strengthen, and to fortify, at the right time. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." (2 Chr. 16: 9) This is an encouraging truth for our poor, timid, doubting, faltering hearts. Christ will be our strength and shield. He will "cover our heads in the day of battle;" He will "teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight;" and finally, "He will bruise Satan under our feet shortly." ALL this is unspeakably comforting to a heart sincerely desirous of making way against "the world, the flesh, and the devil." May the Lord keep our hearts true to Himself, in the midst of the ensnaring scene around us.

Genesis 15

"After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram. I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." The Lord would not suffer His servant to be a loser, by rejecting the offers of this world. It was infinitely better for Abraham to find himself hidden behind Jehovah's shield, than to take refuge beneath the patronage of the king of Sodom; and to be anticipating his "exceeding great reward," than to accept "the goods" of Sodom. The position into which Abraham is put, in the opening verse of our chapter, is beautifully expressive of the position into which every soul is introduced by the faith of Christ. Jehovah was his "shield," that He might rest in Him; Jehovah was his "reward," that he might wait for Him. So with the believer now: he finds his present rest, his present peace, his present security, all in Christ. No dart of the enemy can possibly penetrate the shield which covers the weakest believer in Jesus.

And then, as to the future, Christ fills it. Precious portion! Precious hope! A portion which can never be exhausted: a hope which will never make ashamed. Both are infallibly secured by the counsels of God, and the accomplished atonement of Christ. The present enjoyment thereof is by the ministry of the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. This being the case, it is manifest that if the believer is pursuing a worldly career, or indulging in worldly, or carnal desires, he cannot be enjoying either the "shield" or the "reward. If the Holy Ghost is grieved, He will not minister the enjoyment of that which is our proper portion — our proper hope. Hence, in the section of Abraham's history now before us, we see that when he had returned from the slaughter of the kings, and rejected the offer of the king of Sodom, Jehovah rose before his soul in the double character, as his "Shield and his exceeding great reward. Let the heart ponder this, for it contains a volume of deeply practical truth. We shall now examine the remainder of the chapter.

In it we have unfolded to us the two great principles of sonship and heirship. "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed:

and lo, one born in my house is mine heir." Abraham desired a son, for he knew, upon divine authority, that his "seed" should inherit the land. (Gen. 13: 15) Sonship and heirship are inseparably connected in the thoughts of God "He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." Sonship is the proper basis of everything; and, moreover, it is the result of God's sovereign counsel and operation, as we read in James, "of his own will begat he us." Finally, it is founded upon God's eternal principle of resurrection. How else could it be? Abraham's body was "dead;" wherefore, in his case, as in every other, sonship must be in the power of resurrection. Nature is dead, and can neither beget nor conceive ought for God. There lay the inheritance stretching out before the patriarch's eye, in all its magnificent dimensions; but where was the heir? Abraham's body and Sarah's womb alike answered "death." But Jehovah is the God of resurrection, and, therefore, a "dead body" was the very thing for Him to act upon. Had nature not been dead, God should have put it to death ere He could fully show Himself. The most suitable theatre for the living God is that from which nature, with all its boasted powers and empty pretensions, has been totally expelled by the sentence of death. Wherefore, God's word to Abraham was, "look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be." When the God of resurrection fills the vision there is no limit to the soul's blessing, for He who can quicken the dead, can do anything.

"And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it unto him for righteousness." The imputation of righteousness to Abraham is, here, founded upon his believing in the Lord as the Quickener of the dead. It is in this character that He reveals Himself in a world where death reigns; and when a soul believes in Him, as such, it is counted righteous in His sight. This necessarily shuts man out, as regards his co-operation, for what can he do in the midst of a scene of death? Can he raise the dead? Can he open the gates of the grave? Can he deliver himself from the power of death, and walk forth, in life and liberty, beyond the limits of its dreary domain? Assuredly not. Well, then, if he cannot do so, he cannot work out righteousness, nor establish himself in the relation of sonship. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," and, therefore, so long as a man is under the power of death, and under the dominion of sin, he can neither

know the position of a son, nor the condition of righteousness. Thus, God alone can bestow the adoption of sons, and He alone can impute righteousness, and both are connected with faith in Him as the One who raised up Christ from the dead.

It is in this way that the apostle handles the question of Abraham's faith, in Romans 4, where he says, "It was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed unto him; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, *if We believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.*" Here, the God of resurrection is presented "to us also," as the object of faith, and our faith in Him as the alone ground of our righteousness. If Abraham had looked up into heaven's vault, spangled with innumerable stars, and then looked at "his own body now dead," how could he ever grasp the idea of a seed as numerous as those stars? Impossible. But he did not look at his own body, but at the resurrection power of God, and, inasmuch as that was the power which was to produce the seed, we can easily see that the stars of heaven and the sand on the sea-shore are but feeble figures indeed; for what natural object could possibly illustrate the effect of that power which can raise the dead ?

So also, when a sinner hearkens to the glad tidings of the gospel, were he to look up to the unsullied light of the divine presence, and then look: down into the unexplored depths of his own evil nature, he might well exclaim, How can I ever get thither? How can I ever be fit to dwell in that light? Where is the answer? In himself? Nay, blessed be God, but in that blessed! One, who travelled from the bosom to the cross and the grave, and from thence to the throne, thus filling up, in His Person and work, all the space between those extreme points. There can be nothing higher than the bosom of God — the eternal dwelling-place of the Son; and there can be nothing lower than the cross and the grave; but, amazing truth! I find Christ in both. I find Him in the bosom, and I and Him in the grave. He went down into death in order that He might leave behind Him, in the dust thereof, the full weight of His people's sins and iniquities. Christ, in the grave, exhibits the end of everything human — the end of sin — the full limit of Satan's power. The grave of Jesus forms the grand terminus of death. But resurrection takes us beyond this terminus, and constitutes the imperishable basis on

which God's glory and man's blessing repose for ever. The moment the eye of faith rests on a risen Christ, there is a triumphant answer to every question as to sin, judgement, death, and the grave. The One who divinely met all these, is alive from the dead; and has taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens; and, not only so, but the Spirit of that risen and glorified One, in the believer, constitutes him a son. He is quickened out of the grave of Christ: as we read, "and you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. 2: 13)

Hence, therefore, sonship, being founded on resurrection, stands connected with perfect justification — perfect righteousness — perfect freedom from everything which could, in any wise, be against us. God could not have us in His presence with sin upon us. He could not suffer a single speck or stain of sin upon His sons and daughters. The father could not have the prodigal at *His* table with the rags of the far country upon him. He could go forth to meet him in those rags. He could fall upon his neck and kiss him, in those rags. It was worthy, and beautifully characteristic of his *grace* so to do; but then to seat him at his table in the rags would never do. The grace that brought the father out to the prodigal, reigns through the righteousness which brought the prodigal in to the father. It would not have been grace had the father waited for the son to deck himself in robes of his own providing; and it would not have been righteous to bring him in in his rags; but both grace and righteousness shone forth in all their respective brightness and beauty when the father went out and fell on the prodigal's neck; but yet did not give him a seat at the table until he was clad and decked in a manner suited to that elevated and happy position. God, in Christ, has stooped to the very lowest point of man's moral condition, that, by stooping He might raise man to the very highest point of blessedness, in fellowship with Himself. From all this, it follows, that our sonship, with all its consequent dignities and privileges, is entirely independent of us. We have just as little to do with it as Abraham's dead body and Sarah's dead womb had to do with a seed as numerous as the stars which garnish the heavens, or as the sand on the seashore. It is all of God. God the Father drew the plan, God the Son laid the foundation, and God the Holy Ghost raises the

superstructure; and on this superstructure, appears the inscription, "THROUGH GRACE, BY FAITH, WITHOUT WORKS OF LAW"

But, then, our chapter opens another most important subject to our view, namely, *heirship*. The question of sonship and righteousness being fully settled — divinely and unconditionally settled, the Lord said unto Abraham, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." Here comes out the great question of heirship, and the peculiar path along which the chosen heirs are to travel ere they reach the promised inheritance. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we *suffer* with him, that we may be also glorified together." Our way to the kingdom lies through suffering, affliction, and tribulation; but, thank God, we can, by faith, say, "the *sufferings* of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And further, we know that "our *light affliction* which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Finally, "we glory in *tribulation*, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." It is a high honour and a real privilege to be allowed to drink of our blessed Master's cup, and be baptised with His baptism; to travel in blest companionship with Him along the road which leads directly to the glorious inheritance. The Heir and the joint-heirs reach that inheritance by the pathway of suffering.

But let it be remembered that the suffering of which the joint-heirs participate has no penal element in it. It is not suffering from the hand of infinite justice, because of sin; all that was fully met on the cross, when the divine victim bowed His sacred head beneath the stroke. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins," and that "once," was on the tree and *nowhere else*. He never suffered for sins before and He never can suffer for sins again. "*Once*, in the end of the world, (the end of all flesh,) hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." "Christ was *once* offered."

There are two ways in which to view a suffering Christ: first, as bruised of Jehovah; secondly, as rejected of men. In the former, He stood alone; in the latter, we have the honour of being associated with Him. In the former, I say, He stood alone, for who could have

stood with Him? He bore the wrath of God alone; He travelled in solitude, down into "the rough valley that had neither been eared nor sown," and there He settled, for ever, the question of our sins. *With* this we had nothing to do, though to this we are eternally indebted for everything. He fought the fight and gained the victory, alone; but He divides the spoils with us. He was in solitude in the horrible pit and miry clay;" but directly He planted His foot on the everlasting "rock of resurrection, He associates us with Him. He uttered the cry alone; He sings the "*new song*" in company. (Ps. 40: 2, 3)

Now, the question is, shall we refuse to suffer from the hand of man *with Him* who suffered from the hand of God *for us* That it is, in a certain sense. a question is evident, from the Spirit's constant use of the word "IF" in connection with it. "If so be we suffer; If, with him." "If we suffer, we shall reign." There is no such question as to sonship. We do not reach the high dignity of sons through suffering, but through the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, founded on the accomplished work of Christ, according to God's eternal counsel. This can never be touched. We do not reach the *family* through suffering. The apostle does not say, "that ye may be counted worthy of the *family* of God for which ye also suffer." They were in the family already; but they were bound for the kingdom; and their road to that kingdom lay through suffering; and not only so, but the measure of suffering for the kingdom would be according to their devotedness and conformity to the King. The more like we are *to Him*, the more we shall suffer *with Him*; and the deeper our fellowship with Him in the suffering, the deeper will be our fellowship in the glory. There is a difference between the *house* of the Father and the kingdom of the Son: in the former, it will be a question of capacity; in the latter, a question of assigned position. All my children may be round my table, but their enjoyment of my company and conversation will entirely depend on their capacity. One may be seated on my knee, in the full enjoyment of his relationship, as a child, yet perfectly unable to comprehend a word I say; another may exhibit uncommon intelligence in conversation, yet not be a whit happier in his relationship than the infant on my knee. But when it becomes a question of service for me, or public identification with me, it is, evidently, quite another thing. This is

but a feeble illustration of the idea of capacity in the Father's house, and assigned position in the kingdom of the Son.

But let it be remembered that our suffering with Christ is not a yoke of bondage, but a matter of privilege; not an iron rule, but a gracious gift; not constrained servitude, but voluntary devotedness. "Unto you *it is given*, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Phil. 1: 29) Moreover, there can be little doubt but that the real secret of suffering for Christ is to have the heart's affections centred in Him. The more I love Jesus, the closer I shall walk with Him, and the closer I walk with Him, the more faithfully I shall imitate Him, and the more faithfully I imitate Him, the more I shall suffer with Him. Thus it all flows from love to Christ; and then it is a fundamental truth that "we love him because he first loved us." In this, as in everything else, let us beware of a legal spirit; for it must not be imagined that a man, with the yoke of legality round his neck, is suffering for Christ; alas ! it is much to be feared that such an one does not know Christ; does not know the blessedness of sonship; has not yet been established in grace; is rather seeking to reach the family by works of law, than to reach the kingdom by the path of suffering.

On the other hand, let us see that we are not shrinking from our Master's cup and baptism. Let us not profess to enjoy the benefits which His cross secures, while we refuse the rejection which that cross involves. We may rest assured that the road to the kingdom is not enlightened by the sunshine of this world's favour, nor strewn with the roses of its prosperity. If a Christian is advancing in the world, he has much reason to apprehend that he is not walking in company with Christ. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be." What was the goal of Christ's earthly career? Was it an elevated, influential position in this world? By no means. What then? He found His place on the cross, between two condemned malefactors. "But," it will be said, "God was in this." and yet man was in it likewise; and this latter truth is what must inevitably secure our rejection by the world, if only we keep in company with Christ. The companionship of Christ, which lets me into heaven, casts me out of earth; and to talk of the former, while I am ignorant of the latter,

proves there is something wrong. If Christ were on earth, now, what would His path be? Whither would it tend? Where would it terminate? Would we like to walk with Him? Let us answer those enquiries under the edge of the word, and under the eye of the Almighty; and may the Holy Ghost make us faithful to an absent — a rejected — a crucified Master. The man who walks in the Spirit will be filled with Christ; and, being filled with Him, he will not be occupied with suffering, but with Him for whom he suffers. If the eye is fixed on Christ, the suffering will be as nothing in comparison with the present joy and future glory.

The subject of heirship has led me much further than I intended; but I do not regret it, as it is of considerable importance. Let us now briefly glance at the deeply significant vision of Abraham as set forth in the closing verses of our chapter. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.....And it came to pass, that, *when the sun went down*, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces."

The entire of Israel's history is summed up in those two figures, the "furnace" and the "lamp." The former presents to us those periods of their history in which they were brought into suffering and trial; such, for example, as the long period of Egyptian bondage, their subjection to the kings of Canaan, the Babylonish captivity, their present dispersed and degraded condition. During all these periods they may be considered as passing through the smoking furnace. (See Deut. 4: 20; 1 Kings 8: 51; Isa. 48: 10.)

Then, in the burning lamp, we have those points in Israel's eventful history at which Jehovah graciously appeared for their relief, such as their deliverance from Egypt, by the hand of Moses; their deliverance from under the power of the kings of Canaan, by the ministry of the various judges; their return from Babylon, by the decree of Cyrus; and their final deliverance, when Christ shall

appear in His glory. The inheritance must be reached through the furnace; and the darker the smoke of the furnace, the brighter and more cheering will be the lamp of God's salvation. Nor is this principle confined merely to the people of God, as a whole; it applies, just as fully, to individuals. Who have ever reached a position of eminence as servants, have endured the furnace before they enjoyed the lamp. "An horror of great darkness" passed across the spirit of Abraham. Jacob had to endure twenty-one years of sore hardship, in the house of Laban. Joseph found his furnace of affliction in the dungeons of Egypt. Moses spent forty years in the desert. Thus it must be with all God's *servants*. They must be "tried" first, that, being found "faithful," they may be "put into the ministry." God's principle, in reference to those who serve Him, is expressed in those words of St. Paul, "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim 3: 6)

It is one thing to be a *child* of God; it is quite another to be a *servant of Christ*. I may love my child very much, yet, if I set him to work in my garden, he may do more harm than good. Why? Is it because he is not a dear child? No; but because he is not a practised servant. This makes all the difference. Relationship and office are distinct things. Not one of the Queen's children is, at present, capable of being her prime minister. It is not that all God's children have not something to do, something to suffer, something to learn. Undoubtedly they have; yet it ever holds good, that *public service and private discipline* are intimately connected in the ways of God. One who comes forward much, in public, will need that chastened spirit, that matured judgement, that subdued and mortified mind, that broken will, that mellow tone, which are the sure and beautiful result of God's secret discipline; and it will, generally, be found that those who take a prominent place without more or less of the above moral qualifications, will, sooner or later, break down.

Lord Jesus, keep thy feeble servants very near unto thine own Most Blessed Person, and in the hollow of thine Hand!

Genesis 16

Here we find unbelief casting its dark shadow across the spirit of Abraham, and again turning him aside, for a season, from the path of simple, happy confidence in God. "And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold the Lord hath restrained me from bearing." These words bespeak the usual impatience of unbelief; and Abraham should have treated them accordingly, and waited patiently on the Lord for the accomplishment of His gracious promise. The poor heart naturally prefers anything to the attitude of *waiting*. It will turn to any expedient — any scheme — any resource, rather than be kept in that posture. It is one thing to believe a promise, at the first, and quite another thing to wait quietly for the accomplishment thereof. We can see this distinction constantly, exemplified in a child. If I promise my child anything, he has no idea of doubting my word; but yet, I can detect the greatest possible restlessness and impatience in reference to the time and manner of accomplishment. And cannot the wisest sage find a true mirror in which to see himself reflected, in the conduct of a child? Truly so. Abraham exhibits faith, in Gen. 15 and yet he fails in patience, in Gen. 16. Hence the force and beauty of the apostle's word, in Hebrews 6, "followers of them who through *faith and patience* inherit the promises." God makes a promise, faith believes it; hope anticipates it; patience *waits* quietly for it.

There is such a thing, in the commercial world, as "the present worth" of a bill or promissory note, for if men are called upon to wait for their money, they must be paid for waiting. Now, in faith's world, there is such a thing as the present worth of God's promise; and the scale by which that worth is regulated, is the heart's experimental knowledge of God; for according to my estimate of God, will be my estimate of His promise; and moreover, the subdued and patient spirit finds its rich and full reward in waiting upon Him for the accomplishment of all that He has promised.

However, as to Sarah, the real amount of her word to Abraham is this, "the Lord has failed me; it may be, my Egyptian maid will prove a resource for me." Anything but God for a heart under the influence of unbelief. It is often truly marvellous to observe the

trifles to which we will betake ourselves, when once we have lost the sense of God's nearness, His infallible faithfulness, and unfailing sufficiency. We lose that calm and well-balanced condition of soul, so essential to the proper testimony of the man of faith; and, just like other people, betake ourselves to any or every expedient, in order to reach the wished-for end, and call that "a laudable use of means."

But it is a bitter thing to take ourselves out of the place of absolute dependence upon God. The consequences must be disastrous. Had Sarah said, 'Nature has failed me, but God is my resource,' how different it would have been! This would have been her proper ground; for nature really had failed her. But, then, it was nature in one shape, and therefore she wished to try nature in another. She had not learnt to look away from nature in every shape. In the judgement of God, and of faith, nature in Hagar was no better than nature in Sarah. Nature, whether old or young, is alike to God; and, therefore, alike to faith; but, ah! we are only in the power of this truth when we are experimentally finding our living centre in God Himself. When the eye is taken off that Glorious Being, we are ready for the meanest device of unbelief. It is only when we are consciously leaning on the only true, the only wise, the living God, that we are enabled to look away from every creature stream. It is not that we shall despise God's instrumentality. By no means. To do so would be recklessness and not faith. Faith values the instrument, not because of itself, but because of Him who uses it. Unbelief looks only at the instrument, and judges of the success of a matter by the apparent efficiency thereof, instead of by the sufficiency of Him who, in grace, uses it. Like Saul, who, when he looked at David, and then looked at the Philistine, said, "thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth." Yet the question in David's heart was not as to whether he was able, but whether Jehovah was able.

The path of faith is a very simple and a very narrow one. It neither deifies the means, on the one hand, nor despises it, on the other. It simply values it, so far as it is evidently God's means, and no further. There is a vast difference between God's using the creature to minister to me, and my using it to shut Him out. This difference is not sufficiently attended to. God used the ravens to

minister to Elijah, but Elijah did not use them to exclude God. If the heart be really trusting in God, it will not trouble itself about His means. It waits on Him, in the sweet Assurance that by what means soever He pleases, He will bless, He will minister, He will provide.

Now, in the case before us, in this chapter, it is evident that Hagar was not God's instrument for the accomplishment of His promise to Abraham. He had promised a son, no doubt, but He had not said that this son would be Hagar's; and, in point of fact, we find from the narrative, that both Abraham and Sarah "multiplied their sorrow," by having recourse to Hagar; for "when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes." This was but the beginning of those multiplied sorrows, which flowed from hastening after nature's resources. Sarah's dignity was trampled down by an Egyptian bond-woman, and she found herself in the place of weakness and contempt. The only true place of dignity and power is the place of felt weakness and dependence. There is no one so entirely independent of all around, as the man who is really walking by faith, and waiting only upon God; but the moment a child of God makes himself a debtor to nature or the world, he loses his dignity, and will speedily be made to feel his loss. It is no easy task to estimate the loss sustained by diverging, in the smallest measure, from the path of faith. No doubt, all those who walk in that path will find trial and exercise; but one thing is certain, that the blessings and joys which peculiarly belong to them are infinitely more than a counterpoise; whereas, when they turn aside, they have to encounter far deeper trial, and nought but that.

"And Sarai said, My wrong be *upon thee*." When we act wrong, we are, oft-times, prone to lay the blame on some one else. Sarah was only reaping the fruit of her own proposal, and yet she says to Abraham, "My wrong be upon thee;" and then, with Abraham's permission, she seeks to get rid of the trial which her own impatience had brought upon her. "But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarah dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face." This will not do. "The bond-woman" cannot be got rid of by hard treatment. When we make mistakes, and find ourselves called upon to encounter the results thereof, we cannot counteract those results by

carrying ourselves with a high hand. We frequently try this method, but we are sure to make matters worse thereby. If we have done wrong, we should humble ourselves and confess the wrong, and wait on God for deliverance. But there was nothing like this manifested in Sarah's case. Quite the reverse. There is no sense of having done wrong; and, so far from waiting on God for deliverance, she seeks to deliver herself in her own way. However, it will always be found that every effort which we make to rectify our errors, previous to the full confession thereof, only tends to render our path more difficult. Thus Hagar had to return, and give birth to her son, which son proved to be not the child of promise at all, but a very great trial to Abraham and his house, as we shall see in the sequel.

Now, we should view all this in a double aspect: first, as teaching us a direct practical principle of much value; and secondly, in a doctrinal point of view. And, first, as to the direct, practical teaching, we may learn that when, through the unbelief of our hearts, we make mistakes, it is not all in a moment, nor yet by our own devices, we can remedy them. Things must take their course. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." This is an unalterable principle, meeting us, again and again, on the page of inspiration, and also on the page of our personal history. Grace forgives the sin and restores the soul, but that which is sown must be reaped. Abraham and Sarah had to endure the presence of the bond-woman and her son for a number of years, and, then, get rid of them in God's way. There is peculiar blessedness in leaving ourselves in God's hands. Had Abraham and Sarah done so, on the present occasion, they would never have been troubled with the presence of the bond-woman and her son; but, having made themselves debtors to nature, they had to endure the consequences. But, alas! we are often "like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke," when it would be our exceeding comfort to "behave and quiet ourselves as a child that is weaned of his mother." No two figures can be more opposite than a stubborn bullock and a weaned child. The former represents person senselessly struggling under the yoke of circumstances, and rendering his yoke all the more galling by his efforts to get rid of it;

the latter represents one meekly bowing his hand to everything, and rendering his portion all the sweeter, by entire subjection of spirit.

And, now, as to the doctrinal view of this chapter. We are authorised to look at Hagar and her son, as figures of the covenant of works, and all who are thereby brought into bondage. (Gal. 4: 22-25) "The flesh" is, in this important passage, contrasted with "promise;" and thus we not only get the divine idea as to what the term "flesh" implies, but also as to Abraham's effort to obtain the seed by means of Hagar, instead of resting in God's "promise." The two covenants are allegorised by Hagar and Sarah, and are diametrically opposite the one to the other. The one gendering to bondage, inasmuch as it raised the question as to man's competency "to do" and "not to do," and made life entirely dependent upon that competency. "The man that doeth these things shall live in them." This was the Hagar-covenant. But the Sarah-covenant reveals God as the God of promise, which promise is entirely independent of man, and founded upon God's willingness and ability to fulfil it. When God makes a promise, there is no "if" attached thereto. He makes it unconditionally, and is resolved to fulfil it; and faith rests in Him, in perfect liberty of heart. It needs no effort of nature to reach the accomplishment of A divine promise. Here was, precisely, where Abraham and Sarah failed. They made an effort of nature to reach a certain end, which end was absolutely secured by a promise of God. This is the grand mistake of unbelief. By its restless activity, it raises a hazy mist around the soul, which hinders the beams of the divine glory from reaching. "He could there do no mighty works, because of their unbelief." One great characteristic virtue of faith is, that it ever leaves the platform clear for God to show Himself; and truly, when He shows Himself, man must take the place of a happy worshipper.

The error into which the Galatians allowed themselves to be drawn, was the addition of something of nature to what Christ had already accomplished for them by the cross. The gospel which had been preached to them, and which they had received, was the simple presentation of God's absolute, unqualified, and unconditional grace. "Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth crucified among them." This was not merely promise divinely made, but promise divinely

and most gloriously accomplished. A crucified Christ settled everything, in reference both to God's claims and man's necessities. But the false teachers upset all this, or sought to upset it, by saying, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This, as the apostle teaches them, was, in reality, "making Christ of none effect." Christ must either be a *whole* Saviour, or no Saviour at all. the moment a man says, "except ye he this or that, ye cannot be saved," he totally subverts Christianity ; for in Christianity I find God coming down to me, *just as I am*, a lost, guilty, self-destroyed sinner; and coming, moreover, with a full remission of all my sins, and a full salvation from my lost estate, all perfectly wrought by Himself on the cross.

Hence, therefore, a man who tells me, "you must be so and so, in order to be saved," robs the cross of all its glory, and robs me of all my peace. If salvation depends upon our being or doing ought, we shall, inevitably, be lost. Thank God, it does not; for the great fundamental principle of the gospel is, that God is ALL — man is NOTHING. It is not a mixture of God and man. It is all of God. The peace of the gospel does not repose, in part, on Christ's work; and, in part, on man's work; it reposes *wholly* on Christ's work, because that work is perfect — perfect for ever; and it renders all who put their trust in it as perfect as itself.

Under the law, God, as it were, stood still to see what man could do; but, in the gospel, God is seen acting, and as for man, he has but to "stand still and see the salvation of God." This being so, the inspired apostle hesitates not to say to the Galatians, "Christ is become of no effect unto you; whosoever of you are justified by law, (*en nomo*.) ye are fallen from grace." If man has anything to do in the matter, God is shut out; and if God is shut out, there can be no salvation, for it is impossible that man can work out a salvation by that which proves him a lost creature; and then if it be a question of *grace*, it must be all grace. It cannot be half grace, half law. The two covenants are perfectly distinct. It cannot be half Sarah and half Hagar. It must be either the one or the other. If it be Hagar, God has nothing to do with it; and if it be Sarah, man has nothing to do with it. Thus it stands throughout. The law addresses man, tests him, sees what he is really worth, proves him a ruin, and puts him under the

curse; and not only puts him under it, but keeps him there, so long as he is occupied with it so long as he is alive. "The law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth;" but when he is dead, its dominion necessarily ceases, so far as he is concerned, though it still remains in full force to curse every *living* man.

The gospel, on the contrary, assuming man to be lost ruined, dead, reveals God as He is — the Saviour of the lost — the Pardoner of the guilty — the Quickener of the dead. It reveals Him, not as exacting ought from man; (for what could be expected from one who has died a bankrupt) but as exhibiting His own independent grace in redemption. This makes a material difference and will account for the extraordinary strength of the language employed in the Epistle to the Galatians: "I marvel" — "Who hath bewitched you" — "I am afraid of you" — "I stand in doubt of you" — "I would they were even cut off that trouble you." This is the language of the Holy Ghost, who knows the value of a full Christ, and a full salvation; and who also knows how essential the knowledge of both is to a lost sinner. We have no such language as this in any other epistle; not even in that to the Corinthians, although there were some of the grossest disorders to be corrected amongst them. all human failure and error can be corrected by bringing in God's grace; but the Galatians, like Abraham in this chapter, were going away from God, and returning to the flesh. What remedy could be devised for this? How can yon correct an error which consists in departing from that which alone can correct anything? To fall from grace, is to get back under the law, from which nothing can ever be reaped but "the curse." May the Lord establish our hearts in His own most excellent grace!

Genesis 17

Here we have God's remedy for Abraham's failure set before us." And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, I am the *Almighty God*: walk before *me*, and be thou *perfect*."* This is a most comprehensive verse. It is very evident that Abraham had not been walking before the Almighty God when he adopted Sarah's expedient in reference to Hagar. It is faith alone that can enable a man to walk up and down before an Almighty One. Unbelief will ever be thrusting in something of self, something of circumstances, second causes, and the like, and thus the soul is robbed of the joy and hence, the calm elevation, and holy independence, which flow from leaning upon the arm of One who can do everything. I believe we deeply need to ponder this. God is not such an abiding reality to our souls as He ought to be, or as he would be, were we walking in more simple faith and dependence.

{*I would here offer a remark as to the word "perfect." When Abraham was called upon to be "perfect," it did not mean perfect in himself; for this he never was, and never could be. It simply, meant that he should be perfect as regards the object before his heart that his hopes and expectations were to be perfectly and undividedly centred in the "Almighty God."

In looking through the New Testament, we find the word "perfect" used in, at least, four distinct senses. In Matt. 5: 48, we read, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Here we learn from the context that the word "perfect" refers to the principle of our walk. At verse 44, we read, "love your enemies,..... that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh the sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust" Hence, to be "perfect" in the sense of Matt. 5: 48 is to act on a principle of grace toward all, even toward those who are injurious and hostile. A Christian going to law, and asserting or contending for his rights, is not "perfect as his Father" for his Father is dealing in grace, whereas he is dealing in righteousness.

The question here is not as to the right or wrong of going to law with worldly people, (as to brethren, 1 Cor. 6 is conclusive.) All I contend for is, that a Christian so doing is acting in a character the direct opposite to that of his Father; for assuredly He is not going to law with the world. He is not now on a judgement-seat, but on a mercy-seat — a throne of grace. He showers His blessings upon those who, were He to go to law with them, should be in hell. Wherefore it is plain that a Christian, when he brings a man before the judgement-seat, is not "perfect as his Father which is in heaven is perfect."

At the close of Matt. 18 we have a parable which teaches us that a man who asserts his rights is ignorant of the character and proper effect of grace. The servant was not unrighteous in demanding what was due to him; but he was ungracious. He was totally unlike his master. He had been forgiven ten thousand talents, and yet he could seize his fellow by the throat for a paltry hundred pence. What was the consequence? He was delivered to the tormentors. He lost the happy sense of grace, and was left to reap the bitter fruits of having asserted his rights, while being himself a subject of grace. And, observe further, he was called a wicked servant," not because of having owed "ten thousand talents, "but because of not having forgiven the "hundred pence." The master had ample grace to settle the former, but he had not grace to settle the latter. This parable has a solemn voice for all Christians going to law; for although in the application of it, it is said, "so shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you, from your heart, forgive not every one his brother their trespasses," yet is the principle of general application, that a man acting in righteousness will lose the sense of grace.

In Hebrews 9 we have another sense of the term "Perfect." Here, too, the context settles the import of the word. It is "perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." This is a deeply important use of the term. The worshipper under the law never could have a perfect conscience, for the simplest reason possible, because he never had a perfect sacrifice. The blood of a bullock and a goat did well enough For a time, but it could not do for ever and, therefore, could not give a perfect conscience. Now, however, the weakest believer in Jesus is

privileged to have a perfect conscience. Why? Is it because he is a better man than the worshipper under the law Nay; but because he has gotten a better sacrifice. If Christ's sacrifice is perfect for ever, the believer's conscience is perfect for ever. The two things necessarily go together. For the Christian not to have a perfect conscience is a dishonour to the sacrifice of Christ. It is tantamount to saying that His sacrifice is only temporary, and not eternal in its effect; and what is this but to bring it down to the level of the sacrifices under the Mosaic economy.

It is very needful to distinguish between perfection in the flesh and perfection as to conscience. To pretend to the former, is to exalt self; to refuse the latter, is to dishonour Christ. The babe in Christ should have a perfect conscience; whereas St. Paul had not, nor could have, perfect flesh. The flesh is not presented in the word as a thing which is to be perfected, but as a thing which has been crucified. This makes a wide difference. The Christian has sin in him, but not on him. Why? Because Christ, who had no sin in Him, ever, had sin on Him, when He was nailed to the cross.

Finally, in Phil. 3 we have two other senses of the word "perfect." The apostle says, "not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," and yet a little further on he says, "Let as many as be perfect be thus minded." The former refers to the apostles full and everlasting conformity to Christ in glory. The latter refers to our having Christ as the all-engrossing object before the heart's affections. }

"Walk before *me*." This is true power. To walk thus, implies our having nothing whatever before our hearts save God Himself. If I am founding my expectation upon men and things, I am not walking before God, but before men and things. It is of the utmost importance to ascertain who or what I have before me as an object. To what am I looking? On whom or what am I leaning, at this moment? Does God *entirely* fill my future? Have men or circumstances ought to do therein? Is there any space allotted to the creature? The only way in which to get above the world is to walk by faith, because faith so completely fills the scene with God, that there is no room for the creature, no room for the world. If God fills up my entire range of vision, I can see nothing else; and then I am

able to say with the Psalmist, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God; for my expectation is from him. He *only* is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence, I shall not be moved." (Ps. 62: 5, 6) This word "only" is deeply searching. Nature cannot say this. Not that it will, save when under the direct influence of a daring and blasphemous scepticism, formally shut out God altogether; but it, assuredly, Cannot say, "*He only*."

Now, it is well to see that, as in the matter of salvation, so in all the details of actual life, from day to day, God will not share His glory with the creature. From first to last, it must be "He only;" and this, too, in reality. It will not do to have the language of dependence upon God on our lips, while our hearts are really leaning on some creature resource. God will make all this fully manifest; He will test the heart; He will put faith into the furnace. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." Thus it is we reach the proper point. When the soul is enabled, by grace, to get rid of all its fondly-cherished creature expectations, then, and only then, it is prepared to let God act; and when He acts all must be well. He will not leave anything undone. He will perfectly settle everything on behalf of those who simply put their trust in Him. When unerring wisdom, omnipotent power, and infinite love combine, the confiding heart may enjoy unruffled repose. Unless we can find some circumstance too big or too little for "the Almighty God," we have no proper base on which to found a single anxious thought. This is an amazing truth, and one eminently calculated to put all who believe it into the blessed position in which we find Abraham in this chapter. When God had, in effect, said to him, "leave *all* to me and I will settle it for you, beyond your utmost desires and expectations; the seed and the inheritance, and everything pertaining thereto, will be fully and everlastingly settled, according to the covenant of the Almighty God" — then "*Abram fell on his face*." Truly blessed attitude! the only proper one for a thoroughly empty, feeble, and unprofitable sinner, to occupy in the presence of the living God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the possessor of all things, "the Almighty God."

"And God talked with him." It is when man is in the dust, that God can talk to him in grace. Abraham's posture here, is the beautiful expression of entire prostration, in the presence of God, in

the sense of utter weakness and nothingness. and this, be it observed, is the sure precursor of God's revelation of Himself. It is when the creature is laid low that God can show Himself in the unclouded effulgence of what He is. He will not give His glory to another. He can reveal Himself, and allow man to worship in view of that revelation; but until the sinner takes his proper place, there can be no unfolding of the divine character. How different is Abraham's attitude in this and the preceding chapter! There, he had nature before him; here, he has the Almighty God. There, he was an actor; here, he is a worshipper. There, he was betaking himself to his own and Sarah's contrivance; here, he leaves himself and his circumstances, his present and his future, in God's hands, and allows Him to act in him, for him, and through him. Hence, God can say, "I will make" "I will establish" "I will give" "I will bless." In a word, it is all God and His actings; and this is real rest for the poor heart that has learnt anything of itself.

The covenant of circumcision is now introduced. Every member of the household of faith must bear in his body the seal of that covenant. There must be no exception. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant." We are taught in Romans 4, that circumcision was "a seal of the righteousness of faith." "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Being thus counted righteous, God set His "seal" upon him.

The seal with which the believer is now sealed is not a mark in the flesh, but "that Holy Spirit of promise, whereby he is sealed unto the day of redemption." This is founded upon his everlasting connection with Christ, and his perfect identification with Him, in death and resurrection; as we read, in Colossians, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye

are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." This is a most glorious passage, unfolding to us the true idea of what circumcision was meant to typify. Every believer belongs to "the circumcision" in virtue of his living association with Him who, by His cross, has for ever abolished everything that stood in the way of His Church's perfect justification. There was not a speck of sin on the conscience, nor a principle of sin in the nature of His people, for which Christ was not judged on the cross; and they are now looked upon as having died with Christ, lain in the grave with Christ, been raised with Christ, perfectly accepted in Him — their sins, their iniquities, their transgressions, their enmity, their uncircumcision, having been entirely put away by the cross. The sentence of death has been written on the flesh; but the believer is in possession of a new life, in union with His risen Head in glory.

The apostle, in the above passage, teaches that the Church was quickened out of the grave of Christ; and moreover, that the forgiveness of all her trespasses is as complete, and as entirely the work of God, as was the raising of Christ from the dead; and this latter, we know, was the result of "God's mighty power," or, as it may be rendered, "according to the energy of the might of his power" (Eph. 1: 19) — a truly wonderful expression, calculated to set forth the magnitude and glory of redemption, as well as the solid basis on which it rests.

What rest — perfect rest — for the heart and conscience is here! What full relief for the burdened spirit! *All* our sins buried in the grave of Christ — not one — even the smallest — left out! God did this for us! All that His searching eye could detect in us, He laid on the head of Christ when He hung upon the cross! He judged Him there and then, instead of judging us, in hell for ever! Precious fruit, this, of the admirable, the profound, the eternal counsels of redeeming love! And we are "sealed," not with a certain mark cut in our flesh, but with the Holy Ghost. The entire household of faith is sealed thus. Such is the dignity, the value, the changeless efficacy of

the blood of Christ, that the Holy Ghost can take up His abode in all those who have put their trust therein.

And, now, what remains for those who know these things, save to "be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Thus may it be, O Lord, through the grace of Thy Holy Spirit.

Genesis 18

This chapter affords a beautiful exemplification of the results of an obedient, separated walk. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3: 20) again, we read, "Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14: 23) From these passages, taken in connection with our chapter, we learn that an obedient soul enjoys a character of communion entirely unknown to one who moves in a worldly atmosphere.

This does not touch, in the most remote manner, the question of forgiveness or justification. All believers are clothed in the same spotless robe of righteousness—all stand in one common justification, under the eye of God. The one life flows down from the Head in heaven through all the members on earth. This is plain. The doctrine, in reference to the above important points, is fully established in the word; and has been, again and again, unfolded through the foregoing pages of this volume. But we should remember that justification is one thing, and the fruit thereof quite another. To be a child is one thing, to be an obedient child is quite another. Now, a father loves an obedient child, and will make, such a child more the depository of his thoughts and plans. And is this not true, in reference to our heavenly Father? Unquestionably. John 14 puts this quite beyond dispute; and, moreover, it proves that for one to speak of loving Christ, and not to "keep his words," is hypocrisy. "If a man love me, he will keep my words." Hence, if we are not keeping Christ's words, it is a sure proof we are not walking in the love of His name. Love to Christ is proved by doing the things which He commands, and not by merely saying, "Lord, Lord." It is of very little avail to say, "I go, sir," while the heart has no idea of going.

However, in Abraham we see one who, however he may have failed in detail, was, nevertheless, characterised, in the main, by a close, simple, and elevated walk with God; and in the interesting section of his history now before us, we find him in the enjoyment

of three special privileges, namely, providing refreshment *for* the Lord! enjoying full communion *with* the Lord, and interceding for others *before* the Lord. These are high distinctions; and yet are they only such as ever result from an obedient, separated, holy walk. Obedience refreshes the Lord, as being the fruit of His own grace in our hearts. We see in the only perfect man that ever lived, how He constantly refreshed and delighted the Father. Again and again, God "bore testimony to Him from heaven, as His "beloved Son; in whom he was well pleased." The path of Christ furnished a continual feast to Heaven. His ways were ever sending up a fragrant incense to the throne of God. From the manger to the cross, He did always the things which pleased His Father. There was no interruption, no variation, no salient point. He was the only perfect One. There only can the Spirit trace a perfect life below. Here and there, as We look along the current of inspiration, we find one and another who occasionally refreshed the mind of Heaven. Thus, in the chapter before us, we find the tent of the stranger at Mamre affording refreshment to the Lord Himself — refreshment lovingly offered, and willingly accepted. (Ver. 1-8)

Then we find Abraham enjoying high communion with the Lord, first, in reference to his own personal interests, (ver. 9-15) and, secondly, in reference to the destinies of Sodom. (Ver.16, 21) What confirmation to Abraham's heart in the absolute promise (*Sarah* shall have a son!" Yet this promise only elicited a laugh from Sarah, as it had elicited one from Abraham in the preceding chapter.

There are two kinds of laughter spoken of in scripture. There is first, the laughter with which the Lord fills our mouth, when, at some trying crisis, He appears in a signal manner for our relief. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with *laughter*, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them; the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." (Ps. 126: 1, 2)

Again, there is the laughter with which unbelief fills our mouths, when God's promises are too magnificent for our narrow hearts to take in, or the visible agency too small, in our judgement, for the accomplishment of His grand designs. The first of these we

are never ashamed or afraid to avow. Zion's sons are not ashamed to say, "then was our mouth filled with laughter." (Ps. 126: 2) When Jehovah makes us to laugh, we may laugh heartily. "But Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid." Unbelief makes us cowards and liars; faith makes us bold and truthful. It enables us to "come boldly," and to "draw near with true hearts."

But, further, Abraham is made the depository of God's thoughts and counsels about Sodom. Though having nothing to do with it personally, yet he was so near the Lord that he was let into His mind in reference to it. The way to know the divine purposes about this present evil world, is not to be mixed up with it, in its schemes and speculations, but to be entirely separated from it. The more closely we walk with God, and the more subject we are to His word, the more we shall know of His mind about everything. I do not need to study the newspaper, in order to know what is going to happen in the world. God's word reveals all I want to know. In its pure and sanctifying pages I learn all about the character, the course, and the destiny of the world; whereas, if I go to the men of the world for news, I may expect that the devil will use them to cast dust in my eyes.

Had Abraham visited Sodom in order to obtain information about its facts, had he applied to some of its leading intelligent men, to know what they thought of Sodom's present condition and future prospects, how would he have been answered? Doubtless, they would have called his attention to their agricultural and architectural schemes, the vast resources of the country; they would have placed before his eyes one vast, mingled scene of buying and selling, building and planting, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Doubtless, too, they would never dream of judgement, and if any one had made mention thereof, their mouths would have been filled with infidel laughter. Hence, then, it is plain, that Sodom was not the place in which to learn about Sodom's end. No; "the place, where Abraham stood before the Lord," afforded the only proper point from whence to take in the whole prospect. There he could stand entirely above the fogs and mists which had gathered upon Sodom's horizon. There, in the clearness and calmness of the divine presence, he could understand it all. And what use did he make of

his knowledge and his elevated position? How was he occupied in the Lord's presence? The answer to these inquiries leads us to the third special privilege enjoyed by our patriarch in this chapter, namely, —

Intercession for others *before* the Lord. He was enabled to plead for those, who were mixed up in Sodom's defilement, and in danger of being involved in Sodom's judgement. This was a happy and a holy use to make of his place of nearness to God. Thus it is ever. The soul that can "draw near to God," in the assurance of faith, having the heart and conscience perfectly at rest, being able to repose in God as to the past, the present, and the future — that soul will be able and willing to intercede for others. The man, who has on "the whole armour of God," will be able to pray for all saints." And, oh I what a view this gives us of the intercession of our Great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens! What infinite repose He enjoys in all the divine counsels! With what conscious acceptance He sits enthroned amid the brightness of the Majesty in the heavens! And with what efficacy He pleads, before that Majesty, for those, who are toiling along, amid the defilement of this present scene! Happy, ineffably happy, they, who are the subjects of such all prevailing intercession! At once happy and secure. Would that we had hearts to enter into all this hearts enlarged by personal communion with God, to take in more of the infinite fullness of His grace, and the suitability of His provision, for all our need.

We see, in this scripture, that, how blessed soever Abraham's intercession might be, yet it was limited, because the intercessor was *but a man*. It did not reach the need. He said, "I will speak *yet but this once*," and there he stopped short, as if afraid of having presented too large a draft at the treasury of infinite grace, or forgetting that faith's cheque was never yet dishonoured at God's bank. It was not that he was straitened in God. By no means. There was abundance of grace and patience in Him to have hearkened to His dear servant, had he proceeded even to three or one. But the servant was limited. He was afraid of overdrawing his account He ceased to ask, and God ceased to give. Not so our blessed Intercessor. Of Him it can be said, "He is able to save *to the*

uttermost,..... seeing he ever liveth to make intercession." May our hearts cling to Him, in all our need, our weakness, and our conflict.

Before closing this section, I would offer a remark, which, whether it may be regarded as properly flowing: out of the truth contained therein, or not, is nevertheless worthy of consideration. It is of the utmost importance, in the study of scripture, to distinguish between God's moral government of the world, and the specific hope of the Church. The entire body of Old Testament prophecy, and much of the New, treats of the former, and, in so doing, presents, I need hardly say, a subject of commanding interest to every Christian. It is interesting to know what God is doing, and will do, with all the nations of the earth. Interesting to read God's thoughts about Tyre, Babylon, Nineveh, and Jerusalem; about Egypt, Assyria, and the land of Israel. In short, the entire range of Old Testament prophecy demands the prayerful attention of every true believer. But, let it be remembered, we do not find therein contained the proper hope of the Church. How could we? If we have not therein the Church's existence directly revealed, how could we have the Church's hope? Impossible. It is not that the Church cannot find there a rich harvest of divine moral principles, which she may most happily and profitably use. She undoubtedly can; but this is quite another thing from finding there her proper existence and specific hope. And yet, a large portion of the Old Testament prophecies has been applied to the Church; and this application has involved the whole subject in such mist and confusion, that simple minds are scared away from the study, and, in neglecting the study of prophecy, they have also neglected that which is quite distinct from prophecy, properly so called, even the hope of the Church, which hope, be it well remembered, is not anything which God is going to do with the nations of the earth, but to meet the Lord Jesus in the clouds of heaven, to be for ever with Him, and for ever like Him.

Many may say, I have no *head* for prophecy. Perhaps not, but have you a *heart* for Christ Surely if you love Christ, you will love His appearing, though you may have no capacity for prophetic investigation. An affectionate wife may not have a head to enter into her husband's affairs; but she has a heart for her husband's return. She might not be able to understand his ledger and day-book; but

she knows his footstep, and recognises his voice. The most unlettered saint, if only he has affection for the Person of the Lord Jesus, can entertain the most intense desire to see Him; and this is the Church's hope. The apostle could say to the Thessalonians, "ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." (1 Thess. 1: 9, 10) Now, evidently, those Thessalonian saints could, at the moment of their conversion, have known little, if anything, of prophecy, or the special subject thereof; and yet they were, at that very moment, put into the full possession and power of the specific hope of the Church — even the coming of the Son. Thus is it throughout the entire New Testament. There, no doubt, we have prophecy—there, too, we have God's moral government; but, at the same time, numberless passages might be adduced in proof of the fact, that the common hope of Christians in apostolic times — the simple, unimpeded, and unencumbered hope was, THE RETURN OF THE BRIDEGROOM. May the Holy Ghost revive "that blessed hope" in the Church — may He gather in the number of the elect, and "make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Genesis 19

There are two methods which the Lord graciously adopts, in order to draw the heart away from this present world. The first is, by setting before it the attractiveness and stability of "things above." The second is, by faithfully declaring the evanescent and shakeable nature of "things on the earth." The close of Hebrews 12 furnishes a beautiful example of each of these methods. After stating the truth, that we are come unto mount Zion, with all its attendant joys and privileges, the apostle goes on to say, "see that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth, but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once I shake, not only the earth, but also heaven. Now this word Once signifieth the removal of the shakeable things, as of things that are made, that the unshakeable things may remain." Now it is much better to be *drawn* by the joys of heaven, than *driven* by the sorrows of earth.. The believer should not wait to be shaken out of present things. He should not wait for the world to give him up, before he gives up the world. He should give it up in the power of communion with heavenly things. There is no difficulty in giving up the world when we have, by faith, laid hold of Christ; the difficulty would then be to hold it. If a scavenger were left an estate of ten thousand a year, he would not long continue to sweep the streets. Thus, if we are realising our portion amid the unshakeable realities of heaven, we shall find little difficulty in resigning the delusive joys of earth. Let us now look at the solemn section of inspired history here set before us.

In it we find Lot "sitting in the gate of Sodom," the place of authority. He has evidently made progress. He has "got on in the world." Looked at from a worldly point of view, his course has been a successful one. He, at first, "pitched his tent toward Sodom." Then, no doubt, he found his way into it; and now we find him sitting in the gate — a prominent, influential post. How different is all this from the scene with which the preceding chapter opens! But, ah! my reader, the reason is obvious. "*By faith* Abram sojourned in the land of promise, as in a *strange country*, dwelling in tabernacles." We have no such statement, in reference to Lot.* It could not be said,

"By faith Lot sat in the gate of Sodom." Alas! no; he gets no place among the noble army of confessors — the great cloud of witnesses to the power of faith. The world was his snare, present things his bane. He did not "endure as seeing him who is invisible." He looked at "the things which are seen, and temporal:" whereas Abram looked at "the things which are unseen and eternal." There was a most material difference between those two men, who, though they started together on their course, reached a very different goal, so far as their "public testimony was concerned. No doubt Lot was saved, yet it was "So as by fire," for, truly, "his work was burned up." On the other hand, Abraham had "an abundant entrance ministered unto him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

{*It would furnish a very searching question for the heart, in reference to every undertaking, were we to ask, "Am I doing this by faith?" "Whatever is not of faith is sin;" and, "Without faith it is impossible to please God.}

Further, we do not find that Lot is permitted to enjoy any of the high distinctions and privileges with which Abraham was favoured. Instead of refreshing the Lord, Lot gets his righteous soul vexed; instead of enjoying communion *with* the Lord, he is at a lamentable distance *from* the Lord; and, lastly, instead of interceding for others, he finds enough to do to intercede for himself. The Lord remained to commune with Abraham, and merely sent His angels to Sodom; and these angels could, with difficulty, be induced to enter into Lot's house, or partake of his hospitality: "they said, Nay, but we *will abide in the street all night.*" What a rebuke! How different from the willing acceptance of Abraham's invitation, as expressed in the words, "So do as thou hast said."

There is a great deal involved in the act of partaking of any one's hospitality. It expresses, when intelligently looked at, full fellowship with him. "I will come in unto him, and sup *with him*, and *he with me.*" "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide." If they had not so judged her, they would not have accepted her invitation.

Hence, the angels' word to Lot contains a most unqualified condemnation of his position in Sodom. They would rather abide in the street all night, than enter under the roof of one in a wrong position. Indeed, their only object in coming to Sodom seems to have been to deliver Lot, and that, too, because of Abraham; as we read: "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that *God remembered Abraham*, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt." This is strongly marked. It was simply for Abraham's sake that Lot was suffered to escape: the Lord has no sympathy with a worldly mind; and such a mind it was that had led Lot to settle down amid the defilement of that guilty city. Faith never put him there; a spiritual mind never put him there; "his righteous soul" never put him there. It was simple love for this present evil world that led him, first, to "*choose*," then to "pitch his tent toward," and, finally, to "sit in the gate of Sodom." And, oh! what a portion he chose. Truly it was a broken cistern which could hold no water; a broken reed which pierced his hand. It is a bitter thing to seek, in any wise, to manage for ourselves; we are sure to make the most grievous mistakes. It is infinitely better to allow God to order all our ways for us, to commit them all, in the spirit of a little child, to Him, who is so willing and so able to manage for us; to put the pen, as it were, into His blessed hand, and allow Him to sketch out our entire course, according to His own unerring wisdom and infinite love.

No doubt, Lot thought he was doing well for himself and his family, when he moved to Sodom; but the sequel shows how entirely he erred; and it also sounds in our ears a voice of deepest solemnity — a voice telling us to beware how we yield to the incipient workings of a worldly spirit. "Be content with such things as ye have." Why? Is it because you are so well off in the world? Because you have all that your poor rambling hearts would seek after? Because there is not so much as a single chink in your circumstances, through which vain desire might make its escape? Is this to be the ground of our contentment? By no means. What then? "For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Blessed portion! Had Lot been content therewith, he never would have sought the well watered plains of Sodom.

And, then, if we need any further ground of inducement to the exercise of a contented spirit, truly we have it in this chapter, What did Lot gain in the way of happiness and contentment Little indeed. The people of Sodom surround his house, and threaten to break into it; he seeks to appease them by a most humiliating proposition, but all in vain. If a man will mingle with the world, for the purpose of self-aggrandisement, he must make up his mind to endure the sad consequences. We cannot profit by the world, and, at the same time, bear effectual testimony against its wickedness. "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge." This will never do. The true way to judge is to stand apart, in the moral power of grace, not in the supercilious spirit of Pharisaism. To attempt to reprove the world's ways, while we profit by association with it, is vanity; the world will attach very little weight to such reproof and such testimony. Thus it was, too, with Lot's testimony to his sons-in-law;" he seemed as one that mocked." It is vain to speak of approaching judgement, while finding our place, our portion, and our enjoyment, in the very scene which is to be judged.

Abraham was in a far better position to speak of judgement, inasmuch as he was entirely outside of the sphere thereof. The tent of the stranger at Mamre was in no danger, though Sodom were in flames. Oh! that our hearts longed more after the precious fruits of a realised strangership, so that instead of having, like poor Lot, to be dragged, by main force, out of the world, and casting a lingering look behind, we might, with holy alacrity, bound forward, like a racer, towards the goal.

Lot, evidently, longed after the scene which he was forced, by angelic power, to abandon; for not only had the angels to lay hold of him, and hasten him away from the impending judgement, but even when exhorted to escape for *his life*, (which was all he could save from the wreck,) and flee to the mountain, he replies, "Oh! not so, my Lord: behold, now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast showed unto me in saving *my life*; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me and I die: behold, now, *this city* is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: oh I let me escape thither, (is it not a little one) and my soul shall live." What a picture! He seems like a drowning man,

ready to catch even at a floating feather. Though commanded by the angel to flee to the mountain, he refuses, and still fondly clings to the idea of "a little city," — some little shred of the world. He feared death in the place to which God was mercifully directing him — yea, he feared all manner of evil, and could only hope for safety in some little city, some spot of his own devising. Oh! let me escape *thither, and my soul shall live.*" How sad. There is no casting himself wholly upon God. Alas! he had too long walked at a distance from Him; too long breathed the dense atmosphere of a "city," to be able to appreciate the pure air of the divine presence, or lean on the arm of the Almighty. His soul seemed completely unhinged; his worldly nest had been abruptly broken up, and he was not quite able to nestle himself, by faith, in the bosom of God. He had not been cultivating communion with the invisible world; and, now, the visible was passing away from beneath his feet with tremendous rapidity. The "fire and brimstone from heaven" were about to fall upon that in which all his hopes and all his affections were centred. The thief had broken in upon him, and he seems entirely divested of spiritual nerve and self-possession. He is at his wits' end; but the worldly element, being strong in his heart, prevails, and he seeks his only refuge in "a little city." Yet he is not at ease even there, for he leaves it, and gets up to the mountain. He does, through fear, what he would not do at the command of God's messenger.

And, then, see his end! His own children make him drunk, and in his drunkenness he becomes the instrument of bringing into existence the Ammonites and the Moabites — the determined enemies of the people of God. What a volume of solemn instruction is here Oh! my reader, see here what the world is! see what a fatal thing it is to allow the heart to go out after it! What a commentary is Lot's history upon that brief but comprehensive admonition, "love not the world" This world's Sodoms and its Zoars are all alike. There is no security, no peace, no rest, no solid satisfaction for the heart therein. The judgement of God hangs over the whole scene; and He only holds back the sword, in long-suffering mercy, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Let us, then, seek to pursue a path of holy separation from the world. Let us, while standing outside its entire range, be found cherishing the hope of the Master's return. May its well-watered plains have no charms for our hearts. May its honours, its distinctions, and its riches, be all surveyed by us in the light of the coming glory of Christ. May we be enabled, like the holy patriarch Abraham, to get up into the presence of the Lord, and, from that elevated ground, look forth upon the scene of wide-spread ruin and desolation — to see it all, by faith's anticipative glance, a smoking ruin. *Such it will be.* "The earth, also, and the things that are therein, shall be burned up." ALL that about which the children of this world are so intensely anxious-after which they are so eagerly grasping-for which they are so fiercely contending — all — all will be burned up. And who can tell how soon? Where is Sodom Where is Gomorrha? Where are the cities of the plain — those cities which were once all life, and stir, and bustle! Where are they now? All gone! swept away by the judgement of God. Consumed by His fire and brimstone. Well, His judgements now hang over this guilty world. The day is at hand; and, while judgements impend, the sweet story of grace is being told out to many an ear. Happy they, who hear and believe that story. Happy they, who fled to the strong mountain of God's salvation! who take refuge behind the cross of the Son of God, and therein and pardon and peace!

God grant that the reader of these lines may know what it is, with a conscience purged from sin, and his heart's affections purged from the defiling influence of the world, to wait for the Son from heaven.

Genesis 20

We have two distinct points in this chapter: first, the moral degradation to which the child of God sometimes subjects himself, in the view of the world; and, secondly, the moral dignity which *always* belongs to him in the view of God. Abraham again exhibits the dread of circumstances, which the heart can so easily understand. He sojourns in Gerar, and fears the men of that place. Judging that God was not there, he forgets that He is always with him. He seems to be more occupied with the men of Gerar than with the One who was stronger than they. Forgetting God's ability to protect his wife, he has recourse to the same stratagem which, years before, he had adopted in Egypt. This is very admonitory. The father of the faithful was carried away, by taking his eye off God. He lost, for a little, his centre in God, and, therefore, gave way. How true it is, that we are only strong as we cling to God in the sense of our perfect weakness. So long as we are in the path of His appointment, nothing can harm us. Had Abraham simply leaned on God, the men of Gerar would not have meddled with him; and it was his privilege to have vindicated God's faithfulness in the midst of the most appalling difficulties. Thus, too, he would have maintained his own dignity, as a man of faith.

It is often a source of sorrow to the heart to mark how the children of God dishonour Him, and, as a consequence, lower themselves before the world, by losing the sense of His sufficiency for every emergency. So long as we live in the realisation of the truth, that all our springs are in God, so long shall we be above the world, in every shape and form. There is nothing so elevating to the whole moral being as faith: it carries one entirely beyond the reach of this world's thoughts; for how can the men of the world, or even worldly minded Christians, understand the life of faith? Impossible: the springs on which it draws lie far away beyond their comprehension. They live on the surface of present things. So long as they can see what they deem a proper foundation for hope and confidence, so long they are hopeful and confident; but the idea of resting solely on the promise of an unseen God, they understand not. But the man of faith is calm in the midst of scenes in which nature can see nothing. Hence it is, that faith ever seems, in the judgement

of nature, such a reckless, improvident, visionary thing. None but those, who know God, can ever approve the actings of faith, for none but they really understand the solid and truly reasonable ground of such actings.

In this chapter we find the man of God actually exposing himself to the rebuke and reproach of the men of the world, by reason of his actings, when under the power of unbelief. Thus it must ever be. Nothing but faith can impart true elevation to a man's course and character. We may, it is true, see some, who are naturally upright and honourable in their ways, yet nature's uprightness and honour cannot be trusted: they rest on a bad foundation, and are liable to give way at any moment. It is only faith which can impart a truly elevated moral tone, because it connects the soul in living power with God, the only source of true morality. And it is a remarkable fact, that, in the case of all those whom God has graciously taken up, we see that, when off the path of faith, they sank even lower than other men. This will account for Abraham's conduct in this part of his history.

But there is another point of much interest and value brought out here. We find that Abraham had harboured an evil thing for a number of years: he had, it seems, started upon his course with a certain reserve in his soul, which reserve was the result of his want of full, unqualified confidence in God. Had he been able fully to trust God in reference to Sarah, there would have been no need of any reserve or subterfuge whatever. God would have fenced her round about from every ill; and who can harm those, who are the happy subjects of His unslumbering guardianship? However, through mercy, Abraham is enabled to bring out the root of the whole matter — to confess and judge it thoroughly, and get rid of it. This is the true way to act. There can be no real blessing and power till every particle of leaven is brought forth into the light and there trampled under foot. God's patience is exhaustless. He can wait. He can bear with us; but He never will conduct a soul to the culminating point of blessing and power, while leaven remains known and unjudged. Thus much as to Abimelech and Abraham. Let us now look at the moral dignity of the latter, in the view of God.

In the history of God's people, whether we look at them as a whole, or as individuals, we are often struck with the amazing difference between what they are in God's view, and what they are in the view of the world. God sees His people in Christ. He looks at them through Christ; and hence He sees them "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." They are as Christ is before God. They are perfected for ever, as to their standing in Christ. "They are not in the flesh but in the spirit."

But, in themselves, they are poor, feeble, imperfect, stumbling, inconsistent creatures; and, inasmuch as it is what they are in themselves, and that alone, that the world takes knowledge of, therefore it is that the difference seems so great between the divine and the human estimate.

Yet it is God's prerogative to set forth the beauty, the dignity, and the perfection of His people. It is His exclusive prerogative, inasmuch as it is He Himself who has bestowed those things. They are only comely through the comeliness which He has put upon them; and it is, therefore, due to Him to declare what that comeliness is; and truly He does it in a manner worthy of Himself, and never more blessedly than when the enemy comes forth to injure, to curse, or accuse. Thus, when Balak seeks to curse the seed of Abraham, Jehovah's word is, "I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither have I seen perverseness in Israel." "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. Again, when Satan stands forth to resist Joshua, the word is, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan,.....is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Thus He ever puts Himself between His people and every tongue that would accuse them. He does not answer the accusation by a reference to what His people are in themselves, or to what they are in the view of the men of this world, but to what He Himself has made them, and where He has set them.

Thus, in Abraham's case, he might lower himself in the view of Abimelech, king of Gerar; and Abimelech might have to rebuke him, yet, when God comes to deal with the case, He says to Abimelech, "Behold, thou art but a dead man;" and of Abraham he says, "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee." Yes, with all "the integrity of his heart, and the innocency of his hands," the king of

Gerar was "but a dead man;" and, moreover, he must be a debtor to the prayers of the erring and inconsistent stranger for the restoration of the health of his household. Such is the manner of God: He may have many a secret controversy with His child, on the ground of his practical ways; but directly the enemy enters a suit against him, Jehovah ever pleads His servant's cause. "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye." "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? No dart of the enemy can penetrate the shield, behind which the Lord has hidden the very feeblest lamb of His blood-bought flock. He hides His people in His pavilion, sets their feet upon the rock of ages, lifts their heads above their enemies round about, and fills their hearts with the everlasting joy of His salvation.

His name be praised for evermore!

Genesis 21

And the Lord visited Sarah, as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken." Here we have accomplished promise — the blessed fruit of patient waiting upon God. None ever waited in vain. The soul, that takes hold of God's promise by faith, has gotten a stable reality which will never fail him. Thus was it with Abraham; thus was it with all the faithful from age to age; and thus will it be with all those, who are enabled, in any measure, to trust in the living God. Oh! it is a wonderful blessing to have God Himself as our portion and resting-place, amid the unsatisfying shadows of this scene through which we are passing; to have our anchor cast within the veil; to have the word and oath of God, the two immutable things, to lean upon, for the comfort and tranquility of our souls.

When God's promise stood before the soul of Abraham, as an accomplished fact, he might well have learnt the futility of his own effort to reach that accomplishment. Ishmael was of no use, whatever, so far as God's promise was concerned. He might, and did, afford something for nature's affections to entwine themselves around, thus furnishing a more difficult task for Abraham to perform afterwards; but he was in no wise conducive to the development of the purpose of God, or to the establishment of Abraham's faith — quite the reverse. Nature can never do ought for God. The Lord must visit and the Lord must "do," and faith must wait, and nature must be still; yea, must be entirely set aside as a dead, worthless thing, and then the divine glory can shine out, and faith find in that outshining all its rich and sweet reward. "Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, *at the set time* of which God had spoken to him." There is such a thing as God's "set time," His "due season," and for this the faithful must be content to wait. The time may seem long, and hope deferred may make the heart sick; but the spiritual mind will ever find its relief in the assurance, that all is for the ultimate display of God's glory. "For the vision is for an appointed time, but *at the end* it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. but the just shall live by his faith." (Hab. 2: 3, 4) This wondrous faith! It brings into our present all the power of God's future, and feeds upon God's promise as a present reality. By its power the soul

is kept hanging upon God, when every outward thing seems to be against it; and, "at the set time," the mouth is filled with laughter. "Abraham was an hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him." Thus nature had nothing to glory in. "Man's extremity was God's opportunity;" and Sarah said, "*God* hath made me to laugh." All is triumph when God is allowed to show Himself.

Now while the birth of Isaac filled Sarah's mouth with laughter, it introduced an entirely new element into Abraham's house. The son of the free-woman very speedily developed the true character of the son of the bond-woman. Indeed, Isaac proved, in principle, to be to the household of Abraham, what the implantation of the new nature is in the soul of a sinner. It was not *Ishmael changed*, but it was *Isaac born*. The son of the bond-woman could never be anything else but that. He might become a great nation, he might dwell in the wilderness, and become an archer, he might become the father of twelve princes, but he was the son of the bond-woman all the while. On the contrary, no matter how weak and despised Isaac might be, he was the son of the free-woman. His position and character, his standing and prospects, were all from the Lord. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Regeneration is not a change of the old nature, but the introduction of a new; it is the implantation of the nature or life of the Second Adam, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, founded upon the accomplished redemption of Christ, and in full keeping with the sovereign will or counsel of God. The moment a sinner believes in his heart, and confesses with his mouth, the Lord Jesus, he becomes the possessor of a new life, and that life is Christ. He is born of God, is a child of God, is a son of the free-woman. (See Rom. 10: 9; Col. 3: 4; 1 John 3: 1, 2; Gal. 3: 26; Gal. 4: 31)

Nor does the introduction of this new nature alter, in the slightest degree, the true, essential character of the old. This latter continues what it was, and is made, in no respect, better; yea, rather, there is the full display of its evil character in opposition to the new element. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." There they are

in all their distinctness, and the one is only thrown into relief by the other.

I believe this doctrine of the two natures in the believer is not generally understood; and yet, so long as there is ignorance of it, the mind must be utterly at sea, in reference to the true standing and privileges of the child of God. Some there are, who think that regeneration is a certain change which the old nature undergoes; and, moreover, that this change is gradual in its operation, until, at length, the whole man becomes transformed. That this idea is unsound, can be proved by various quotations from the New Testament. For example, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." How can that, which is thus spoken of, ever undergo any improvement? The apostle goes on to say, "it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be.*" If it *cannot be* subject to the law of God, how can it be improved? How can it undergo any change? Again, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Do what you will with flesh, and it is flesh all the while. As Solomon says, "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar, among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." (Prov. 27: 22) There is no use in seeking to make foolishness wise: you must introduce heavenly wisdom into the heart that has been heretofore only governed by folly. Again, "ye have put off the old man." (Col. 3: 9) He does not say, Ye have improved, or are seeking to improve, "the old man;" but, Ye have put it off. This gives us a totally different idea. There is a very great difference between seeking to mend an old garment, and casting it aside altogether, and putting on a new one. This is the idea of the last-quoted passage. It is a putting off the old, and a putting on of the new. Nothing can be more distinct or simple.

Passages might easily be multiplied to prove the unsoundness; of the theory, with respect to the gradual improvement of the old nature — to prove that the old nature is dead in sins, and utterly unrenowable and unimproveable; and, moreover, that the only thing we can do with it is, to keep it under our feet in the power of that new life, which we have in union with our risen Head in the heavens.

The birth of Isaac did not improve Ishmael, but only brought out his real opposition to the child of promise. He might have gone on very quietly and orderly till Isaac made his appearance; but then he showed what he was, by persecuting and mocking at the child of resurrection. What then was the remedy? To make Ishmael better? By no means; but, "cast out this bondwomen and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." (8-10) Here was the only remedy. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight;" therefore you have only to get rid of the crooked thing altogether, and occupy yourself with that which is divinely straight. It is labour lost to seek to make a crooked thing straight. Hence all efforts after the improvement of nature, are utterly futile, so far as God is concerned. It may be all very well for men to cultivate and improve that which is of use to themselves; but God has given his children something infinitely better to do, even to cultivate that which is His own creation, the fruits of which, while they, in no wise, serve to exalt nature, are entirely to His praise and glory.

Now the error into which the Galatian churches fell, was the introduction of that which addressed itself to nature. "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Here salvation was made to depend upon something that man could be, or man could do, or man could keep. This was upsetting the whole glorious fabric of redemption, which, as the believer knows, rests exclusively upon what Christ is, and what He has done. To make salvation dependent, in the most remote manner, upon anything in, or done by, man, is to set it entirely aside. In other words, Ishmael must be entirely cast out, and all Abraham's hopes be made to depend upon what God had done, and given, in the person of Isaac. This, it is needless to say, leaves man nothing to glory in. If present or future blessedness were made to depend upon even a divine change wrought in nature, flesh might glory. Though my nature were improved, it would be something of *me*, and thus God would not have *all* the glory. But when I am introduced into a new creation, I find it is all of God, designed, matured, developed by Himself alone. God is the actor, and I am a worshipper; He is the blesser, and I am the blessed; He is "the better," and I am "the less;" (Heb. 7: 7) He is the giver, and I am the receiver. This is what

makes Christianity what it is; and, moreover, distinguishes it from every system of human religion under the sun, whether it be Romanian, Puseyism, or any other ism whatsoever. Human religion gives the creature a place more or less; it keeps the bond-woman and her son in the house; it gives man something to glory in. On the contrary, Christianity excludes the creature from all interference in the work of salvation; casts out the bond-woman and her son, and gives *all* the glory to Him, to whom alone it is due.

But let us inquire who this bond-woman and her son really are, and what they shadow forth. Galatians 4 furnishes ample teaching as to these two points. In a word, then, the bond-woman represents the covenant of the law; and her son represents all, who are "of works of law," or on that principle (*ex ergon nomou*). This is very plain. The bond-woman only genders to bondage, and can never bring forth a free man. How can she? The law never could give liberty, for so long as a man was alive it ruled him. (Rom. 7: 1) I can never be free so long as I am under the dominion of any one. But while I live, the law rules me; and nothing but death can give me deliverance from its dominion. This is the blessed doctrine of Rom. 7. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that you should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." This is freedom; for, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8: 36) So, then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free." (Gal. 4: 31)

Now, it is in the power of this freedom that we are enabled to obey the command, cast out this bondwoman and her son." If I am not consciously free, I shall be seeking to attain liberty in the strangest way possible, even by keeping the bond-woman in the house: in other words, I shall be seeking to get life by keeping the law; I shall be establishing my own righteousness. No doubt, it will involve a struggle to cast out this element of bondage, for legalism is natural to our hearts. "The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son." Still, however grievous it may be, it is according to the divine mind that we should abidingly stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hat made us free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5: 1) May we, beloved

reader, so fully and experimentally enter into the blessedness of God's provision for us in Christ, that we may be done with all thoughts about the flesh, and all that it can be, do, or produce. There is a fullness in Christ which renders all appeal to nature utterly superfluous and vain.

Genesis 22

Abraham is now in a fit moral position to have his heart put to a most severe test. The long-cherished reserve being put forth from his heart, in Gen. 20 — the bond-woman and her son being put forth from his house, as in Gen. 21, he now stands forth in the most honoured position in which any soul can be placed, and that is a position of trial from the hand of God Himself. There are various kinds of trial-trial from the hand of Satan; trial from surrounding circumstances; but the highest character of trial is that which comes directly from the hand of God, when He puts His dear child into the furnace for the purpose of testing the reality of his faith. God will do this: He must have reality. It will not do to say "Lord, Lord," or, "I go, sir." The heart must be probed to the very bottom, in order that no element of hypocrisy, or false profession, may be allowed to lodge there. "My son, give me *thine heart*." He does not say, "give me thine head, or thine intellect, or thy talents, or thy tongue, or thy money;" but "give me thine heart:" and in order to prove the sincerity of our response to this gracious command, He will lay His hand upon something very near our hearts. Thus he says to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." This was coming very close to Abraham's heart. It was passing him through a searching crucible indeed. God "requires truth in the inward parts." There may be much truth on the lips, and much in the intellect, but God looks for it in the heart. It is no ordinary proof that will satisfy God, as to the love of our hearts. He Himself did not rest satisfied with giving an ordinary proof. He gave His Son, and we should aim at giving very striking proofs of our love to Him who so loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.

However, it is well to see that God confers a signal honour upon us when He thus tests our hearts. We never read that "the Lord did tempt Lot." No; Sodom tempted Lot. He never reached a sufficiently high elevation to warrant his being tried by the hand of Jehovah. It was too plainly manifest that there was plenty between his heart and the Lord, and it did not, therefore, require the furnace to bring that out. Sodom would have held out no temptation

whatever to Abraham. This was made manifest in his interview with Sodom's king, in chapter 14. God knew well that Abraham loved him far better than Sodom; but He would make it manifest, that He loved him better than any one or anything, by laying his hand upon the nearest and dearest object. "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac." Yes, Isaac, the child of promise; Isaac, the object of long-deferred hope, the object of parental love, and the one in whom all the kindreds of the earth were to be blessed. This Isaac must be offered as a burnt-offering. This, surely, was putting faith to the test, in order that, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, it might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory. Had Abraham's whole soul not been stayed simply on the Lord, he never could have yielded unhesitating obedience to such a searching command. But God Himself was the living and abiding support of his heart, and therefore he was prepared to give up all for Him.

The soul that has found *all* its springs in God, can, without any demur, retire from *all* creature streams. We can give up the creature, just in proportion as we have found out, or become experimentally acquainted with, the Creator, and no further. To attempt to give up the visible things in any other way, save in the energy of that faith which lays hold of the invisible, is the most fruitless labour possible. It cannot be done. I withhold fast my Isaac until I have found my all in God. It is when we are enabled, by faith, to say "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," that we can also add, "therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." (Ps. 46: 1, 2)

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning." There is ready obedience. "I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Faith never stops to look at circumstances, or ponder results; it only looks at God; it expresses itself thus; "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. 1: 1, 5, 16) The moment we confer with flesh and blood, our testimony and service are marred, for flesh and blood

can never obey. We must rise early, and carry out, through grace, the divine command. Thus we are blessed, and God is glorified. Having God's own word as the basis of our acting will ever impart strength and stability to our acting. If we merely act from impulse, when the impulse subsides, the acting will subside also.

There are two things needful to a course of steady and consistent action, viz., the Holy Ghost, as the power of action, and the word to give proper direction. To use a familiar illustration: on a railway, we should find motive-power of little use without the iron rails firmly laid down; the former is the power by which we move; and the latter, the direction. It is needless to add that the rails would be of little use without the steam. Now, Abraham was blessed with both. He had the power of action conferred by God; and the command to act given by God also. His devotedness was of a most definite character; and this is deeply important. We frequently find much that looks like devotedness, but which, in reality, is but the desultory activity of a will not brought under the powerful action of the word of God. ALL such apparent devotedness is worthless, and the spirit from which it proceeds will very speedily evaporate. We may lay down the following principle, viz., whenever devotedness passes beyond divinely appointed bounds it is suspicious. If it comes not up to these bounds it is defective; if it flows without them it is erratic. I quite admit that there are extraordinary operations and ways of the Spirit of God, in which He asserts His own sovereignty, and rises above ordinary bounds; but, in such cases, the evidence of divine activity will be sufficiently strong to carry home conviction to every spiritual mind; nor will they, in the slightest degree, interfere with the truth of the principle that true devotedness will ever be founded upon and governed by divine principle. To sacrifice a son might seem to be an act of most extraordinary devotedness; but, be it remembered, that, what gave that act all its value, in God's sight, was the simple fact of its being based upon God's command.

Then, we have another thing connected with true devotedness, and that is a spirit of sonship. "I and the lad will go yonder and worship." The really devoted servant will keep his eye, not on his service, be it ever so great, but on the Master, and this will produce a spirit of worship. If I love my master, according to the flesh, I shall

not mind whether I am cleaning his shoes or driving his carriage; but if I am thinking more of myself than of him, I shall rather be a coachman than a shoe black. So is it precisely in the service of the heavenly Master: if I am thinking only of Him, planting churches and making tents will be both alike to me. We may see the same thing in angelic ministry. It matters not to an angel whether he be sent to destroy an army, or to protect the person of some heir of salvation. It is the Master who entirely fills his vision. As some one has remarked, "if two angels were sent from heaven, one to rule an empire, and the other to sweep, the streets, they would not dispute about their respective work." This is most true, and so should it be with us. The servant should ever be combined with the worshipper, and the works of our hands perfumed with the ardent breathings of our spirits. In other words we should go forth to our work in the spirit of those memorable words, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship." This would effectually preserve us from that merely mechanical service into which we are so prone to drop; doing things for doing's sake, and being more occupied with our work than with our Master. ALL must flow from simple faith in God, and obedience to His word.

"BY faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten." (Heb. 11: 17) It is only as we are walking by faith that we can begin, continue, and end our works in God. Abraham not merely set out to offer his son, but he went on, and reached the spot which God had appointed. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together." And further on we read, "And Abraham built an altar there; and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." This was real work, "A work of faith and labour of love," in the highest sense. It was no mere mockery no drawing near with the lips, while the heart was far off — no saying "I go, sir, and went not." It was all deep reality, just such a faith ever delights to produce, and which God delights to accept. It is easy to make a show of devotedness when there is no demand for it. It is easy to say, "though all shall be offended because of thee, yet will never be

offended though I should die with thee, yet will not deny thee;" but the point is to stand the trial. When Peter was put to the test, he entirely broke down. Faith never talks of what it will do, but does what it can in the strength of the Lord. Nothing can be more thoroughly worthless than a spirit of empty pretension. It is just as worthless as the basis on which it rests. But faith acts "when it is tried;" and till then it is content to be unseen and silent.

Now, it needs hardly to be remarked that God is glorified in those Holy activities of faith. He is the immediate object of them, as He is the spring from whence they emanate. There was not a scene in Abraham's entire history in which God was so much glorified as the scene on Mount Moriah. There it was that he was enabled to bear testimony to the fact that he had found all his fresh springs in God — found them not merely previous to, but after, Isaac's birth. This is a most touching point. It is one thing to rest in God's blessings, and another thing to rest in Himself. It is one thing to trust God when I have before my eyes the channel through which the blessing is to flow; and quite another thing to trust Him when that channel is entirely stopped up. This was what proved the excellency of Abraham's faith. He showed that he could not merely trust God for an innumerable seed while Isaac stood before him in health and vigour; but just as fully if he were a smoking victim on the altar. This was a high order of confidence in God; it was unalloyed confidence; it was not a confidence propped up, in part, by the Creator, and in part by the creature. No it rested on one solid pedestal, viz., God Himself. "He accounted that God was able." He never accounted that Isaac was able. Isaac, without God, was nothing; God, without Isaac, was everything. This is a principle of the very last importance, and one eminently calculated to test the heart most keenly. Does it make any difference to me to see the apparent channel of all my blessings dried up? Am I dwelling sufficiently near the fountain-head to be able, with a worshipping spirit, to behold all the creature streams dried up? This I do feel to be a searching question. Have I such a simple view of God's sufficiency as to be able, as it were, to "stretch forth my hand and take the knife to slay my son." Abraham was enabled to do this, because his eye rested on the God of resurrection. "He accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead."

In a word, it was with God he had to do, and that was quite enough. He was not suffered to strike the blow. He had gone to the very utmost bounds; he had come up to the line beyond which God could not suffer him to go. The Blessed One spared the father's heart the pang which He did not spare His own heart, even that of smiting His Son. He, blessed be His name, passed beyond the utmost bounds, for "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." There was no voice from heaven when, on Calvary, the Father offered up His only-begotten Son. No; it was a perfectly accomplished sacrifice; and, in its accomplishment, our everlasting peace is sealed.

However, Abraham's devotedness was fully proved, and fully accepted. For now "I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Mark it is "now I know." It had never been proved before. It was there, no doubt, and, if there, God knew it; but the valuable point here, is, that God founds His knowledge of it upon the palpable evidence afforded at the altar upon Mount Moriah. Faith is always proved by action, and the fear of God by the fruits which flow from it. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar" (James 2: 21) Who could think of calling his faith in question Take away faith, and Abraham appears on Moriah as a murderer, and a madman. Take faith into account, and he appears as a devoted worshipper — a God-fearing, justified man. But faith must be proved. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man *say* he hath faith, and have not works" (James 2: 14) Will either God or man be satisfied with a powerless and profitless profession? Surely not. God looks for reality and honours it where He sees it; and as for man, he can understand nought save the living and intelligible utterance of a faith that shows itself in acts. We are surrounded by the profession of religion; the phraseology of faith is on every lip; but faith itself is as rare a gem as ever—that faith which will enable a man to push out from the shore of present circumstances, and meet the waves and the winds, and not only meet them, but endure them, even though the Master should seem to be asleep on the pillow.

And here I would remark: the beautiful harmony between James and Paul, on the subject of justification. The intelligent and spiritual reader, who bows to the important truth of the plenary inspiration of holy scripture, knows full well that, on this question it is not with Paul or James we have to do, but with the Holy Ghost, who graciously used each of those honoured men as the pen to write His thoughts, just as I might take up a quill pen or a steel pen to write my thoughts, in which case it would be quite preposterous to speak of a discrepancy between the two pens, inasmuch as the writer is one. Hence it is just as impossible that two divinely-inspired penmen could clash, as that two heavenly bodies, while moving in their divinely appointed orbits, could come into collision.

But, in reality, as might be expected, there is the fullest and most perfect harmony between these two apostles; indeed, on the subject of justification, the one is the counterpart or exponent of the other. Paul gives us the inward principle, James the outward development of that principle; the former presents the hidden life, the latter the manifested life; the former looks at man in relation to God, the latter looks at him in his relation to man. Now we want both: the inward would not do without the outward; and the outward would be valueless and powerless without the inward. "Abraham was justified" when "he believed God;" and "Abraham was justified" when "he offered Isaac his son." In the former case we have his secret standing; in the latter, his public acknowledgement by heaven and earth. It is well to understand this distinction. There was no voice from heaven when "Abraham believed God," though in God's view he was there, then, and that "counted righteous;" but "when he had offered his son upon the altar," God could say, "now I know;" and all the world had a powerful and unanswerable proof of the fact that Abraham was a justified man. Thus will it ever be. Where there is the inward principle, there will be the outward acting; but all the value of the latter springs from its connection with the former. Disconnect, for one moment, Abraham's acting, as set forth by James, from Abraham's faith as set forth by Paul, and that justifying virtue did it possess? None whatever. All its value, all its efficacy, all its virtue, springs from the fact that it was the outward manifestation of that faith, by virtue of which he had been already counted righteous before God. Thus much as to the admirable

harmony between Paul and James, or rather, as to the unity of the voice of the Holy Ghost, whether that voice be uttered by Paul or James.

We now return to our chapter. It is deeply interesting to mark here how Abraham's soul is led into a fresh discovery of God's character by the trial of his faith. When we are enabled to bear the testings of God's own hand, it is sure to lead us into some new experience with respect to His character, which makes us to know how valuable the testing is. If Abraham had not stretched out his hand to slay his son, he never would have known the rich and exquisite depths of that title which he here bestows upon God, viz., "Jehovah Jireh." It is only when we are really put to the test that we discover what God is. Without trial we can be but theorists, and God would not have us such: He would have us entering into the living depths that are in Himself-the divine realities of personal communion with Him. With what different feelings and convictions must Abraham have retraced his steps from Moriah to Beer-sheba ! from the mount of the Lord to the well of the oath! What very different thoughts of God! What different thoughts of Isaac! What different thoughts Of every-thing! Truly we may say, "Happy is the man that endureth trial. It is an honour put upon one by the Lord Himself, and the deep blessedness of the experience to which it leads cannot be easily estimated. It is when men are brought, to use the language of Psalm 107, "to their wits' end," that they discover what God is. Oh! for grace to endure trial, that God's workmanship may appear, and His name be glorified in us.

There is one point which, before closing my remarks on this chapter, I shall notice, and that is the gracious way in which God gives Abraham credit for having done the act which he had showed himself so fully prepared to do. "*By myself have I sworn*, saith the Lord; for *because thou hast done this thing*, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice." This beautifully corresponds with the Spirit's notice of Abraham's acting, as put

before us in Heb. 11 and also in James 2, in both of which scriptures he is looked upon as having offered Isaac his son upon the altar. The grand principle conveyed in the whole matter is this: Abraham proved that he was prepared to have the scene entirely cleared of all but God; and, moreover, it was this same principle which both constituted and placed him a justified man. Faith can do without every one and everything but God. It has the full sense of His sufficiency, and can, therefore, let go all beside. Hence Abraham could rightly estimate the words, "by myself have I sworn." Yes, this wondrous word, "*myself*," was everything to the man of faith. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself..... For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." The word and oath of the living God should put an end to all the strivings and workings of the human will, and form the immovable anchor of the soul amid all the tossing and tumult of this stormy world.

Now, we must condemn ourselves consistently, because of the little power which the promise of God has in our hearts. There it is, and we profess to believe it; but ah! it is not that deep, abiding, influential reality which it ought ever to be; we do not draw from it that 'strong consolation' which it is calculated to afford. How little prepared are we, in the power of faith, in the promise of God, to slay our Isaac! We need to cry to God that He would be graciously pleased to endow us with a deeper insight into the blessed reality of a life of faith in Himself, that so we may understand better the import of that word of John, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." We can only overcome the world by faith. Unbelief puts us under the power of present things; in other words, it gives the world the victory over us. A soul that has entered, by the teaching of the Holy ghost, into the sense of God's sufficiency, is entirely independent of things here. Beloved reader, may we know this, for our peace and joy in God, and His glory in us.

Genesis 23

This little section of inspiration furnishes much sweet and profitable instruction to the soul. In it the Holy Spirit sets before us a beautiful exhibition of the mode in which the man of faith should carry himself toward those that are without. While it is true, divinely true, that faith makes a man independent of the men of the world, it is no less true that faith will ever teach him to walk honestly toward them. We are told to "walk honestly toward them that are without;" (1 Thess. 4: 12) "to provide things honest in the sight of all;" (2 Cor. 8: 21) "to owe no man anything." (Rom. 13: 8) These are weighty precepts — precepts which, even before their distinct enunciation, were duly observed in all ages by the faithful servants of Christ, but which, in modern times, alas! have not been sufficiently attended to.

The 23rd of Genesis, therefore, is worthy of special notice. It opens with the death of Sarah, and introduces Abraham in a new character, viz., that of a mourner. "Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." The child of God must meet such things; but he must not meet them as others. The great fact of resurrection comes in to his relief, and imparts a character to his sorrow quite peculiar. (1 Thess. 4: 13, 14) The man of faith can stand at the grave of a brother or sister, in the happy consciousness that it shall not long hold its captive," for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The redemption of the soul secures the redemption of the body; the former we have, the latter we wait for. (Rom. 8: 23)

Now, I believe that in purchasing Machpelah for a burying-place, Abraham gave expression to his faith in resurrection. "*He stood up from* before his dead." Faith cannot long keep death in view; it has a higher object, blessed be the "living God" who has given it. Resurrection is that which ever fills the vision of faith; and, in the power thereof, it can rise up from before the dead. There is much conveyed in this action of Abraham. We want to understand its meaning much more fully, because we are much too prone to be occupied with death and its consequences. Death is the boundary of Satan's power; but where Satan ends, God begins. Abraham understood this when he rose up and purchased the cave of

Machpelah as a sleeping place for Sarah. This was the expression of Abraham's thought in reference to the future. He knew that in the ages to come, God's promise about the land of Canaan would be fulfilled, and he was able to lay the body of Sarah in the tomb, "in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection."

The sons of Heth knew nothing about this. The thoughts which were filling the patriarch's soul were entirely foreign to the uncircumcised children of Heth. To them it seemed a small matter where he buried his dead, but it was by no means a small matter to him. "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." It might, and manifestly did, appear strange to them to make so much ado about a grave; but, "beloved, the world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not." The finest traits and characteristics of faith are those which are most incomprehensible to the natural man. The Canaanites had no idea of the expectations which were giving character to Abraham's actings on this occasion. They had no idea that he was looking forward to the possession of the land, while he was merely looking for a spot in which, as a dead man, he might wait for God's time, and God's manner, viz., the MORNING OF RESURRECTION. He felt *he* had no controversy with the children of Heth, and hence he was quite prepared to lay his head in the grave, and allow God to act for him, and with him, and by him.

"These all died in (or according to) faith, (*kata pistin*,) not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. 11: 13) This is a truly exquisite feature in the divine life. Those "witnesses," of whom the apostle is speaking in Heb. 11 not merely lived by faith, but even when they arrived at the close of their career, they proved that the promises of God were as real and satisfying to their souls as when they first started. Now, I believe this purchase of a burying place in the land was an exhibition of the power of faith, not only to live, but to die. Why was Abraham so particular about this purchase? Why was he so anxious to make good his claim to the field and cave of Ephron on righteous principles? Why so determined to weigh out the full price "current with the merchant"

Faith is the answer. He did it all by faith. He knew the land was his in prospect, and that in glory his seed should yet possess it, and until then he would be no debtor to those who were yet to be dispossessed.

Thus we may view this beautiful chapter in a twofold light; first, as setting before us a plain, practical principle, as to our dealings with the men of this world; and secondly, as presenting the blessed hope which should ever animate the man of faith. Putting both these points together, we have an example of what the child of God should ever be. The hope set before us in the gospel is a glorious immortality; and this, while it lifts the heart above every influence of nature and the world, furnishes a high and holy principle with which to govern all our intercourse with those who are without. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." This is our hope. What is the moral effect of this? "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3: 2, 3) If I am to be like Christ by and by, I shall seek to be as like Him now as I can. Hence, the Christian should ever seek to walk in purity, integrity and moral grace in the view of all round.

Thus it was with Abraham, in reference to the sons of Heth. His whole deportment and conduct, as set forth in our chapter, would seem to have been marked with very pure elevation and disinterestedness. He was "a mighty prince among them," and they would fain have done him a favour; but Abraham had learnt to take his favours only from the God of resurrection, and while he would pay *them* for Machpelah he would look to *Him* for Canaan. The sons of Heth knew well the value of "current money with the merchant," and Abraham knew the value of the cave of Machpelah. It was worth much more to him than it was to them. "The land was worth to them "four hundred shekels of silver," but to him it was priceless, as the earnest of an everlasting inheritance, which, because it was an everlasting inheritance, could only be possessed in the power of resurrection. Faith conducts the soul onward into God's future; it looks at things as He looks at them, and estimates them according to the judgement of the sanctuary. Therefore, in the intelligence of faith, Abraham stood up from before his dead, and purchased a

burying-place, which significantly set forth his hope of resurrection, and of an inheritance founded thereon.

Genesis 24

The connection of this chapter, with the two which precede it, is worthy of notice. In Gen. 22 the son is offered up; in Gen. 23 Sarah is laid aside; and in Gen. 24 the servant is sent forth to procure a bride for him who had been, as it were, received from the dead in a figure. This connection, in a very striking manner, coincides with the order of events connected with the calling out of the Church. whether this coincidence is to be regarded as of divine origin, will, it may be, raise a question in the minds of some; but it must at least be regarded as not a little remarkable.

When we turn to the New Testament, the grand events which meet our view are, first, the rejection and death of Christ; secondly, the setting aside of Israel after the flesh; and, lastly, the calling out of the Church to occupy the high position of the bride of the Lamb.

Now, all this exactly corresponds with the contents of this and the two preceding chapters. The death of Christ needed to be an accomplished fact, ere the Church, properly so called, could be called out. "The middle wall of partition" needed to be broken down, ere the "*One new man*" could be developed. It is well to understand this in order that we may know the place which the Church occupies in the ways of God. So long as the Jewish economy subsisted there was the most strict separation maintained between Jew and Gentile, and hence the idea of both being united in one new man was far removed from the mind of a Jew. He was led to view himself in a position of entire superiority to that of a gentile, and to view the latter as utterly unclean, to whom it was unlawful to come in. (Acts 10: 28)

If Israel had walked with God according to the truth of the relationship into which He had graciously brought them, they would have continued in their peculiar place of separation and superiority; but this they did not do; and, therefore, when they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, by crucifying the Lord of life and glory, and rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost, we find St. Paul is raised up to be the minister of a new thing, which was held back in the counsels of God, while the testimony to Israel was going on. "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, *as it is now* revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets (i.e., New Testament prophets, *tois hagiois apostolois autou kai prophetais*) by the Spirit; that the gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph. 3: 1-6) This is conclusive. The mystery of the Church, composed of Jew and Gentile, baptised by one Spirit into one body, united to the glorious Head in the heavens, had never been revealed until Paul's day. Of this mystery the apostle goes on to say, "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me, by the effectual working of his power." (Ver. 7) The apostles and prophets of the New Testament formed, as it were, the first layer of this glorious building. (See Eph. 2: 20) This being so, it follows, as a consequence, that the building could not have been begun before. If the building had been going on from the days of Abel, downwards, the apostle would then have said, "the foundation of the Old Testament saints." But he has not said so, and therefore we conclude that, whatever be the position assigned to the Old Testament saints, they cannot possibly belong to a body which had no existence, save in the purpose of God, until the death and resurrection of Christ, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost. Saved they were, blessed be God; saved by the blood of Christ, and destined to enjoy heavenly glory with the Church; but they could not have formed a part of that which did not exist for hundreds of years after their time.

It were easy to enter upon a more elaborate demonstration of this most important truth, were this the place for so doing; but I shall now go on with our chapter, having merely touched upon a question of commanding interest, because of its being suggested by the position of Genesis 24.

There may be a question, in some minds, as to whether we are to view this deeply-interesting portion of scripture as *a type* of the calling out of the Church by the Holy Ghost. For myself, I feel happier in merely handling it as *an illustration* of that glorious work. We cannot suppose that the Spirit of God would occupy an

unusually long chapter with the mere detail of a family compact, were that compact not typical or illustrative of some great truth. "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." This is emphatic. What, therefore, are we to learn from the chapter before us? I believe it furnishes us with a beautiful illustration or foreshadowing of the great mystery of the Church. It is important to see that, while there is no direct revelation of this mystery in the Old Testament, there are, nevertheless, scenes and circumstances which, in a very remarkable manner, shadow it forth; as, for example, the chapter before us. As has been remarked, the son being, in a figure, offered up, and received again from the dead; the original parent stem, as it were, being laid aside, the messenger is sent forth by the father to procure a bride for the son.

Now, in order to the clear and full understanding of the contents of the entire chapter, we may consider the following points, viz., 1, *the oath*; 2, *the testimony*; 3, *the result*. It is beautiful to observe that the call and exaltation of Rebekah were founded upon the oath between Abraham and his servant. She knew nothing of this, though she was, in the purpose of God, so entirely the subject of it all. So is it exactly with the Church of God as a whole and each constituent part. "In thy book were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them." (Ps. 139: 16) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1: 3, 4) "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. 8: 20, 30) These scriptures are all in beautiful harmony with the point immediately before us. The call, the justification, and the glory of the Church, are all founded on the eternal purpose of God — His word and oath, ratified by the death, resurrection, and exaltation of the Son. Far back, beyond the bounds of time, in the deep recesses of God's eternal mind, lay this wondrous purpose respecting the Church, which cannot, by any

means, be separated from the divine thought respecting the glory of the Son. The oath between Abraham and the servant had for its object the provision of a partner for the son. It was the father's desire with respect to the son that led to Rebekah's after-dignity. It is happy to see this. Happy to see how the Church's security and blessing stand inseparably connected with Christ and His glory. "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." (1 Cor. 11: 8, 9) So it is in the beautiful parable of the marriage supper; "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son." (Matt. 22: 2) The Son is the Grand object of all the thoughts and counsels of God: and if any are brought into blessing, or glory, or dignity, it can only be in connection with Him. ALL title to these things, and even to life itself, was forfeited by sin; but Christ met all the penalty due to sin; He made Himself responsible for everything on behalf of His body the Church; He was nailed to the cross as her representative He bore her sins in His own body on the tree, and went down into the grave under the full weight of them. Hence, nothing can be more complete than the Church's deliverance from all that was against her. She is quickened out of the grave of Christ, where all her trespasses were laid. The life which she has is a life taken up at the other side of death, after every possible demand had been met. Hence, this life is connected with, and founded upon, divine righteousness, inasmuch as Christ's title to life is founded upon His having entirely exhausted the Power of death; and He is the Church's life. Thus the Church enjoys divine life; she stands in divine righteousness; and the hope that animates her is the hope of righteousness. (See, amongst many other scriptures, John 3: 16, 36; John 5: 39, 40; John 6: 27, 40, 47, 68; John 11: 25; John 17: 2; Rom. 5: 21; Rom. 6: 23; 1 Tim. 1: 16; 1 John 2: 25; 5: 20; Jude 21; Eph. 2: 1-6, 14, 15; Col. 1: 12-22 Col. 2: 10-15; Rom 1: 17; Rom 3: 21-26; Rom 4: 5, 23-25; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Gal. 5: 5)

These scriptures most fully establish the three points, viz., the life, the righteousness, and the hope of the Church, all of which flow from her being one with Him who was raised from the dead. Now, nothing can be so calculated to assure the heart as the conviction that the Church's existence is essential to the glory of Christ. "The

woman is the glory of the man." (1 Cor. 11: 7) And again, the Church is called "the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 23) This last is a remarkable expression. The word translated "fullness" means the complement, that which, being added to something else, makes up a whole. Thus it is that Christ the Head, and the Church the body, make up the "one new man." (Eph. 2: 15) Looking at the matter in this point of view, it is no marvel that the Church should have been the object of God's eternal counsels. When we view her as the body, the Bride, the companion, the counterpart, of His only-begotten Son, we feel that there was, through grace, wondrous reason for her being so thought of before the foundation of the world. Rebekah was necessary to Isaac, and therefore, she was the subject of secret counsel while yet in profound ignorance about her high destiny ALL Abraham's thought was about Isaac. "I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take *a wife unto my son* of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell." Here we see that the all-important point was, "a wife unto my son." "It is not good that the man should be alone." This opens up a very deep and blessed view of the Church. In the counsels of God she is necessary to Christ; and in the accomplished work of Christ, divine provision has been made for her being called into existence.

While occupied with such a character of truth as this, it is no longer a question as to whether God can save poor sinners; He actually wants to "make a marriage" for his Son," and the Church is the destined bride — she is the object of the Father's purpose, the object of the Son's love, and of the testimony of the Holy Ghost. She is to be the sharer of all the Son's dignity and glory, as she is the sharer of all that love of which He has been the everlasting object. Hear His own words, "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." (John 17: 22, 23) This settles the whole question. The words just quoted give us the thoughts of Christ's heart in reference to the Church. She is to be as He is, and not only so, but she is so even now, as St. John tells us, "Herein is love perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement: because as he is, so

are we in this world." (1 John 4: 17) This gives full confidence to the soul. "We are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." (2 John 5: 20) There is here no ground for uncertainty. Everything is secured for the bride in the bridegroom. ALL that belonged to Isaac became Rebekah's because Isaac was hers; and so all that belongs to Christ is made available to the Church. "ALL things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3: 21-23) Christ is "head over all things to the Church." (Eph. 1: 22) It will be His joy, throughout eternity, to exhibit the Church in all the glory and beauty with which He has endowed her, for her glory and beauty will be but the reflection of His. Angels and principalities shall behold in the Church the marvellous display of the wisdom, power, and grace of God in Christ.

But we shall now look at the second point for consideration, viz., *the testimony*. Abraham's servant carried with him a very distinct testimony. "And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed My master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men servants, and maid servants, and camels, and asses. and Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when she was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath." (Ver. 34-36) He reveals the father and the son. Such was his testimony. He speaks of the vast resources of the father, and of the son's being endowed with all these in virtue of his being "the only-begotten," and the object of the father's love. With this testimony he seeks to obtain a bride for the son.

ALL this, I need hardly remark, is strikingly illustrative of the testimony with which the Holy Ghost was sent from heaven upon the day of Pentecost. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John 15: 26) Again, "Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine and show it

unto you." *All things that the Father hath are mine*: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. (John 16: 13-15) The coincidence of these words with the testimony of Abraham's servant is instructive and interesting. It was by telling of Isaac that he sought to attract the heart of Rebekah; and it is, as we know, by telling of Jesus, that the Holy Ghost seeks to draw poor sinners away from a world of sin and folly into the blessed and holy unity of the body of Christ. "He shall take of mine and show it Unto you." The Spirit of God will never lead any one to look at Himself or His work; but only and always at Christ. Hence, the more really spiritual any one is, the more entirely will he be occupied with Christ.

Some there are who regard it as a great mark of spirituality to be ever looking in at their own hearts, and dwelling upon what they find there, even though that be the work of the Spirit. This is a great mistake. So far from its being a proof of spirituality, it is a proof of the very reverse, for it is expressly declared of the Holy Ghost that "He shall take of mine and show it unto you." Therefore, whenever one is looking inward, and building on the evidences of the Spirit's work there, he may be assured he is not led by the Spirit of God, in so doing. It is by holding up Christ that the Spirit draws souls to God. This is very important. The knowledge of Christ is life eternal; and it is the Father's revelation of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, that constitutes the basis of the Church. When Peter confessed Christ to be the Son of the Living God, Christ's answer was, "blessed art thou, Simon Barjonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock *I will build my church*; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16: 17, 18) What rock? Peter? God forbid. "This rock" (*taute te petra*) simply means the Father's revelation of Christ, as the Son of the living God, which is the only means by which any one is introduced into the assembly of Christ. Now this opens to us, very much, the true character of the gospel. It is, pre-eminently and emphatically, a revelation — a revelation not merely of a doctrine, but of a Person — the Person of the Son. This revelation being received by faith, draws the heart to Christ, and becomes the spring of life and power — the ground of membership — the power of fellowship. "When it pleased God.....*to reveal His Son in me*," &c. Here we have the true principle of "the

rock," viz., God revealing His Son. It is thus the superstructure is reared up; and on this solid foundation it reposes, according to God's eternal purpose.

It is therefore peculiarly instructive to find in this 24th of Genesis such a marked and beautiful illustration of the mission and special testimony of the Holy Ghost. Abraham's servant, in seeking to procure a bride for Isaac, sets forth all the dignity and wealth with which he had been endowed by the father; the love of which he was the object; and, in short, all that was calculated to affect the heart, and draw it off from present things. He showed Rebekah an object in the distance, and set before her the blessedness and reality of being made one with that beloved and highly favoured object. ALL that belonged to Isaac would belong to Rebekah too, when she became part of him. Such was his testimony. Such, also, is the testimony of the Holy Ghost. He speaks of Christ, the glory of Christ, the beauty of Christ, the fullness of Christ, the grace of Christ, "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the dignity of His Person, and the perfectness of His work.

Moreover, he sets forth the amazing blessedness of being one with such a Christ, "members of His body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Such is the Spirit's testimony always; and herein we have an excellent touchstone by which to try all sorts of teaching and preaching. The most spiritual teaching will ever be characterised by a full and constant presentation of Christ. He will ever form the burden of such teaching. The Spirit cannot dwell on ought but Jesus. Of Him He delights to speak. He delights in setting forth His attractions and excellencies. Hence, when a man is ministering by the power of the Spirit of God, there will always be more of Christ than anything else in his ministry. There will be little room in such ministry for human logic and reasoning. Such things may do very well where a man desires to set forth himself; but the Spirit's sole object be it well remembered by all who minister — will ever be to set forth Christ.

Let us now look, in the last place, at *the result* of all this. Truth, and the practical application of truth, are two very different things. It is one thing to speak of the peculiar glories of the Church, and quite another thing to be practically influenced by those glories.

In Rebekah's case the effect was most marked and decisive. The testimony of Abraham's servant sank down into her ears, and into her heart, and entirely detached her heart's affections from the scene of things around her. She was ready to leave all and follow after, in order that she might apprehend that for which she had been apprehended. It was morally impossible that she could believe herself to be the subject of such high destinies, and yet continue amid the circumstances of nature. If the report concerning the future were true, attachment to the present was the worst of folly. If the hope of being Isaac's bride, joint-heir with him of all his dignity and glory, if this were a reality, then to continue to tend Laban's sheep would be practically to despise all that God had, in grace, set before her.

But, no, the prospect was far too bright to be thus lightly given up. True, she had not yet seen Isaac, nor yet the inheritance, but she had believed the report, the testimony of *him*, and had received, as it were, the earnest of it, and these were enough for her heart; and hence she unhesitatingly arises and expresses her readiness to depart in the memorable words, "*I will go.*" "She was fully prepared to enter upon an unknown path in companionship with one who had told her of an object far away, and of a glory connected with him, to which she was about to be raised. "I will go," said she, and "forgetting the things which were behind, and reaching forth toward the things which were before, she pressed toward the mark for the prize of her high calling." Most touching and beautiful illustration this of the Church, under the conduct of the Holy Ghost, going onward to meet her heavenly Bridegroom. This is what the Church should be; but, alas! there is sad failure here. There is little of that holy alacrity in laying aside every weight and every entanglement, in the power of communion with the Holy Guide and Companion of our way, whose office and delight it is to take of the things of Jesus, and show them unto us; just as Abraham's servant took of the things of Isaac, and showed them to Rebekah: and no doubt, too, he found his joy in pouring fresh testimonies concerning the son into her ear, as they moved onward toward the consummation of all her joy and glory. Thus it is, at least with our heavenly guide and companion. He delights to tell of Jesus, "He shall take of mine and show it unto you;" and again, "he shall show you things to come." Now, this is

what we really want, this ministry of the Spirit of God, unfolding Christ to our souls, producing earnest longing to see Him, as He is, and be made like Him for ever. Nought but this will ever detach our hearts from earth and nature. What, save the hope of being associated with Isaac, would ever have: led Rebekah to say, "I will go," when her "brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at least ten." And so with us: nothing but the hope of seeing Jesus as He is, and being like Him, will ever enable or lead us to purify ourselves, even as He is pure.

Genesis 25

In the opening of this chapter, Abraham's second marriage is set before us, an event not without its interest to the spiritual mind, when viewed in connection with what we have been considering in the preceding chapter. With the light furnished by the prophetic scriptures of the New testament, we understand that after the completion and taking up of the elect bride of Christ, the seed of Abraham will again come into notice. Thus, after the marriage of Isaac, the Holy Ghost takes up the history of Abraham's seed by a new marriage, together with other points in his history, and that of his seed, according to the flesh. I do not press any special interpretation of all this; I merely say that it is not without its interest.

We have already referred to the remark of some one on the book of Genesis, namely, that it is "full of the seeds of things;" and as we pass along its comprehensive pages, we shall find them teaming with all the fundamental principles of truth, which are more elaborately brought out in the New Testament. True, in Genesis these principles are set forth illustratively, and in the New Testament didactically; still, the illustration is deeply interesting, and eminently calculated to bring home the truth with power to the soul.

At the close of this chapter we are presented with some principles of a very solemn and practical nature. Jacob's character and actings which" hereafter, if the Lord will, come more fully before us; but I would just notice, ere passing on, the conduct of Esau, in reference to the birthright, and all which it involved. The natural heart places no value on the things of God. To it God's promise is a vague, valueless, powerless thing, simply because God is not known. Hence it is that present things carry such weight and influence in man's estimation. Anything that man can see he values, because he is governed by sight, and not by faith. To him the present is everything; the future is a mere unimportant thing — a matter of the merest uncertainty. Thus it was with Esau. Here his fallacious reasoning, "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me? What strange reasoning? *The present* is slipping from beneath my-feet, I will therefore despise and entirely

let go the *future*? Time is fading from my view, I will therefore abandon all interest in eternity! "Thus Esau despised his birthright." Thus Israel despised the pleasant land; (Ps. 106: 24) thus they despised Christ. (Zech. 11: 13) Thus those who were bidden to the marriage despised the invitation. (Matt. 22: 5) Man has no heart for the things of God. The present is everything to him. a mess of pottage is better than a title to Canaan. Hence, the very reason why Esau made light of the birthright was the reason why he ought to have grasped it with the greater intensity. The more clearly I see the vanity of man's present, the more I shall cleave to God's future. Thus it is in the judgement of faith. "Seeing then that *all these things shall be dissolved*, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, *according to his promise*, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3: 11-13) These are the thoughts of God, and, therefore, the thoughts of faith. The things that are seen shall be dissolved. What, then, are we to despise the unseen? By no means. The present is rapidly passing away. What is our resource? "Looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God." This is the judgement of the renewed mind; and any other judgement is only that of "a profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." (Heb. 12: 16) The Lord keep us judging of things as He judges. This can only be done by faith.

Genesis 26

The opening verse of this chapter connects itself with Gen. 12. "There was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham." The trials which meet God's people, in their course, are very much like; and they ever tend to make manifest how far the heart has found its *all* in God. It is a difficult matter — a rare attainment, so to walk in sweet communion with God as to be rendered thereby entirely independent of things and people here. The Egypts and the Gerars which lie on our right hand and on our left present great temptations, either to turn aside out of the right way, or to stop short of our true position as servants of the true and living God.

"And Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar." There is a manifest difference between Egypt and Gerar. Egypt is the expression of the world in its natural resources, and its independence of God. "My river is mine own," is the language of an Egyptian who knew not Jehovah, and thought not of looking to Him for ought. Egypt was, locally, further removed from Canaan than Gerar; and, morally, it expresses a condition of soul further from God. Gerar is thus referred to in Gen. 10 "And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza as thou goest unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha." (Ver. 19) We are informed that "from Gerar to Jerusalem was three days' journey." It was, therefore, as compared with Egypt, an advanced position; but still it lay within the range of very dangerous influences. Abraham got into trouble there, and so does Isaac, in this chapter, and that, too, in the very same way. Abraham denied his wife, and so does Isaac. This is peculiarly solemn. To see both the father and the son fall into the same evil, in the same place, tells us, plainly, that the influence of that place was not good.

Had Isaac not gone to Abimelech, king of Gerar, he would have had no necessity for denying his wife; but the slightest divergence from the true line of conduct superinduces spiritual weakness. It was when Peter stood and warmed himself at the high priest's fire that he denied his Master. Now, it is manifest that Isaac

was not really happy in Gerar. True, the Lord says unto him, "sojourn in this land;" but how often does the Lord give directions to His people morally suitable to the condition He knows them to be in, and calculated also to arouse them to a true sense of that condition? He directed Moses, in Num. 13 to send men to search the land of Canaan; but had they not been in a low moral condition, such a step would not have been necessary. We know well that faith does not need "*to spy out*" when God's promise lies before us. Again, he directed Moses to choose out seventy elders to help him in the work; but had Moses fully entered into the dignity and blessedness of his position, he would not have needed such a direction. So, in reference to the setting up of a king, in 1 Sam. 8. They ought not to have needed a king. Hence, we must always take into consideration the condition of an individual or a people to whom a direction is given before we can form any correct judgement as to the direction.

But again it may be said, if Isaac's position in Gerar was wrong, how do we read, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received the same year an hundred-fold: and the Lord blessed him." (ver. 12) I reply, we can never judge that a person's condition is right because of prosperous circumstances. We have had already to remark, that there is a great difference between the Lord's presence and His blessing. Many have the latter without the former; and, moreover, the heart is prone to mistake the one for the other — prone to put the blessing; for the presence; or at least to argue that the one must ever accompany the other. This is a great mistake. How many do we see surrounded by God's blessings, who neither have, nor wish for, God's presence? It is important to see this. A man may "wax great, and go forward, and grow until he becomes very great, and have possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants," and all the while, not have the full, unhindered joy of the Lord's presence with him. Flocks and herds are not the Lord. They are things on account of which the Philistines might envy Isaac, whereas they never would have envied him on account of the Lord's presence. He might have been enjoying the sweetest and richest communion with God, and the Philistines have thought nothing whatever about it? simply because they had no heart to understand or appreciate such a reality. Flocks, herds, servants,

and wells of water they could appreciate; but the divine presence they could not appreciate.

However, Isaac at length, makes his way from amongst the Philistines, and gets up to Beersheba. "And *the Lord appeared unto him the same night*, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for *I am with thee*, and will bless thee." (Ver. 24) Mark, it was not the Lord's blessing merely, but the Lord Himself. And why? because Isaac had left the Philistines, with all their envy, and strife, and contention behind, and gone up to Beersheba. Here the Lord could show Himself to His servant. His liberal hand might follow him during his sojourn in Gerar; but His presence could not there be enjoyed. To enjoy God's presence, we must be where He is, and He certainly is not to be found amid the strife and contention of an ungodly world; and hence, the sooner the child of God gets away from all such, the better. So Isaac found it. He had no rest in his own spirit; and he assuredly did not, in any wise, serve the Philistines by his sojourn amongst them. It is a very common error to imagine that we serve the men of this world by mixing ourselves up with them in their associations and ways. The true way to serve them is to stand apart from them in the power of communion with God, and thus show them the pattern of a more excellent way.

Mark the progress in Isaac's soul, and the moral effect of his course. "He went up from thence," "The Lord appeared unto him," "he builded an altar," "he called upon the name of the Lord," "he pitched his tent," "his servants digged a well." Here we have most blessed progress. The moment he took a step in the right direction, he went from strength to strength. He entered into the joy of God's presence — tasted the sweets of true worship, and exhibited the character of a stranger and pilgrim, and found peaceful refreshment, an undisputed well, which the Philistines could not stop because they were not there.

These were blessed results in reference to Isaac himself; and now observe the effect produced upon others. "Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phicol, the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was

with thee: and we said, Let there now be an oath betwixt us," &c. The true way to act on the hearts and consciences of the men of the world is to stand in decided separation from them, while dealing in perfect grace toward them. So long as Isaac continued in Gerar, there was nothing but strife and contention. He was reaping sorrow for himself, and producing no effect whatever upon those around him. On the contrary, the moment he went away from them, their hearts were touched, and they followed him, and desired a covenant. This is very instructive. The principle unfolded here may be seen constantly exemplified in the history of the children of God. The first point with the heart should ever be, to see that in our position we are right with God, and not only right in position, but in the moral condition of the son. When we are *right with God*, we may expect to act salutary upon men. The moment Isaac got up to Beersheba, and took his place as a worshipper, his own soul was refreshed, and he was used of God to act upon others. So long as we continue in a low position, we are robbing ourselves of blessing, and failing, totally, in our testimony and service.

Nor should we, when in a wrong position, stop to inquire, as we so often do, "Where can I find anything better?" God's order is, "Cease to do evil;" and when we have acted upon that holy precept, we are furnished with another, namely, "learn to do well." If we expect to "learn" how to do well, before we "cease to do evil," we are entirely mistaken. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead." (*ek ton nekron.*) And what then? "Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. 5: 14)

My beloved reader, if you are doing what you know to be wrong, or if you are identified, in any way, with what you own to be contrary to scripture, hearken to the word of the Lord, "Cease to do evil." And, be assured, when you have yielded obedience to this word, you will not long be left in ignorance as to your path. It is sheer unbelief that leads us to say, "I cannot cease to do evil, until I find something better." The Lord grant us a single eye, and a docile spirit.

Genesis 27-35

These chapters present to us the history of Jacob-at least, the principal scenes in that history. The Spirit of God here sets before us the deepest instruction, first, as to God's purpose of infinite grace; and, secondly, as to the utter worthlessness and depravity of human nature.

There is a passage in Gen. 25 which I purposely passed over, in order to take it up here, so that we might have the truth in reference to Jacob fully before us "And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her: and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." This is referred to in Malachi, where we read, "I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau." This is again referred to in Rom. 9: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Thus we have very distinctly before us, God's eternal purpose, according to *the election of grace*. There is much involved in this expression. It banishes all human pretension from the scene, and asserts God's right to act as He will. This is of the very last importance. The creature can enjoy no real blessedness until he is brought to bow his head to sovereign grace. It becomes him so to do, inasmuch as he is a sinner, and, as such, utterly without claim to act or dictate. The great value of finding oneself on this ground is, that it is then no longer a question of what we deserve to get, but simply of what God is pleased to give. The prodigal might talk of being a servant, but he really did not deserve the place of a servant, if it were to be made a question of desert; and, therefore, he had only to

take what the father was pleased to give — and that was the very highest place, even the place of fellowship with himself. Thus it must ever be. "Grace all the work shall crown, through everlasting days." Happy for us that it is so. As we go on, day by day, making fresh discoveries of ourselves, we need to have beneath our feet the solid foundation of God's grace: nothing else could possibly sustain us in our growing self-knowledge. The ruin is hopeless, and therefore the grace must be infinite: and infinite it is, having its source in God Himself, its channel in Christ, and the power of application and enjoyment in the Holy Ghost. The Trinity is brought out in connection with the grace that saves a poor sinner. "Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." It is only in redemption that this reign of grace could be seen. we may see in creation the reign of wisdom and power; we may see in providence the reign of goodness and long-suffering; but only in redemption do we see the reign of grace, and that, too, on the principle of righteousness.

Now, we have, in the person of Jacob, a most striking exhibition of the power of divine grace; and for this reason, that we have in him a striking exhibition of the power of human nature. In him we see nature in all its obliquity, and therefore we see grace in all its moral beauty and power. From the facts of his remarkable history, it would seem that, before his birth, at his birth, and after his birth, the extraordinary energy of nature was seen. Before his birth, we read, "the children struggled together within her." At his birth, we read, "his hand took hold on Esau's heel." And, after his birth — yea to the turning point of his history, in Gen. 32, without any exception — his course exhibits nothing but the most unamiable traits of nature; but all this only serves, like a drab background, to throw into relief the grace of Him who condescends to call Himself by the peculiarly touching name, "the God of Jacob" — a name most sweetly expressive of free grace.

Let us now examine the chapters consecutively. Gen. 27 exhibits a most humbling picture of sensuality, deceit, and cunning; and when one thinks of such things in connection with the people of God, it is sad and painful to the very last degree. Yet how true and faithful is the Holy Ghost! He must tell all out. He cannot give us a

partial picture. If he gives us a history of man, he must describe man as he is, and not as he is not. So, if He unfolds to us the character and ways of God, He gives us God as He is. And this, we need hardly remark, is exactly what we need. We need the revelation of one perfect in holiness, yet perfect in grace and mercy, who could come down into all the depth of man's need, his misery and his degradation, and deal with Him there, and raise him up out of it into full, unhindered fellowship with Himself in all the reality of what He is. This is what scripture gives us. God knew what we needed, and He has given it to us, blessed be His name!

And, be it remembered, that in setting before us, in faithful love, all the traits of man's character, it is simply with a view to magnify the riches of divine grace, and to admonish our souls. It is not, by any means, in order to perpetuate the memory of sins, for ever blotted out from His sight. The blots, the failures, and the errors of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have been perfectly washed away, and they have taken their place amid "the spirits of just men made perfect;" but their history remains, on the page of inspiration, for the display of God's grace, and for the warning of God's people in all ages; And, moreover, that we may distinctly see that the blessed God has not been dealing With perfect men and women, but with those of "like passions as we are" that He has been walking and bearing with the same failures, the same infirmities, the same errors, as those over which we mourn every day. This is peculiarly comforting to the heart; and it may well stand in striking contrast with the way in which the great majority of human biographies are written, in "which, for the most part, we find, not the history of men, but of beings devoid of error and infirmity. histories have rather the effect of discouraging than of edifying those who read them. They are rather histories of what men ought to be, than of what they really are, and they are, therefore, useless to us, yea, not only useless, but mischievous.

Nothing can edify save the presentation of God dealing with man as he really is; and this is what the word gives us. The chapter before us illustrates this very fully. Here we find the aged patriarch Isaac, standing, as it were, at the very portal of eternity, the earth and nature fast fading away from his view, yet occupied about

"savoury meat," and about to act in direct opposition to the divine counsel, by blessing the elder instead of the younger. Truly this was nature, and nature with its "eyes dim." If Esau had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, Isaac was about to give away the blessing for a mess of venison, How very humiliating!

But God's purpose must stand, and He will do all His pleasure. Faith knows this; and, in the power of that knowledge, can wait for God's time. This nature never can do, but must set about gaining its own ends, by its own inventions. These are the two grand points brought out in Jacob's history — God's purpose of grace, on the one hand; and on the other, nature plotting and scheming to reach what that purpose would have infallibly brought about, without any plot or scheme at all. This simplifies Jacob's history amazingly, and not only simplifies it, but heightens the soul's interest in it also. There is nothing, perhaps, in which we are so lamentably deficient, as in the grace of patient, self-renouncing dependence upon God. Nature will be working in some shape or form, and thus, so far as in it lies, hindering the outshining of divine grace and power. God did not need the aid of such elements as Rebekah's cunning and Jacob's gross deceit, in order to accomplish His purpose. He had said, "the elder shall serve the younger." This was enough — enough for faith, but not enough for nature, which must ever adopt its own ways, and know nothing of what it is to wait on God.

Now, nothing can be more truly blessed than the position of hanging in child-like dependence upon God, and being entirely content to wait for His time. True, it will involve trial; but the renewed mind learns some of its deepest lessons, and enjoys some of its sweetest experiences, while waiting on the Lord; and the more pressing the temptation to take ourselves out of His hands, the richer will be the blessing of leaving ourselves there. It is so exceedingly sweet to find ourselves wholly dependent upon one who finds infinite joy in blessing us. It is only those who have tasted, in any little measure, the reality of this wondrous position that can at all appreciate it. The only one who ever occupied it perfectly and uninterruptedly was the Lord Jesus Himself. He was ever dependent upon God, and utterly rejected every proposal of the enemy to be anything else. His language was, "In thee do I put my trust;" and

again, "I was cast upon thee from the womb." Hence, when tempted by the devil to make an effort to Satisfy His hunger, His reply was, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." When tempted to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, His reply was, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." When tempted to take the kingdoms of the world from the hand of another than God, and by doing homage to another than Him, His reply was, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." In a word, nothing could allure the perfect man from the place of absolute dependence upon God. True, it was God's purpose to sustain His Son; it was His purpose that He should suddenly come to His temple; it was His purpose to give Him the kingdoms of this world; but this was the very reason why the Lord Jesus would simply and uninterruptedly wait on God for the accomplishment of His purpose, in His own time, and in His own way. He did not set about accomplishing His own ends. He left Himself thoroughly at God's disposal. He would only eat when God gave Him bread; He would only enter the temple when sent of God; He will ascend the throne when God appoints the time. "Sit thou at my right hand, *until I make thy foes thy footstool.*" (Ps. 110)

This profound subjection of the Son to the Father is admirable beyond expression. Though entirely equal with God, He took, as man, the place of dependence, rejoicing always in the will of the Father; giving thanks even when things seemed to be against Him; doing always the things which pleased the Father; making: it His grand and unvarying object to glorify the Father; and finally, when all was accomplished, when He had perfectly finished the work which the Father had given, He breathed His spirit into the Father's hand, and His flesh rested in hope of the promised glory and exaltation. Well, therefore, may the inspired apostle say, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"

How little Jacob knew, in the opening of his history, of this blessed mind! How little was he prepared to wait for God's time and God's way! He much preferred Jacob's time and Jacob's way. He thought it much better to arrive at the blessing and the inheritance by all sorts of cunning and deception, than by simple dependence upon and subjection to God, whose electing grace had promised, and whose almighty power and wisdom would assuredly accomplish all for him.

But, oh! how well one knows the opposition of the human heart to all this! Any attitude for it save that of patient waiting upon God. It is almost enough to drive nature to distraction to find itself bereft of all resource but God. This tells us, in language not to be misunderstood, the true character of human nature. In order to know what nature is, I need not travel into those scenes of vice and crime which justly shock all refined moral sense. No; all that is needful is just to try it for a moment in the place of dependence, and see how it will carry itself there. It really knows nothing of God, and therefore cannot trust Him; and herein was the secret of all its misery and moral degradation. It is totally ignorant of the true God, and can therefore be nought else but a ruined and worthless thing. The knowledge of God is the source of life — yea, is itself life; and until a man has life, what is he? or, what can he be?

Now, in Rebekah and Jacob, we see nature taking advantage of nature in Isaac and Esau. It was really this. There was no waiting upon God whatever. Isaac's eyes were dim, he could therefore be imposed upon, and they set about doing so, instead of looking off to God, who would have entirely frustrated Isaac's purpose to bless the one whom God would not bless — a purpose? founded in nature, and most unlovely nature, for "Isaac loved Esau," not because he was the first-born, but "because he did eat of his venison." How humiliating!

But we are sure to bring unmixed sorrow upon ourselves, when we take ourselves, our circumstances, or our destinies, out of

the hands of God.* Thus it was with Jacob, as we shall see in the sequel. It has been observed by another, that whoever observes Jacob's life, after he had surreptitiously obtained his father's blessing, will perceive that he enjoyed very little worldly felicity. His brother purposed to murder him, to avoid which he was forced to flee from his father's house; his uncle Laban deceived him, as he had deceived his father, and treated him with great rigor; after a servitude of twenty-one years, he was obliged to leave him in a clandestine manner, and not without danger of being brought back or murdered by his enraged brother; no sooner were these fears over, than he experienced the baseness of his son Reuben, in defiling his bed; he had next to bewail the treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi towards the Shechemites; then he had to feel the loss of his beloved wife; he was next imposed upon by his own sons, and had to lament the supposed untimely end of Joseph; and, to complete all, he was forced by famine to go into Egypt, and there died in a strange land. So just, wonderful, and instructive are all the ways of providence."

{*We should ever remember, in a place of trial, that what we want is not a change of circumstances, but victory over self.}

This is a true picture, so far as Jacob was concerned; but it only gives us one side, and that the gloomy side. Blessed be God, there is a bright side, likewise, for God had to do with Jacob; and, in every scene of his life, when Jacob was called to reap the fruits of his own plotting and crookedness, the God of Jacob brought good out of evil, and caused His grace to abound over all the sin and folly of His poor servant. This we shall see as we proceed with his history.

I shall just offer a remark here upon Isaac, Rebekah, and Esau. It is very interesting to observe how, notwithstanding the exhibition of nature's excessive weakness, in the opening of Genesis 27, Isaac maintains, by faith, the dignity which God had conferred upon him. He blesses with all the consciousness of being endowed with power to bless! He says, "I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed.. Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him; and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?" He speaks as one who,

by faith, had at his disposal all the treasures of earth. There is no false humility, no taking a low ground by reason of the manifestation of nature. True, he was on the eve of making a grievous mistake — even of moving right athwart the counsel of God; still, he knew God, and took his place accordingly, dispensing blessings in all the dignity and power of faith. "I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed." "With corn and wine have I sustained him." It is the proper province of faith to rise above all one's own failure and the consequences thereof, into the place where God's grace has set us.

As to Rebekah, she was called to feel all the sad results of her cunning actings. She, no doubt, imagined she was managing matters most skillfully; but, alas! she never saw Jacob again: so much for management! How different it would have been had she left the matter entirely in the hands of God. This is the way in which faith manages, and it is ever a gainer. "Which of you by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?" We gain nothing by our anxiety and planning; we only shut out God, and that is no gain. It is a just judgement from the hand of God to be left to reap the fruits, of our own devices; and I know of few things more sad than to see a child of God so entirely forgetting his proper place and privilege, as to take the management of his affairs into his own hands. The birds of the air, and the lilies of the field, may well be our teachers when we so far forget our position of unqualified dependence upon God.

Then, again, as to Esau, the apostle calls him "a profane person, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright," and "afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of change of mind, though he sought it carefully with tears." Thus we learn what a profane person is, viz. one who would like to hold both worlds; one who would like to enjoy the present, without forfeiting his title to the future. This is, by no means, an uncommon case. It expresses to us the mere worldly professor, whose conscience has never felt the action of divine truth, and whose heart has never felt the influence of divine grace.

We are now called to trace Jacob in his movement from under his fathers roof, to view him as a homeless and lonely wanderer on the earth. It is here that God's special dealings with him commence.

Jacob now begins to realise, in some measure, the bitter fruit of his conduct, in reference to Esau; while, at the same time, God is seen rising above all the weakness and folly of His servant, and displaying His own sovereign grace and profound wisdom in His dealings with him. God will accomplish His own purpose, no matter by what instrumentality; But if His child, in impenitence of spirit, and unbelief of heart, will take himself out of His hands, he must expect much sorrowful exercise and painful discipline. Thus it was with Jacob: he might not have had to flee to Haran, had he allowed God to act for him. God would, assuredly, have dealt with Esau, and caused him to find his destined place and portion; and Jacob might have enjoyed that sweet peace which nothing can yield save entire subjection in all things to the hand and counsel of God.

But here is where the excessive feebleness of our hearts is constantly disclosed. We do not lie passive in God's hand; we will be acting; and, by our acting, we hinder the display of God's grace and power on our behalf. "*Be still* and know that I am God," is a precept which nought, save the power of divine grace, can enable one to obey. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. (*eggus*) Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." What will be the result of this activity? "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison (*phrouresei*) your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 5-7)

However, God graciously overrules our folly and weakness, and while we are called upon to reap the fruits of our unbelieving and impatient ways, He takes occasion from them to teach our hearts still deeper lessons of His own tender grace and perfect wisdom. This, while it, assuredly, affords no warrant whatever for unbelief and impatience, does most wonderfully exhibit the goodness of our God, and comfort the heart even while we may be passing through the painful circumstances consequent upon our failure. God is above all; and, moreover, it is His special prerogative to bring good out of evil; to make the eater yield meat, and the strong yield sweetness; and hence, while it is quite true that Jacob was compelled to be an exile from his father's roof in consequence of his own restless and deceitful acting, it is equally true that he never could have learnt the

meaning of "Bethel" had he been quietly at home. Thus the two sides of the picture are strongly marked in every scene of Jacob's history. It was when he was driven, by his own folly, from Isaac's house, that he was led to taste, in some measure, the blessedness and solemnity of "God's house."

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. and he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep." Here we find the homeless wanderer just in the very position in which God could meet him, and in which He could unfold His purposes of grace and glory. Nothing could possibly be more expressive of helplessness and nothingness than Jacob's condition as here set before us. Beneath the open canopy of heaven, with a pillow of stone, in the helpless condition of sleep. Thus it was that the God of Bethel unfolded to Jacob His purposes respecting him and his seed. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Here we have, indeed, "grace and glory." The ladder "set *on the earth*" naturally leads the heart to meditate on the display of God's grace, in the Person and work of His Son. On the earth it was that the wondrous work was accomplished which forms the basis, the strong and everlasting basis, of all the divine counsels in reference to Israel, the Church, and the world at large. On the earth it was that Jesus lived laboured. and died; that, through His death, He might remove out of the way every obstacle to the accomplishment of the divine purpose of blessing to man.

But "the top of the ladder reached to heaven." It formed the medium of communication between heaven and earth; and "behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it" — striking and beautiful picture of Him by whom God has come down into all the depth of man's need, and by whom also He has brought man up and set him in His own presence for ever, in the power of divine righteousness! God has made provision for the accomplishment of all His plans, despite of man's folly and sin; and it is for the everlasting joy of any soul to find itself, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, within the limits of God's gracious purpose.

The prophet Hosea leads us on to the time when that which was foreshadowed by Jacob's ladder shall have its full accomplishment. "And in that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle, out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." (Hosea 2: 18-23) There is also an expression in the first chapter of John, bearing upon Jacob's remarkable vision; it is Christ's word to Nathanael, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (Ver. 51)

Now this vision of Jacob's is a very blessed disclosure of divine grace to Israel. We have been led to see something of Jacob's real character, something, too, of his real condition; both were evidently such as to show that it should either be divine grace for him, or nothing. By birth he had no claim; nor yet by character. Esau might put forward some claim on both these grounds; i.e., provided

God's prerogative were set aside; but Jacob had no claim whatsoever; and hence, while Esau could only stand upon the exclusion of God's prerogative, Jacob could only stand upon the introduction and establishment thereof. Jacob was such a sinner, and so utterly divested of all claim, both by birth and by practice, that he had nothing whatever to rest upon save God's purpose of pure, free, and sovereign grace. Hence, in the revelation which the Lord makes to His chosen servant, in the passage just quoted, it is a simple record or prediction of what He Himself would yet do. "*I am.... I will give.... I will keep I will bring..... I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of*" It was all Himself. There is no condition whatever. No *if* or *but*; for when *grace* acts there can be no such thing. Where there is an *if*, it cannot possibly be grace. Not that God cannot put man into a position of responsibility, in which He must needs address him with an 'if.' We know He can; but Jacob asleep on a pillow of stone was not in a position of responsibility, but of the deepest helplessness and need; and therefore he was in a position to receive a revelation of the fullest, richest, and most unconditional grace.

Now, we cannot but own the blessedness of being in such a condition, that we have nothing to rest upon save God Himself; and, moreover, that it is in the most perfect establishment of God's own character and prerogative that we obtain all our true joy and blessing. According to this principle, it would be an irreparable loss to us to have any ground of our own to stand upon, for in that case, God should address us on the ground of responsibility, and failure would then be inevitable. Jacob was so bad, that none but God Himself could do for him.

And, be it remarked, that it was his failure in the habitual recognition of this that led him into so much sorrow and pressure. God's revelation of Himself is one thing, and our resting in that revelation is quite another. God shows Himself to Jacob, in infinite grace; but no sooner does Jacob awake out of sleep, than we find him developing his true character, and proving how little he knew, practically, of the blessed One who had just been revealing Himself so marvellously to him. "He was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the

gate of heaven." His heart was not at home in the presence of God; nor can any heart be so until it has been thoroughly emptied and broken. God is at home, blessed be His name, with a broken heart, and a broken heart at home with Him. But Jacob's heart was not yet in this condition; nor had he yet learnt to repose, like a little child, in the perfect love of one who could say, "Jacob have I loved." "Perfect love casteth out fear;" but where such love is not known and fully realised, there will always be a measure of uneasiness and perturbation. God's house and God's presence are not dreadful to a soul who knows the love of God as expressed in the perfect sacrifice of Christ. such a soul is rather led to say, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." (Ps. 26: 8) And, again, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." (Ps. 27: 4) and again, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord." (Ps. 84) When the heart is established in the knowledge of God, it will assuredly love His house, whatever the Character of that house may be, whether it be Bethel, or the temple at Jerusalem, or the Church now composed of all true believers, "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." However, Jacob's knowledge, both of God and His house, was very shallow, at that point in his history on which we are now dwelling.

We shall have occasion, again, to refer to some principles connected with Bethel; and shall, now, close our meditations upon this chapter, with a brief notice of Jacob's bargain with God, so truly characteristic of him, and so demonstrative of the truth of the statement with respect to the shallowness of his knowledge of the divine character. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Observe, "*if* God will be with me." Now, the Lord had just said, emphatically, "*I am* with thee, and *will keep thee in all places*

whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land," &c. And yet poor Jacob's heart cannot get beyond an "if" nor, in its thoughts of God's goodness, can it rise higher than "bread to eat, and raiment put on." Such were the thoughts of one who had just seen the magnificent vision of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with the Lord standing above, and promising an innumerable seed, and an everlasting possession. Jacob was evidently unable to enter into the reality and fullness of God's thoughts. He measured God by Himself, and thus utterly failed to apprehend Him. In short, Jacob had not yet verily got to the end of himself; and hence he had not really begun with God.

"Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east." As we have just seen, in Gen. 28 Jacob utterly fails in the apprehension of God's real character, and meets all the rich grace of Bethel with an "if" and a miserable bargain about food and raiment. We now follow him into a scene of thorough bargain-making. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is no possibility of escaping from this. Jacob had not yet found his true level in the presence of God; and, therefore, God uses circumstances to chasten and break him down.

This is the real secret of much, very much, of our sorrow and trial in the world. Our hearts have never been really broken before the Lord; we have never been self-judged and self-emptied; and hence, again and again, we, as it were, knock our heads against the wall. No one can really enjoy God until he has got to the bottom of self, and for this plain reason, that God has begun the display of Himself at the very point at which the end of flesh is seen. If, therefore, I have not reached the end of my flesh, in the deep and positive experience of my soul, it is morally impossible that I can have anything like a just apprehension of God's character. But I must, in some way or other, be conducted to the true measure of nature. To accomplish this end, the Lord makes use of various agencies which, no matter what they are, are only effectual when used by Him for the purpose of disclosing, in our view, the true character of all that is in our hearts. How often do we find as in Jacob's case, that even although the Lord may come near to us, and speak in our ears, yet we do not understand His voice, or take our

true place in His presence. "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not How dreadful is this place!" Jacob learnt nothing by all this, and it, therefore, needed twenty years of terrible schooling, and that, too, in a school marvellously adapted to his flesh; and even that, as we shall see, was not sufficient to break him down.

However, it is remarkable to see how he gets back into an atmosphere so entirely suited to his moral constitution. The bargain-making Jacob, meets with the bargain-making Laban, and they are both seen, as it were, straining every nerve to outwit each other. Nor can we wonder at Laban, for he had never been at Bethel: he had seen no open heaven, with a ladder reaching from thence to earth; he had heard no magnificent promises from the lips of Jehovah, securing to him all the land of Canaan, with a countless seed: no marvel, therefore, that he should exhibit a grasping grovelling spirit; he had no other resource. It is useless to expect from worldly men ought but a worldly spirit, and worldly principles and ways; they have gotten nought superior; and you cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean. But to find Jacob, after all he had seen and heard at Bethel, struggling with a man of the world, and endeavouring, by such means, to accumulate property, is peculiarly humbling.

And yet, alas! it is no uncommon thing to find the children of God thus forgetting their high destinies and heavenly inheritance, and descending into the arena with the children of this world, to struggle there for the riches and honours of a perishing, sin-stricken earth. Indeed, to such an extent is this true, in many instances, that it is often hard to trace a single evidence of that principle which St. John tells us "overcometh the world." Looking at Jacob and Laban, and judging of them upon natural principles, it would be hard to trace any difference. One should get behind the scenes, and enter into God's thoughts about both, in order to see how widely they differed. But it was God that had made them to differ, not Jacob; and so it is now. Difficult as it may be to trace any difference between the children of light and the children of darkness, there is, nevertheless, a very wide difference indeed — a difference founded on the solemn fact that the former are "the vessels of mercy, which God has before prepared unto glory," while the latter are "the vessels of wrath, fitted (not by God, but by sin) to destruction." Rom 9: 22,

23)* This makes a very serious difference. The Jacobs and the Labans differ materially, and have differed, and will differ for ever, though the former may so sadly fail in the realization and practical exhibition of their true character and dignity.

{*It is deeply interesting to the spiritual mind to mark how sedulously the Spirit of God, in Rom. 9 and indeed throughout all scripture, guards against the horrid inference which the human mind draws from the doctrine of God's election — when He speaks of "vessels of wrath," He simply says, "fitted to destruction." He does not say that God "fitted" them.

Whereas, on the other hand, when He refers to "the vessels of mercy" he says, "whom he had afore prepared unto glory." This is most marked.

If my reader will turn for a moment to Matt 25: 34-41, he will find another striking and beautiful instance of the same thing.

When the king addresses those on His right hand, he says, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" (Verse 34) But when He addresses those on His left, He says, "Depart from me ye cursed." He does not say, "cursed of My Father." And, further, He says, "into everlasting fire, prepared," not for *you*, but "for the devil and his angels." (Verse 41)

In a word, then, it is plain that God has "prepared" a kingdom of glory, and "vessels of mercy" to inherit that kingdom; but He has not prepared "everlasting fire" for men, but for the "devil and his angels" nor has He fitted the "vessels of wrath," but they have fitted themselves.

The word of God as clearly establishes "election" as it sedulously guards against "*reprobation.*" Everyone who finds himself in heaven will have to thank God for it; and everyone that finds himself in hell will have to thank himself.}

Now, in Jacob's case, as set forth in the three chapters now before us, all his toiling and working, like his wretched bargain

before, is the result of his ignorance of God's grace, and his inability to put implicit confidence in God's promise. The man that could say, after a most unqualified promise from God to give him the whole land of Canaan, "IF God will give me food to eat and raiment to put on," could have had but a very faint apprehension of who God was, or what His promise was either; and because of this, we see him seeking to do the best he can for himself. This is always the way when grace is not understood: the principles of grace may be professed, but the real measure of our experience of the power of grace is quite another thing. One would have imagined that Jacob's vision had told him a tale of grace; but God's revelation at Bethel, and Jacob's actings at Haran, are two very different things; yet the latter tell out what was Jacob's sense of the former. Character and conduct prove the real measure of the soul's experience and conviction, whatever the profession may be. But Jacob had never yet been brought to measure himself in God's presence, and therefore he was ignorant of grace, and he proved his ignorance by measuring himself with Laban, and adopting his maxims and ways.

One cannot help remarking the fact that inasmuch as Jacob failed to learn and judge the inherent character of his flesh before God, therefore he was, in the providence of God, led into the very sphere in which that character was fully exhibited in its broadest lines. He was conducted to Haran, the country of Laban and Rebekah, the very school from whence those principles, in which he was such a remarkable adept, had emanated, and where they were taught, exhibited, and maintained. If one wanted to learn what God was, he should go to Bethel; if to learn what man was, he should go to Haran. But Jacob had failed to take in God's revelation of Himself at Bethel, and he therefore went to Haran, and there showed what he was — and oh, what scrambling and scraping! what shuffling and shifting! There is no holy and elevated confidence in God, no simply looking to and waiting on Him. True, God was with Jacob — for nothing can hinder the outshining of divine grace. Moreover, Jacob in a measure owns God's presence and faithfulness. Still nothing can be done without a scheme and a plan. Jacob cannot allow God to settle the question as to his wives and his wages, but seeks to settle all by his own cunning and management. In short, it is "the supplanter" throughout. Let the reader turn, for example, to Gen. 30:

37-42, and say where he can find a more masterly piece of cunning. It is verily a perfect picture of Jacob. In place of allowing God to multiply "the ringstraked, speckled, and spotted cattle," as he most assuredly could have done, had He been trusted, he sets about securing their multiplication by a piece of policy which could only have found its origin in the mind of a Jacob. So in all his actings, during his twenty years' sojourn with Laban; and finally, he, most characteristically, "steals away," thus maintaining, in everything, his consistency with himself.

Now, it is in tracing out Jacob's real character, from stage to stage of his extraordinary history, that one gets a wondrous view of divine grace. None but God could have borne with such an one, as none but God would have taken such an one up. Grace begins at the very lowest point. It takes up man as he is, and deals with him in the full intelligence of what he is. It is of the very last importance to understand this feature of grace at one's first starting; it enables us to bear, with steadiness of heart, the after discoveries of personal vileness, which so frequently shake the confidence and disturb the peace of the children of God.

Many there are who, at first, fail in the full apprehension of the utter ruin of nature, as looked at in God's presence, though their hearts have been attracted by the grace of God, and their consciences tranquillised, in some degree, by the application of the blood of Christ. Hence, as they get on in their course, they begin to make deeper discoveries of the evil within, and, being deficient in their apprehensions of God's grace, and the extent and efficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, they immediately raise a question as to their being children of God at all. Thus they are taken off Christ, and thrown on themselves, and then they either betake themselves to ordinances, in order to keep up their tone of devotion, or else fall back into thorough worldliness and carnality. These are disastrous consequences, and all the result of not having "the heart established in grace."

It is this that renders the study of Jacob's history so profoundly interesting and eminently useful. No one can read the three chapters now before us, and not be struck at the amazing grace that could take up such an one as Jacob, and not only take him up, but say,

after the full discovery of all that was in him, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." (Num. 23: 21) He does not say that iniquity and perverseness were not in him. This would never give the heart confidence — the very thing, above all others, which God desires to give. It could never assure a poor sinner's heart, to be told that there was *no sin in him*; for, alas! he knows too well there is; but to be told there is no sin *on* him, and that, moreover, in God's sight, on the simple ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice, must infallibly set his heart and conscience at rest. Had God taken up Esau, we should not have had, by any means, such a blessed display of grace; for this reason, that he does not appear before us in the unamiable light in which we see Jacob. The more man sinks, the more God's grace rises. As my debt rises, in my estimation, from the fifty pence up to the five hundred, so my sense of grace rises also, my experience of that love which, when we "had nothing to pay, could "frankly forgive" us all. (Luke 7: 42) Well might the apostle say, "it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace: not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." (Heb. 13: 9)

Genesis 32

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." Still God's grace follows him, notwithstanding all. "Nothing changeth God's affection." Whom He loves, and as He loves, He loves to the end. His love is like "Himself," the same yesterday, today, and for ever." But how little effect "God's host" had upon Jacob may be seen by his actings, as here set before us. "and Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom." He evidently feels uneasy in reference to Esau, and not without reason;. He had treated him badly, and his conscience was not et ease; but instead of casting himself unreservedly upon God, he betakes himself to his usual planning again, in order to avert Esau's wrath. He tries to *manage* Esau, instead of leaning on God.

And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto *my lord* Esau; *Thy servant* Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now." ALL this bespeaks a soul very much off its centre in God. "My lord," and "thy servant," is not like the language of a brother, or of one in the conscious dignity of the presence of God; but it was the language of Jacob, and of Jacob, too, with a bad conscience.

"And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed." But what does he first do? Does he at once cast himself upon God? No; he begins to manage. "He divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape." Jacob's first thought was always a plan, and in this we have a true picture of the poor human heart. True, he turns to God, after he makes his plan, and cries to Him for deliverance; but no sooner does he cease praying than he resumes the planning. Now, praying and planning will never do together. If I plan, I am leaning more or less on my plan; but when I pray, I should lean exclusively upon God. Hence, the two things are perfectly incompatible; they virtually destroy each other. When my eye is filled with my own management of things, I am not prepared

to see God acting for me; and, in that case, prayer is not the utterance of my need, but the mere superstitious performance of something which I think ought to be done, or it may be, asking God to sanctify my plans. This will never do. It is not asking God to sanctify and bless my means, but it is asking Him to do it all Himself.*

{*No doubt, when faith allows God to act, He will use His own agency; but this is a totally different thing from His owning and blessing the plans and arrangements of unbelief and impatience. This distinction is not sufficiently understood.}

Though Jacob asked God to deliver him from his brother Esau, he evidently was not satisfied with that, and therefore he tried to "appease him with a present." Thus his confidence was in the "present," and not entirely in God. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It is often hard to detect what is the real ground of the heart's confidence. We imagine, or would fain persuade ourselves, that we are leaning upon God, when we are, in reality, leaning upon some scheme of our own devising. Who, after hearkening to Jacob's prayer, wherein he says, "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children," could imagine him saying, "I will appease him with a present." Had he forgotten his prayer? Was he making a God of his present? Did he place more confidence in a few cattle than in Jehovah, to whom he had just been committing himself? These are questions which naturally arise out of Jacob's actings in reference to Esau, and we can readily answer them by looking into the glass of our own hearts. There we learn, as well as on the page of Jacob's history, how much more apt we are to lean on our own management than on God; but it will not do; we must be brought to see the end of our management, that it is perfect folly, and that the true path of wisdom is to repose in full confidence upon God.

Nor will it do to make our prayers part of our management. We often feel very well satisfied with ourselves when we add prayer to our arrangement, or when we have used all lawful means, and called upon God to bless them. When this is the case, our prayers are worth about as much as our plans, inasmuch as we are leaning upon

them instead of upon God. We must be really brought to the end of everything with which self has ought to do; for until then, God cannot show Himself. But we can never get to the end of our plans until we have been brought to the end of ourselves. We must see that "all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." (Isa. 40: 6)

Thus it is in this interesting chapter; when Jacob had made this prudent arrangements, we read, "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This is a turning point in the history of this very remarkable man. To be left alone with God is the only true way of arriving at a just knowledge of ourselves and our ways. We can never get a true estimate of nature and all its actings, until we have weighed them in the balance of the sanctuary, and there we ascertain their real worth, No matter what we may think about ourselves, nor yet what man may think about us; the great question is, what does God think about us? and the answer to this question can only be heard when we are "left alone." Away from the world; away from self; away from all the thoughts, reasonings, imaginations, and emotions of mere nature, and "alone" with God — thus, and thus alone, can we get a correct judgement about ourselves.

"Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him." Mark, it was not Jacob wrestling with a man; but a man wrestling with Jacob. This scene is very commonly referred to as an instance of Jacob's power in prayer. That it is not this is evident from the simple wording of the passage. My wrestling with a man, and a man wrestling with me, present two totally different ideas to the mind. In the former case I want to gain some object from him; in the latter, he wants to gain some object from me. Now, in Jacob's case, the divine object was to bring him to see what a poor, feeble, worthless creature he was, and when Jacob so pertinaciously held out against the divine dealing with him, "he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him." The sentence of death must be written on the flesh — the power of the cross must be entered into before we can steadily and happily walk with God. We have followed Jacob so far, amid all the windings and workings of his extraordinary character — we have

seen him planning and managing during his twenty years sojourn with Laban; but not until he "was left alone," did he get a true idea of what a perfectly helpless thing he was in himself. Then, the seat of his strength being touched, he learnt to say, "I will not let *thee* go."

"Other refuge have I none;

Clings my helpless soul to thee."

This was a new era in the history of the supplanting, planning, Jacob. Up to this point he had held fast by his own ways and means; but now he is brought to say, "I will not let *thee* go." Now, my reader remark, that Jacob did not express himself thus until "the hollow of his thigh was touched." This simple fact is quite sufficient to settle the true interpretation of the whole scene. God was wrestling with Jacob to bring him to this point. We have already seen that, as to Jacob's power in prayer, he had no sooner uttered a few words to God than he let out the real secret of his soul's dependence, by saying, "I will appease him (Esau) with a present." Would he have said this if he had really entered into the meaning of prayer, or true dependence upon God? Assuredly not. If he had been looking to God alone to appease Esau, could he have said, "I will appease him by a present" Impossible: God and the creature must be kept distinct, and will be kept so in every soul that knows much of the sacred reality of a life of faith.

But, alas here is where we fail, if one may speak for another. Under the plausible and apparently pious formula of using means, we really cloke the positive infidelity of our poor deceitful hearts; we think we are looking to God to bless our means, while, in reality, we are shutting Him out by leaning on the means, instead of leaning on Him. Oh! may our hearts be taught the evil of thus acting. May we learn to cling more simply to God *alone*, that so our history May be more characterised by that holy elevation above the circumstances through which we are passing. It is not, by any means, an easy matter so to get to the end of the creature, in every shape and form, as to be able to say, "I Will not let thee go except thou bless me." To say this from the heart, and to abide in the power of it, is the secret of all true strength. Jacob said it when the hollow

of his thigh was touched; but not till then. He struggled long, ere he gave way, because his confidence in the flesh was strong. But God can bring down to the dust the stoutest character. He knows how to touch the spring of nature's strength, and write the sentence of death thoroughly upon it; and until this is done, there can be no real "Power with God or man." We must be "weak" ere we can be "strong." "The power of Christ" can only "rest on us" in connection with the knowledge of our infirmities. Christ cannot put the seal of His approval upon nature's strength, its wisdom, or its glory: all these must sink that He may rise. Nature can never form, in any one way, a pedestal on which to display the grace or power of Christ; for if it could, then might flesh glory in His presence; but this, we know, can never be.

And, inasmuch as the display of God's glory, and God's name or character, is connected with the entire setting aside of nature, so, until this latter is set aside the soul can never enjoy the disclosure of the former. Hence, though Jacob, is called to tell out his name, to own that his name is Jacob, or a supplanter," he yet receives no revelation of the name of Him who had been wrestling with him, and bringing him down into the dust. He received for himself the name of Israel, or prince," which was a great step in advance?; but when he says, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name;" he received the reply, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" The Lord refuses to tell His name, though he had elicited from Jacob the truth as to himself, and He blesses him accordingly. How often is this the case in the annals of God's family! There is the disclosure of self in all its moral deformity; but we fail to get hold practically of what God is, though He has come so very close to us, and blessed us, too, in connection with the discovery of ourselves. Jacob received the new name of Israel when the hollow of his thigh had been touched. He became a mighty prince when he had been brought to know himself as a weak man; but still the Lord had to say, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" There is no disclosure of the name of Him who, nevertheless, had brought out the real name and condition of Jacob.

From all this we learn that it is one thing to be blessed by the Lord and quite another thing to have the revelation of His character,

by the Spirit, to our hearts. "He blessed him there;" but he did not tell His name. There is blessing in being brought, in any measure, to know ourselves, for therein we are led into a path, in which we are able, more clearly, to discern what God is to us in detail. Thus it was with Jacob. When the hollow of his thigh was touched he found himself in a condition in which it was either God or nothing. A poor halting man could do little, it therefore behoved him to cling to one who was almighty.

I would remark, ere leaving this chapter, that the book of Job is, in a certain sense, a detailed commentary on this scene in Jacob's history. Throughout the first thirty-one chapters, Job grapples with his friends, and maintains his point against all their arguments; but in Job 32 God, by the instrumentality of Elihu, begins to wrestle with him; and in Job 38 He comes down upon Him directly with all the majesty of His power, overwhelms him by the display of His greatness and glory, and elicits from him the well-known words, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth *thee*. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job. 42: 5, 6) This was really touching the hollow of his thigh. And mark the expression, "mine eye seeth thee." He does not say, "I see myself" merely; no; but "thee." Nothing But a view of what God is, can really lead to repentance and self-loathing. Thus it will be with the people of Israel, whose history is very analogous with that of Job. When they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, they will mourn, and then there will be full restoration and blessing. Their latter end, Like Job's, will be better than their beginning. They will learn the full meaning of that word, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help." (Hosea 13: 9)

Genesis 33 - 34

We may here see how groundless were all Jacob's fears, and how useless all his plans. Notwithstanding the wrestling, the touching the hollow of the thigh, and the halting, we find Jacob still planning. "And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost." This arrangement proved the continuance of his fears. He still anticipated vengeance from the hand of Esau, and he exposed those about whom he cared least, to the first stroke of that vengeance. How wondrous are the depths of the human heart? How slow it is to trust God! Had Jacob been really leaning upon God, he never could have anticipated destruction for himself and his family; but alas! the heart knows something of the difficulty of simply reposing, in calm confidence, upon an over present, all-powerful, and infinitely gracious God.

But mark, now, the thorough vanity of the heart's anxiety. "and Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept." The present was quite unnecessary — the plan, useless. God "appeased" Esau, as He had already appeased Laban. Thus it is He ever delights to rebuke our poor, coward, unbelieving hearts, and put to flight all our fears. Instead of the dreaded sword of Esau, Jacob meets his embrace and kiss; instead of strife and conflict, they mingle their tears. Such are God's ways. Who would not trust Him? Who would not honour Him with the heart's fullest confidence? Why is it that, Notwithstanding all the sweet evidence of His faithfulness to those will put their trust in Him, we are so ready, on every fresh occasion, to doubt and hesitate? The answer is simple, we are not sufficiently acquainted with God. "acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace." (Job 22: 21) This is true, whether in reference to the unconverted sinner, or to the child of God. The true knowledge of God, real acquaintance with Him, is life and pence. "This is, life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John 17: 3) The more intimate our acquaintance with God, the more solid will be our peace, and the more will our souls be lifted above

every creature dependence. "God is a Rock," and we only need to lean our whole weight upon Him, to know how ready and how able He is to sustain us.

After all this manifestation of God's goodness, we find Jacob settling down in Succoth, and, contrary to the spirit and principles of a pilgrim life, building a house, as if it were his home. Now, Succoth was evidently not his divinely-appointed destination. The Lord had not said to him, "I am the God of Succoth;" no; but "I am the God of Bethel." Bethel, therefore, and not Succoth, should have been Jacob's grand object. But, alas! the heart is always prone to rest satisfied with a position and portion short of what God would graciously assign.

Jacob then moves on to Shechem, and purchases ground, still falling short of the divine mark, and the name by which he calls his altar is indicative of the moral condition of his soul. He calls it "El-elohe Israel," or "God, the God of Israel." This was taking a very contracted view of God. True, it is our privilege to know God as our God; but it is a higher thing to know Him as the God of His own house, and to view ourselves as part of that house. It is the believer's privilege to know Christ as his Head; but it is a higher thing to know Him as the Head of His body the Church, and to know ourselves as members of that body.

We shall see, when we come to Gen. 35 that Jacob is led to take a higher and a wider view of God; but at Shechem he was manifestly on low ground, and he was made to smart for it, as is always the case when we stop short of God's own ground. The two tribes and a half took up their position on this side of Jordan, and they were the first to fall into the enemy's hand. So it was with Jacob. We see, in Gen. 34 the bitter fruits of his sojourn at Shechem. There is a blot cast upon his family, which Simeon and Levi attempt to wipe out, in the mere energy and violence of nature, which only led to still deeper sorrow; and that, too, which touched Jacob still more keenly than the insult offered to his daughter:" And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and *I* being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against *me*, and slay *me*; and *I* shall be destroyed, *I* and my

house." Thus, it was the consequences in reference to himself that affected Jacob most. He seems to have walked in constant apprehension of danger to himself or his family, and in the manifestation of an anxious, a cautious, timid, calculating spirit, utterly incompatible with a life of genuine faith in God.

It is not that Jacob was not, in the main, a man of faith; he assuredly was, and as such, gets a place amongst the "cloud of witnesses" in Heb. 11. But then he exhibited sad failure from not walking in the habitual exercise of that divine principle. Could faith have led him to say, "I shall be destroyed, I and my house?" Surely not. God's promise in Gen. 28: 14, 15, should have banished every fear from his poor timid spirit. "I will keep theeI will not leave thee. This should have tranquillised his heart. But the fact is, his mind was more occupied with his danger among the Shechemites than with his security in the hand of God. He ought to have known that "not a hair of his head could be touched, and therefore, instead of looking at Simeon and Levi, or the consequences of their rash acting, he should have judged himself for being in such a position at all. If he had not settled at Shechem, Dinah would not have been dishonoured, and the violence of his sons would not have been exhibited. We constantly see Christians getting into deep sorrow and trouble through their own unfaithfulness; and then, instead of judging themselves, they begin to look at circumstances, and to cast upon them the blame.

How often do we see Christian parents, for instance, in keen anguish of soul about the wildness, unsubduedness, and worldliness of their children; and, all the while, they have mainly to blame themselves for not walking faithfully before God in reference to their family. Thus was it with Jacob. He was on low moral ground at Shechem; and, inasmuch as he lacked that refined sensibility which would have led him to detect the low ground, God, in very faithfulness, used his circumstances to chastise him. "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." This is a principle flowing out of God's moral government, a principle, from the application of which none can possibly escape; and it is a positive mercy to the children of God that they are obliged to reap the fruits of their errors. It is a mercy to be taught, in any way, the

bitterness of departing from, or stopping short of, the living God. We must learn that this is not our rest; for, blessed be God, He would not give us a polluted rest. He would ever have us resting in, and with Himself. Such is His perfect grace; and when our hearts founder, or fall short, His word is, "If thou wilt return, return *unto Me.*" False humility, which is simply the fruit of unbelief, would lead the wanderer or backslider to take lower ground, not knowing the principle or measure of God's restoration. The prodigal would seek to be made a servant, not knowing that, so far as he was concerned, he had no more title to take place of a servant than to that of a son; and, moreover, that it would be utterly unworthy of the father's character to put him in such a position. We must come to God on a principle and in a manner worthy of Himself, or not at all.

Genesis 35

"And God said unto Jacob. Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there." This confirms the principle on which we have been dwelling. When there is failure or declension, the Lord calls the soul back to Himself. "Remember therefore *from whence thou art fallen*; and repent and do *the first works*." (Rev. 2: 5) This is the divine principle of restoration. The soul must be recalled to the very highest point; it must be brought back to the divine standard. The Lord does not say, 'remember where you are;' no; but 'remember the lofty position from whence you have fallen.' Thus only can one learn how far he has declined, and how he is to retrace his steps.

Now, it is when thus recalled to God's high and holy standard, that one is really led to see the sad evil of one's fallen condition. What a fearful amount of moral evil had gathered round Jacob's family, unjudged by Him, until his soul was roused by the call to "go up to Bethel." Shechem was not the place in which to detect all this evil. The atmosphere of that place was too much impregnated with impure elements to admit of the soul's discerning, with any degree of clearness and precision, the true character of evil. But the moment the call to Bethel fell on Jacob's ear, "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean and change your garments, and let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." The very mention of "the house of God" struck a chord in the soul of the patriarch; it carried him, in the twinkling of an eye, over the history of twenty eventful years. It was at Bethel he had learnt what God was, and not at Shechem; hence he must get back to Bethel again, and erect an altar upon a totally different base, and under a totally different name, from his altar at Shechem. This latter was connected with a mass of uncleanness and idolatry.

Jacob could speak of "El-elohe-Israel," while surrounded by a quantity of things utterly incompatible with the holiness of the house of God. It is important to be clear in reference to this point. Nothing can keep the soul in a path of consistent, intelligent separation from

evil save the sense of what "the house of God" is, and what becomes that house. If I merely look at God, in reference to myself, I shall not have a clear, full, divine sense of all that flows out of a due recognition of God's relation to His house. Some there are who deem it a matter of no importance how they are mixed up with impure materials in the worship of God, provided they themselves are true and upright in heart, In other words, they think they can worship God at Shechem; and that an altar, named "El-elohe Israel," is just as elevated, just as much according to God, as an altar named "El Bethel." This is evidently a mistake. The spiritually minded reader will at once detect the vast moral difference between Jacob's condition at Shechem, and his condition at Bethel; and the same difference is observable between the two altars. Our ideas, in reference to the worship of God, must, of necessity, be affected by our spiritual condition; and the worship which we present will be low and contracted, or elevated and comprehensive, just in proportion as we enter into the apprehension of His character and relationship.

Now, the name of our altar, and the character of our worship, express the same ideas. El-Bethel worship is, higher than El-elohe-Israel worship, for this simple reason, that it conveys a higher idea of God. It gives me a more elevated thought of God to speak of Him as the God of His house, than as the God of a solitary individual truth, there is beautiful grace expressed in the title, "God, the God of Israel;" and the soul must ever feel happy in looking at the character of God, so graciously connecting Himself with every separate stone of His house, and every separate member of the body. Each stone in the building of God is a "lively stone" as connected with the "living stone," having communion with the living God," by the power of "the Spirit of life." But while all this is blessedly true, God is the God of His house; and when we are enabled, by an enlarged spiritual intelligence, to view Him as such, we enjoy a higher character of worship than that which flows from merely apprehending what He is to ourselves individually.

But there is another thing to be remarked in Jacob's recall to Bethel. He is told to make an altar "unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." He is

thus reminded of "the day of his distress." It is often well to have our minds led in this way to the point in our history in which we found ourselves brought down to the lowest step of the ladder. Thus Saul is brought back to the time when he was "little in his own eyes." This is the true starting point with all of us. "When thou wast little in thine own eyes," is a point of which we often need to be reminded. It is then that the heart really leans on God. Afterwards we begin to fancy ourselves to be something, and the Lord is obliged to teach us afresh our own nothingness. When first one enters upon a path of service or testimony, what a sense there is of personal weakness and incapacity! and as a consequence, what leanings upon God! what earnest, fervent appeals to Him for help and strength. Afterwards we begin to think that, from being so long at the work, we can get on by ourselves, at least there is not the same sense of weakness, or the same simple dependence upon God; and then our ministry becomes a poor, meagre, flippant, wordy thing, without unction or power — a thing flowing, not from the exhaustless tide of the Spirit, but from our own wretched minds.

From ver. 9-15, God repeats His promise to Jacob, and confirms the new name of "prince," instead of "supplanter;" and Jacob again calls the name of the place "Bethel." At verse 18 we have an interesting example of the difference between the judgement of faith and the judgement of nature. The latter looks at things through the hazy mist with which it is surrounded; the former looks at them in the light of the presence and counsels of God. "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died,) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin." Nature called him, "the son of my sorrow;" but faith "the son of the right hand." Thus is it ever. The difference between the thoughts of nature must ever be wide indeed, and we should earnestly desire that our souls should be governed by the latter, and not by the former.

Genesis 36

Furnishes a catalogue of Esau's sons, with their various titles and localities. We shall not dwell on this, but pass on to one of the most fruitful and interesting sections in the entire canon of inspiration.

Genesis 37-50

On which we shall dwell more particularly. There is not in scripture a more perfect and beautiful type of Christ than Joseph. Whether we view Christ as the object of the Father's love, the object of the envy of His own, — in His humiliation, sufferings, death exaltation, and glory, in all we have Him strikingly typified by Joseph.

In Gen. 37 we have Joseph's dreams, the statement of which draws out the enmity of his brethren. He was the object of his father's love, and the subject of very high destinies, and inasmuch as the hearts of his brothers were not in communion with these things, they hated him. They had no fellowship in the father's love. They would not yield to the thought of Joseph's exaltation. In all this they represent the Jews in Christ's day. He came to His own and his own received him not." He had "no form nor comeliness in their eyes." They would neither own Him as the Son of God, nor king of Israel. Their eyes were not open to behold "his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of "grace and truth." They would not have Him; yea, they hated Him.

Now, in Joseph's case, we see that he, in no wise, relaxed his testimony in consequence of his brethren's refusal of his first dream. "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren;" and they hated him yet the more....And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren." This was simple testimony founded upon divine revelation; but it was testimony which brought Joseph down to the pit. Had he kept back his testimony, or taken off ought of its edge and power, he might have spared himself; but no; he told them the truth, and therefore they hated him.

Thus was it with Joseph's great Antitype. He bore witness to the truth — He witnessed a good confession He kept back nothing — He could only speak the truth because He was *the* truth, and His testimony to the truth was answered, on man's part, by the cross, the vinegar, the soldier's spear. The testimony of Christ, too, was connected with the deepest, fullest, richest grace. He not only came as "the truth," but also as the perfect expression of all the love of the Father's heart: "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He was the full disclosure to man of what God was. Hence man was left entirely

without excuse. He came and showed God to man, and man hated God with a perfect hatred. The fullest exhibition of divine love was answered by the fullest exhibition of human hatred. This is seen in the cross; and we have it touchingly foreshadowed at the pit into which Joseph was cast by his brethren.

"And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh; come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams." These words forcibly remind us of the parable in Matthew 22. "But, last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." God sent His Son into the world with this thought, "They will reverence my son;" but, alas! man's heart had no reverence for the "well beloved" of the Father. They cast him out. Earth and heaven were at issue in reference to Christ; and they are at issue still. *Man* crucified Him; but *God* raised Him from the dead. Man placed Him on a cross between two thieves; God set Him at His own right hand in the heavens. Man gave Him the very lowest place on earth; God gave Him the very highest place in heaven, in brightest majesty.

ALL this is shown out in Joseph's history. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel;) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breast and of the womb; the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." (Gen. 49: 22-26)

These verses beautifully exhibit to our view "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." "The archers" have done their work; but God was stronger than they. The true Joseph has been shot at and grievously wounded in the house of his friends; but "the arms of his hands have been made strong" in the power of resurrection, and faith now knows Him as the basis of all God's purposes of blessing and glory in reference to the Church, Israel, and the whole creation. When we look at Joseph in the pit, and in the prison, and look; at him afterwards as ruler over all the land of Egypt, we see the difference between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of men; and so when we look at the cross, and at "the throne of the majesty in the heavens," we see the same thing.

Nothing ever brought out the real state of man's heart toward God but the coming of Christ. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin." (John 15: 22) It is not that they would not have been sinners. No; but "they had not had sin." So He says, in another place, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin." (John 9: 41) God came near to man in the Person of His Son, and man was able to say, "this is the heir;" but yet he said, "come, let us kill him." Hence, "they have no cloak for their sin." Those who say they see, have no excuse. *confessed blindness* is not at all the difficulty, but *professed sight*. This is a truly solemn principle for a professing age like the present. The permanence of sin is connected with the mere profession to see. A man who is blind, and knows it, can have his eyes opened; but what can be done for one who thinks he sees, when he really does not?

Genesis 38.

Presents one of those remarkable circumstances in which divine grace is seen gloriously triumphing over man's sin. "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda." (Heb. 7: 14) But how? "Judas begat Phares and Zara of *Thamar*." (Matt. 1: 3) This is peculiarly striking. God, in His great grace, rising above the sin and folly of man, in order to bring about His own purposes of love and mercy. Thus, a little further on, in Matthew, we read, "David the king begat Solomon, of her that had been the wife of Urias." It is worthy of God thus to act. The Spirit of God is conducting us along the line through which, according to the flesh, Christ came; and, in doing so, he gives us, as links in the genealogical chain, Thamar and Bathsheba! How evident it is that there is nothing of man in this! How plain it is that when we reach the close of the first chapter of Matthew, it is "God manifest in the flesh" we find, and that, too, from the pen of the Holy Ghost man could never have devised such a genealogy. It is entirely divine, and no spiritual person can read it without seeing in it a blessed exhibition of divine grace, in the first place; and of the divine inspiration of Matthews gospel, in the second place, at least, of his account of Christ's genealogy according to the flesh. I believe a comparison of 2 Sam. 11 and Gen. 38 with Matt. 1 will furnish the thoughtful Christian with matter for a very sweet and edifying meditation.

In perusing these interesting sections of inspiration, we perceive a remarkable chain of providential actings, all tending to one grand point, namely, *the exaltation of the man who had been in the pit*; and, at the same time, bringing out, by the way, a number of subordinate objects. "The thoughts of many hearts" were to be "revealed;" but Joseph was to be exalted. "He called for a famine upon! the land: he brake the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant; whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in Iron; until the time that his word came; the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance; to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom." (Psalm 105: 16-22)

It is well to see that the leading object was to exalt the one whom men had rejected; and then to produce in those same men a sense of their sin in rejecting. And how admirably all this is effected! The most trivial and the most important, the most likely and the most unlikely, circumstances are made to minister to the development of God's purposes. In Gen. 39 Satan uses Potiphar's wife, and in Gen. 40 he uses Pharaoh's chief butler. The former he used to put Joseph into the dungeon; and the latter he used to keep him there, through his ungrateful negligence; but all in vain. God was behind the scenes. His finger was guiding all the springs of the vast machine of circumstances, and when the due time was come, He brought forth the man of His purpose, and set His feet in a large room. Now, this is ever God's prerogative. He is above all, and can use all for the accomplishment of His grand and unsearchable designs. It is sweet to be able thus to trace our Father's hand and counsel in everything. Sweet to know that all sorts of agents are at His sovereign disposal; angels, men, and devils — all are under His omnipotent hand, and all are made to carry out His purposes.

In the scripture now before us, all this is seen in a most remarkable manner. God visits the domestic circle of a heathen captain, the household of a heathen king, yea, and his bed-side, and makes the very visions of his head upon his bed contribute to the development of His counsels. Nor is it merely individuals and their circumstances that we see thus taken up and used for the furtherance of God's ends; but Egypt and all the surrounding countries are brought into the scene; in short, the whole earth was prepared by the hand of God to be a theatre on which to display the glory and greatness of the one "who was separate from his brethren." Such are God's ways; and it is one of the happiest and most elevating exercises for the soul of a saint to trace thus the admirable actings of his heavenly Father. How forcibly is God's providence brought out in this profoundly interesting history of Joseph! Look, for a moment, into the dungeon of the captain of the guard. See there a man "laid in iron," charged with a most abominable crime — the outcast and offscouring of society; and yet see him, almost in a moment, raised to the very highest eminence, and who can deny that God is in it all?

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: Only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him to ride in the second chariot that he had: and they cried before him, bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." (Gen. 41: 39-44)

Here, then, was exaltation of no ordinary kind. Contrast this with the pit and the dungeon; and mark the chain of events by which it was all brought about, and you have, at once, a marked exhibition of the hand of God, and a striking type of the sufferings and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph was taken from the pit and the dungeon, into which he had been brought by the envy of his brethren, and the false judgement of the Gentile, to be ruler over the whole land of Egypt; and not only so, but to be the channel of blessing, and the sustainer of life, to Israel and the whole earth. This is all typical of Christ; indeed, a type could hardly be more perfect. We see a man laid, to all intents and purposes, in the place of death, at the hand of man, and then raised up by the hand of God, And set in dignity and glory. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts 2: 22-24)

But there are two points in Joseph's history which, together with what has been noticed, render the type remarkably perfect; I allude to his marriage with a stranger in Gen. 41, and his interview with his brethren in Gen. 45. The following is the order of events. Joseph presents himself to his brethren as one sent by the father;

they reject him, and, so far as lies in them, put him in the place of death; God takes him up from thence, and raises him to a position of highest dignity: thus exalted, he gets a bride; and when his brethren, according to the flesh, so thoroughly broken and prostrate before him, he makes himself known to them, tranquillises their hearts, and brings them into blessing; he then becomes the channel of blessing to them and to the whole world.

I shall just make a few remarks on Joseph's marriage and the restoration of his brethren. The strange wife shadows forth the Church. Christ presented Himself to the Jews, and being rejected, took His seat on high, and sent down the Holy Ghost to form the Church, composed of Jew and Gentile, to be united with Him in heavenly glory. The doctrine of the Church has already been dwelt upon in our remarks on Gen. 24, but one or two points remain to be noticed here. And, first, we may observe, that Joseph's Egyptian bride was intimately associated with him in his glory. [Joseph's wife sets forth the Church as united to Christ in His glory; Moses' wife presents the Church as united to Christ in His rejection.] She, as being part of himself, shared in all that was his. Moreover, she occupied a place of nearness and intimacy, known only to herself. Thus it is with the Church, the bride of the Lamb. She is gathered to Christ to be the sharer, at once, of His rejection and His glory. It is Christ's position which Gives character to the position of the Church, and her position should ever give character to her walk. If we are gathered to Christ, it is as exalted in glory, and not as humbled down here. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." (2 Cor. 5: 26) The Church's gathering point is Christ in glory. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." (John 12: 32)

There is far more of practical value in the clear apprehension of this principle than might, at first sight, appear. It is ever the aim of Satan, as it is the tendency of our hearts, to lead us to stop short of God's mark in everything, and specially in the centre of our unity as Christians. It is a popular sentiment, that "the blood of the Lamb is the union of saints," i.e., it is the blood which forms their centre of unity. Now, that it is the infinitely precious blood of Christ which

sets us individually as worshippers in the presence of God, is blessedly true. The blood, therefore, forms the divine basis of our fellowship with God. But when we come to speak; of the centre of our unity as a church, we must see that the Holy Ghost gathers us to the Person of a risen and glorified Christ; and this grand truth gives character — high and holy character to our association as Christians. If we take lower ground than this we must inevitably form a sect or an schism. If we gather round an ordinance, however important, or round a truth, however indisputable, we make something less than Christ our centre.

Hence, it is most important to ponder the practical consequences which flow out of the truth of our being gathered to a risen and glorified Head in the heavens. If Christ were on earth, we should be gathered to Him here; but, inasmuch as He is hidden in the heavens, the Church takes her character from His position there. Hence, Christ could say, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" and again, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 16, 19) So also, in 1 Peter, we read, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an Holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2: 4, 5) If we are gathered to Christ we must be gathered to Him *as* He is, and *where* He is; and the more the Spirit of God leads our souls into the understanding of this, the more clearly we shall see the character of walk that becomes us. Joseph's bride was united to him, not in the pit or the dungeon, but in the dignity and: glory of his position in Egypt; and, in her case, we can have no difficulty in perceiving the vast difference between the two positions.

But, further, we read, "And unto Joseph were born two sons, *before the years of famine came.*" There was a time of trouble coming; but previous thereto, the fruit of his union appeared. The children whom God had given him were called into existence previous to this time of trial. So will it be in reference to the Church. all the members thereof will be called out, the whole body will be completed and gathered to the Head in heaven, previous to "the great tribulation" which shall come upon all the earth.

We shall now turn, for a little, to Joseph's interview with his brethren, in which we shall find some points of resemblance to Israel's history in the latter day. During the period that Joseph was hidden from the view of his brethren, these latter were called to pass through deep and searching trial — through intensely painful exercises of conscience. One of these exercises is poured out in the following words: "And they said one to another, *We are verily guilty* concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and *we would not hear*; therefore is *this distress come upon us*. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear therefore, behold, also, *his blood is required*." (Gen. 42: 21, 22) Again, in Gen. 44 we read, "And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." None can teach like God. He alone can produce in the conscience the true sense of sin, and bring the soul down into the profound depths of its own condition in His presence. This is all His own work. Men run on in their career of guilt, heedless of everything, until the arrow of the Almighty pierces their conscience, and then they are led into those searchings of heart, and intense exercises of soul, which can only find relief in the rich resources of redeeming love. Joseph's brethren had no conception of all that was to flow to them from their actings toward him. "They took him and cast him into a pit and they sat down to eat bread." "Woe to them.... that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." (Amos 6: 6)

However, God produced grief of heart, and exercises of conscience, and that in a most wonderful way. Years rolled on, and these brethren might have vainly imagined that all was right; but, then, "seven years of plenty, and seven years of scarcity!" What did they mean? Who sent them? And for what were they designed? Admirable providence! Unsearchable wisdom! The famine reaches to Canaan, and the calls of hunger actually bring the guilty brethren to the feet of the injured Joseph! How marked is the display of God's own hand in all this! There they stand, with the arrow of conviction thrust through and through their consciences, in the presence of the man whom they had, "with wicked hands," cast into the pit. Surely

their sin had found them out; but it was in the presence of Joseph. Blessed place!

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." (Gen. 45: 1) No stranger was allowed to witness this sacred scene. What stranger could understand or appreciate it? We are here called to witness, as it were, divinely wrought conviction in the presence of divine grace; and we may say, when these two come together there is an easy settlement of every question.

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, *Come near to me*, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, Whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you, to preserve life. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you sent me hither, but God." This is grace indeed, setting the convicted conscience perfectly at rest. The brethren had, already, most thoroughly, condemned themselves, and hence Joseph had only to pour in the blessed balm into their broken hearts. This is all sweetly typical of God's dealings with Israel, in the latter day, when "they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn." Then they shall prove the reality of divine grace, and the cleansing efficacy of that "fountain which shall be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13: 1).

In Acts 3, we find the Spirit of God in Peter seeking to produce this divine conviction in the consciences of the Jews. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." These statements were designed to elicit from the hearts and lips of the hearers the confession made by Joseph's brethren — "we are verily guilty."

Then follows the grace. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." We here see that, although the Jews really carried out the enmity of their hearts, in the death of Christ, as did also Joseph's brethren in their treatment of him, yet, the grace of God to each is seen in this, that all is shown to be decreed and foreshown of God for their blessing. This is perfect grace, surpassing all human thought; and all that is needed, in order to the enjoyment thereof, is a conscience truly convicted by the truth of God. Those who could say, "We are verily guilty," could rightly understand the words of precious grace, "It was not you, but God." Thus it must ever be. The soul that has thoroughly pronounced its own condemnation, is prepared to understand and appreciate God's pardon.

The remaining chapters of this book are taken up with the removal of Jacob and his family into Egypt, and their settlement there; Joseph's actings during the remaining years of famine; Jacob's blessing the twelve patriarchs; his death and burial. We shall not dwell in detail upon these things, though the spiritual mind may find much to feed upon therein.* Jacob's groundless fears dissipated by the sight of his son alive, and exalted — the peculiar grace of God seen in its overruling power, yet evidently mingled with judgement, inasmuch as Jacob's sons have to go down into the very place whither they had sent their brother. Again, Joseph's remarkable grace throughout: though exalted by Pharaoh, he hides himself, as it were, and binds the people in abiding obligation to the king. Pharaoh says, "Go to Joseph," and Joseph, in effect, says, "all you have and all you are belong to Pharaoh." This is sweetly interesting, and leads the soul on to that glorious time when the Son of man shall take the reins of government into His Own hand, by divine appointment, and rule over the whole redeemed creation, His Church — the bride of the Lamb — occupying the nearest and most intimate place, according to the eternal counsels. The house of Israel, fully restored, shall be nourished and sustained by His gracious hand; and all the earth shall know the deep blessedness of being under His sceptre.

Finally, having brought everything into subjection, He shall hand back the reins of government into the hands of God, that "he may be all in all." From all this we may form some idea of the richness and copiousness of Joseph's history. In short, it sets before us, distinctly, in type, the mission of the Son to the house of Israel — His humiliation and rejection — the deep exercises and final repentance and restoration of Israel — the union of the Church with Christ — His exaltation and universal government, and, finally, it points us forward to the time when "God shall be all in all." It is quite needless to remark, that all these things are largely taught, and fully established, throughout the entire canon of inspiration: we do not, therefore, build their truth upon Joseph's history; still it is edifying to find such early foreshadowings of these precious truths: it proves to us the divine unity which pervades holy scripture. Whether we turn to Genesis or to Ephesians — to the prophets of the Old or those of the New Testament — we learn the same truths. "ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD.

{*The close of Jacob's career stands in most pleasing contrast with all the previous scenes of his eventful history. It reminds one of a serene evening, after a tempestuous day: the sun, which during the day had been hidden from view by clouds, mists, and fogs, sets in majesty and brightness, gilding with his beams the western sky, and holding out the cheering prospect of a bright tomorrow. Thus is it with our aged patriarch. The supplanting, the bargain-making, the running, the management, the shifting, the shuffling the unbelieving selfish fears — all those dark clouds of nature and of earth seem to have passed away, and he comes forth, in all the calm elevation of faith, to bestow blessings, and impart dignities, in that holy skillfulness, which communion with God can alone impart.

Though nature's eyes are dim, faith's vision is sharp. He is not to be deceived as to the relative positions assigned to Ephraim and Manasseh, in the counsels of God. He has not, like his father Isaac, in Gen. 27, to "tremble very exceedingly," in view of an almost fatal mistake. Quite the reverse. His intelligent reply to his less instructed son is, "I know it, my son, I know it." The power of sense has not, as in Isaac's case, dimmed his spiritual vision. He has been taught, in the school of experience, the importance of keeping close to the

divine purpose, and nature's influence cannot move him from thence.

In Gen. 48: 11, we have a very beautiful example of the mode in which our God ever rises above all our thoughts, and proves Himself better than all our fears. "And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face; and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed." To nature's view, Joseph was dead; whereas in God's view he was alive, and seated in the highest place of authority, next the throne. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2: 9) Would that our souls could rise higher in their apprehension of God and His ways.

It is interesting to notice the way in which the titles "Jacob" and "Israel" are introduced in the close of the Book of Genesis; as, for example, "One told Jacob, and said, Behold thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed" Then, it is immediately added, "And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz." Now, we know, there is nothing in scripture without its specific meaning, and hence this interchange of names contains some instruction. In general, it may be remarked, that "Jacob" sets forth the depth to which God had descended; "Israel," the height to which Jacob was raised. }

NOTES
ON THE
BOOK OF EXODUS

Exodus 1

We now approach, by the mercy of God, the study of the Book of Exodus, of which the great prominent theme is redemption. The first five verses recall to the mind the closing scenes of the preceding book. The favoured objects of God's electing love are brought before us; and we find ourselves, very speedily, conducted, by the inspired penman, into the section of the book.

In our meditations on the Book of Genesis, we were led to see that the conduct of Joseph's brethren toward him was that which led to their being brought down into Egypt. This fact is to be looked at in two ways. In the first place, we can read therein a deeply solemn lesson as taught in Israel's actings toward God; and, secondly, we have, therein unfolded, an encouraging lesson, as taught in God's actings toward Israel.

And, first, as to Israel's actings toward God, what can be more deeply solemn than to follow out the results of their treatment of him who stands before the spiritual mind as the marked type of the Lord Jesus Christ? They, utterly regardless of the anguish of his soul, consigned Joseph into the hands of the uncircumcised. And what was the issue, as regards them? They were carried down into Egypt, there to experience those deep and painful exercises of heart which are so graphically and touchingly presented in the closing chapters of Genesis. Nor was this all. A long and dreary season awaited their offspring in that very land in which Joseph had found a dungeon.

But then God was in all this, as well as man; and it is His prerogative to bring good out of evil. Joseph's brethren might sell him to the Ishmaelites, and the Ishmaelites might sell him to Potiphar, and Potiphar might cast him into prison; but Jehovah was above all, and He was accomplishing His own mighty ends. "The wrath of man shall praise him." The time had not arrived in which the heirs were ready for the inheritance, and the inheritance for the heirs. The brickkilns of Egypt were to furnish a rigid school for the seed of Abraham, while, as yet, "the iniquity of the Amorites" was rising to a head, amid the "hills and valleys" of the promised land.

All this is deeply interesting and instructive. There are "wheels within wheels" in the government of God. He makes use of an endless variety of agencies, in the accomplishment of His unsearchable designs. Potiphar's wife, Pharaoh's butler, Pharaoh's dreams, Pharaoh himself, the dungeon, the throne, the fetters, the royal signet, the famine — all are at His sovereign disposal, and all be made instrumental in the development of His stupendous counsels. The spiritual mind delights to dwell upon this. It delights to range through the wide domain of creation and providence, And to recognise, in all, the machinery which an All-wise and an Almighty God is using for the purpose of unfolding His counsels of redeeming love. True, we may see many traces of the serpent; many deep and well-defined footprints of the enemy of God and man; many things which we cannot explain nor even comprehend; suffering innocence and successful wickedness may furnish an apparent basis for the infidel-reasoning of the sceptic mind; but the true believer can piously repose in the assurance that "the Judge of all the earth shall do right." He knows right well that,

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His ways in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
and He will make it plain."

Blessed be God for the consolation and encouragement flowing out of such reflections as these. We need them, every hour, while passing through an evil world, in which the enemy has wrought such appalling mischief, in which the lusts and passions of men produce such bitter fruits, and in which the path of the true disciple presents roughnesses which mere nature could never endure. Faith knows, of a surety, that there is One behind the scenes whom the world sees not nor regards; and, in the consciousness of this, it can calmly say, "it is well," and, "it shall be well."

The above train of thought is distinctly suggested by the opening lines of our book. "God's counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." The enemy may oppose; but God will ever prove

Himself to be above him; and all we need is a spirit of simple, child-like confidence and repose in the divine purpose. Unbelief will rather look at the enemy's efforts to countervail, than at God's power to accomplish. It is on the latter that faith fixes its eye. Thus it obtains victory, and It has to do with God and His infallible faithfulness. It rests not upon the ever shifting sands of human affairs and earthly influences, but upon the immovable rock of God's eternal Word. That is faith's holy and solid resting-place. Come what may, it abides in that sanctuary of strength. "Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation." What then? Could death affect the counsels of the living God? Surely not. He only waited for the appointed moment, the due time, and then the most hostile influences were made instrumental in the development of His purposes.

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come on, let us deal *wisely* with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land." (Vv. 8-10) All this is the reasoning of a heart that had never learnt to take God into its calculations. The unrenewed heart never can do so; and hence, the moment you introduce God, all its reasonings fall to the ground. Apart from, or independent of Him, they may seem very wise; but only bring Him in, and they are proved to be perfect folly.

But why should we allow our minds to be, in any wise, influenced by reasonings and calculations which depend, for their *apparent* truth, upon the total exclusion of God? To do so is, in principle, and according to its measure, practical atheism. In Pharaoh's case, we see that he could accurately recount the various contingencies of human affairs, the multiplying of the people, the falling out of war, their joining with the enemy, their escape out of the land. All these circumstances he could, with uncommon sagacity, put into the scale; but it never once occurred to him that God could have anything whatever to do in the matter. Had he only thought of this, it would have upset his entire reasoning, and have written folly upon all his schemes.

Now it is well to see that it is ever thus with the reasonings of man's sceptic mind. God is entirely shut out; yea, the truth and consistency thereof depend upon His being kept out. The death-blow to all scepticism and infidelity is the introduction of God into the scene. Till He is seen, they may strut up and down upon the stage, with an amazing show of wisdom and cleverness; but the moment the eye catches even the faintest glimpse of that Blessed One, they are stripped of their cloak, and disclosed in all their nakedness and deformity.

In reference to the king of Egypt, it may, assuredly, be said, he did "greatly err," not knowing God, or His changeless counsels. He knew not that, hundreds of years back, before ever he had breathed the breath of mortal life, God's word and oath — "two immutable things" — had infallibly secured the full and glorious deliverance of that very people whom he was going, in his wisdom, to crush. All this was unknown to him; and, therefore, all his thoughts and plans were founded upon ignorance of that grand foundation-truth of all truths, namely, that GOD IS. He vainly imagined that he, by his management, could prevent the increase of those concerning whom God had said, "they shall be as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore." His wise dealing, therefore, was simply madness and folly.

The wildest mistake which a man can possibly fall into is to act without taking God into his account. Sooner or later, the thought of God will force itself upon him, and then comes the awful crash of all his schemes and calculations. At best, everything that is undertaken, independently of God, can last but for the present time. It cannot, by any possibility, stretch itself into eternity. All that is merely human, however solid, however brilliant, or however attractive, must fall into the cold grasp of death, and moulder in the dark, silent tomb. The clod of the valley must cover man's highest excellencies and brightest glories; mortality is engraved upon his brow, and all his schemes are evanescent. On the contrary, that which is connected with, and based upon, God, shall endure for ever. "His name shall endure for ever, and his memorial to all generations."

What a sad mistake, therefore, for a feeble mortal to set himself up against the eternal God, to "rush upon the thick bosses of the shield of the Almighty!" As well might the monarch of Egypt have sought to stem, with his puny hand, the ocean's tide, as to prevent the increase of those who were the subjects of Jehovah's everlasting purpose. Hence, although "they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens," yet, "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." Thus it must ever be. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." (Ps. 2: 4) Eternal confusion shall be inscribed upon all the opposition of men and devils. This gives sweet rest to the heart, in the midst of a scene where all is, apparently, so contrary to God and so contrary to faith. Were it not for the settled assurance that "the wrath of man shall praise" the Lord, the spirit would often be cast down, while contemplating the circumstances and influences which surround one in the world. Thank God, "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4: 18) In the power of this, we may well say, "*rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*" (Ps. 37: 7) How fully might the truth of this be seen in the case of both the oppressed and the oppressor, as set before us in our chapter! Had Israel "looked at the things that are seen," what were they? Pharaoh's wrath, stern taskmasters, afflictive burdens, rigorous service, hard bondage, mortar and brick. But, then, "the things which are not seen," what were they? God's eternal purpose, His unfailing promise, the approaching dawn of a day of salvation, the "burning lamp" of Jehovah's deliverance. Wondrous contrast Faith alone could enter into it. Nought save that precious principle could enable any poor, oppressed Israelite to look from out the smoking furnace of Egypt, to the green fields and vine-clad mountains of the land of Canaan. Who could possibly recognise in those oppressed slaves, toiling in the brick-kilns of Egypt, the heirs of salvation, and the objects of Heaven's peculiar interest and favour.

Thus it was then, and thus it is now. "We walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5: 7) "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." (1 John 3: 2) We are "here in the body pent," "absent from the Lord." As to fact, we are in Egypt, yet, in spirit, we are in the heavenly Canaan. Faith brings the heart into the power of divine and unseen things, and thus enables it to mount above everything down here, in this place "where death and darkness reign. Oh! for that simple child-like faith that sits beside the pure and eternal fountain of truth, there to drink those deep and refreshing draughts, which lift up the fainting spirit, and impart energy to the new man, in its upward and onward course.

The closing verses of this section of our book present an edifying lesson in the conduct of those God-fearing women, Shiphrah and Puah. They would not carry out the king's cruel scheme, but braved his wrath, and hence, God made them houses. "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. 2: 30) May we ever remember this, and act for God, under all circumstances!

Exodus 2

This section of our book abounds in the weightiest principles of divine truth — principles, which range themselves under the three following heads, namely, the power of Satan, the power of God, and the power of faith.

In the last verse of the previous chapter, we read, "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river." This was Satan's power. The river was the place of death; and, by death, the enemy sought to frustrate the purpose of God. It has ever been thus. The serpent has, at all times, watched, with malignant eye, those instruments which God was about to use for his own gracious ends. Look at the case of Abel, in Genesis 4. What was that but the serpent watching God's vessel and seeking to put it out of the way by death? Look at the case of Joseph, in Gen. 37. There you have the enemy seeking to put the man of God's purpose in the place of death. Look at the case of "the seed royal," in 2 Chr. 22, the act of Herod, in Matt. 2, the death of Christ, in Matt. 27. In all these cases, you find the enemy seeking, by death, to interrupt the current of divine action.

But, blessed be God, there is something beyond death. The entire sphere of divine action, as connected with redemption, lies beyond the limits of death's domain. When Satan has exhausted his power, then God begins to show Himself. The grave is the limit of Satan's activity; but there it is that divine activity begins. This is a glorious truth. Satan has the power of death; but God is the God of the living; and He gives life beyond the reach and power of death — a life which Satan cannot touch. The heart finds sweet relief in such a truth as this, in the midst of a scene where death reigns. Faith can stand and look on at Satan putting forth the plenitude of his power. It can stay itself upon God's mighty instrumentality of resurrection. It can take its stand at the grave which has just closed over a beloved object, and drink in, from the lips of Him who is "the resurrection and the life," the elevating assurance of a glorious immortality. It knows that God is stronger than Satan, and it can, therefore, quietly wait for the full manifestation of that superior strength, and, in thus

waiting, find its victory and its settled peace. We have a noble example of this power of faith in the opening verses of our chapter.

"And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him." (Ex. 2: 1-4) Here we have a scene of touching interest, in whatever way we contemplate it. In point of fact, it was simply faith triumphing over the influences of nature and death, and leaving room for the God of resurrection to act in His own proper sphere and character. True, the enemy's power is apparent, in the circumstance that the child had to be placed in such position — a position of death, in principle. And, moreover, a sword was piercing through the mother's heart, in thus beholding her precious offspring laid, as it were, in death. Satan might act, and nature might weep; but the Quickener of the dead was behind the dark cloud, and faith beheld Him there, gilding heaven's side of that cloud with His bright and life-giving beams. "By faith Moses when he was born was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." (Heb. 11: 23)

Thus, this honoured daughter of Levi teaches us a holy lesson. Her "ark of bulrushes, daubed with slime and *pitch*," declares her confidence in the truth that there was a something which could keep out the waters of death, in the case of this "proper child," as well as in the case of Noah, "the preacher of righteousness. Are we to suppose, for a moment, that this "Ark" was the invention of mere nature? Was it nature's mere thought that devised it, or nature's ingenuity that constructed it? Was the babe placed in the ark at the suggestion of a mother's heart, cherishing the fond but visionary hope of thereby saving her treasure from the ruthless hand of death? Were we to reply to the above inquiries in the affirmative, we should, I believe, lose the beautiful teaching of this entire scene. How could we ever suppose that the "*ark*" was devised by one who saw no other portion or destiny for her child but death by *drowning*?

Impossible. We can only look upon that significant structure, as faith's draft handed in at the treasury of the God of resurrection. devised by the hand of faith, as a vessel of mercy, to carry "a proper child" safety over death's dark waters, into the place assigned him by the immutable purpose of the living God. When we behold this daughter of Levi bending over that ark of bulrushes," which her faith had constructed, and depositing therein her babe, we see her "walking in the steps of that faith of her father Abraham, which he had," when "he rose up from before his dead," and purchased the cave of Machpelah from the sons of Heth. (Gen. 23) We do not recognise in her the energy of mere nature, hanging over the object of its affections, about to fall into the iron grasp of the king of terrors. No; but we trace in her the energy of a faith which enabled her to stand, as a conqueror, at the margin of death's cold flood, and behold the chosen servant of Jehovah in safety at the other side.

Yes, my reader, faith can take those bold and lofty flights into regions far removed from this land of death and wide-spread desolation. Its eagle eye can pierce the gloomy clouds which gather around the tomb, and behold the God of resurrection displaying the results of His everlasting counsels, in the midst of a sphere which no arrow of death can reach. It can take its stand upon the top of the Rock of Ages, and listen, in holy triumph, while the surges of death are lashing its base.

And what, let me ask, was "the king's commandment" to one who was in possession of this heaven-born principle? What weight had that commandment with one who could calmly stand beside her "ark of bulrushes" and look death straight in the face? The Holy Ghost replies, "they were not afraid of the king's commandment." The spirit that knows ought of communion with Him who quickens the dead, is not afraid of anything. Such an one can take up the triumphant language of 1 Cor: 15 and say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." He can give forth these words of triumph over a martyred Abel; over Joseph in the pit; over Moses in his ark of bulrushes; in the midst of "the seed royal," slain by the hand of Athaliah; and in the babes of Bethlehem, murdered

by the mandate of the cruel Herod; and far above all, he can utter them at the tomb of the Captain of our salvation.

Now, it may be, there are some who cannot trace the activities of faith, in the matter of the ark of bulrushes. Many may not be able to travel beyond the measure of Moses' sister, when "she stood afar off, to wit, what would be done to him." It is very evident that "his sister" was not up to "the measure of faith" possessed by "his mother." No doubt, she possessed deep interest and true affection, such as we may trace in "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre." (Matt. 27: 61) But there was something far beyond either interest or affection in the maker of the "ark." True, she did not "stand afar off to wit what would be done to" her child, and hence, what frequently happens, the dignity of faith might seem like indifference, on her part. It was not, however, indifference, but true elevation — the elevation of faith. If natural affection did not cause her to linger near the scene of death, it was only because the power of faith was furnishing her with nobler work, in the presence of the God of resurrection. Her faith had cleared the stage for Him, and most gloriously did He show Himself thereon.

"And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it she saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children." Here, then, the divine response begins to break, in sweetest accents, on the ear of faith. God was in all this. Rationalism, or scepticism, or infidelity, or atheism, may laugh at such an idea. And faith can laugh also; but the two kinds of laughter are very different. The former laughs, in cold contempt, at the thought of divine interference in the trifling affair of a royal maiden's walk by the river's side. The latter laughs, with real heartfelt gladness, at the thought that God is in everything. And, assuredly, if ever God was in anything, He was in this walk of Pharaoh's daughter, though she knew it not.

The renewed mind enjoys one of its sweetest exercises, while tracing the divine footsteps in circumstances and events in which a

thoughtless spirit sees only blind chance or rigid fate. The most trifling matter may, at times, turn out to be a most important link in a chain of events by which the Almighty God is helping forward the development of His grand designs. Look, for instance, at Esther 4: 1, and what do you see? A heathen monarch, spending a restless night. No uncommon circumstance, we may suppose; and, yet, this very circumstance was a link in a great chain of providence at the end of which you find the marvellous deliverance of the oppressed seed of Israel.

Thus was it with the daughter of Pharaoh, in her walk by the river's side. Little did she think that she was helping forward the purpose of "the Lord God of the Hebrews" How little idea had she that the weeping babe, in that ark of bulrushes, was yet to be Jehovah's instrument in shaking the land of Egypt to its very centre! Yet so it was. The Lord can make the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrain the remainder. How plainly the truth of this appears in the following passage!

"Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child sway, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed it. And the child grew and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water." (Ex. 2: 7-10) The beautiful faith of Moses' mother here meets its full reward; Satan is confounded; and the marvellous wisdom of God is displayed. Who would have thought that the one who had said, "If it be a son, then ye shall kill him," and, again, "every son that is born ye shall cast into the river," should have in his court one of those very sons, and such "a son." The devil was foiled by his own weapon, inasmuch as Pharaoh, whom he was using to frustrate the purpose of God, is used of God to nourish and bring up Moses, who was to be His instrument in confounding the power of Satan. Remarkable providence! Admirable wisdom! Truly, Jehovah is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." May we learn to trust Him with

more artless simplicity, and thus our path shall be more brilliant, and our testimony more effective.

In considering the history of Moses, we must look at him in two ways, namely, personally and typically.

First, in his personal character, there is much, very much, for us to learn. God had not only to raise him up, but also to train him, in one way or another, for the lengthened period of eighty years—first in the house of Pharaoh's daughter; and then at "the backside of the desert." This, to our shallow thoughts, would seem an immense space of time to devote to the education of a minister of God. But then God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. He knew the need of those forty years, twice told, in the preparation of His chosen vessel. When God educates, He educates in a manner worthy of Himself and His most holy service. He will not have a novice to do His work. The servant of Christ has to learn many a lesson, to undergo many an exercise, to pass through many a conflict, in secret, ere he is really qualified to act in public. Nature does not like this. It would rather figure in public than learn in private. It would rather be gazed upon and admired by the eye of man than be disciplined by the hand of God. But it will not do. We must take God's way. Nature may rush into the scene of operation; but God does not want it there. It must be withered, crushed, set aside. The place of death is the place for nature. If it *will* be active, God will so order matters, in His infallible faithfulness and perfect wisdom, that the results of its activity will prove its utter defeat and confusion. He knows what to do with nature, where to put it, and where to keep it. Oh that we may all be in deeper communion with the mind of God, in reference to self and all that pertains thereto. Then shall we make fewer mistakes. Then shall our path be steady and elevated, our spirit tranquil, and our service effective.

"And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." This was zeal for his brethren; but it was "not according to knowledge." God's time was not yet come for judging Egypt and delivering Israel; and

the intelligent servant will ever wait for God's time. "Moses was grown;" and "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;" and, moreover, "he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them." all this was true; yet he evidently ran before the time, and when one does this failure must be the issue. [In Stephen's address to the council, at Jerusalem, there is an allusion to Moses' acting, to which it may be well to advert. "And when he was full forty years old it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian; for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them; but they understood not." (Acts 7: 23-25) It is evident that Stephen's object, in his entire address, has to bring the history of the nation to bear upon the consciences of those whom he had before him; and it would have been quite foreign to this object, and at variance with the Spirit's rule in the New Testament, to raise a question as to whether Moses had not acted before the divinely-appointed time.

Moreover, he merely says, "it came into his heart to visit his brethren." He does not say that God sent him, *at that time*. Nor does this, in the least, touch the question of the moral condition of those who rejected him. "They understood not." This was the fact as to them, whatever Moses might have personally to learn in the matter. The spiritual mind can have no difficulty in apprehending this.

Looking at Moses, typically, we can see the mission of Christ to Israel, and their rejection of Him, and refusal to have Him to reign over them. On the other hand, looking at Moses, personally, we find that he, like others, made mistakes and displayed infirmities; sometimes went too fast, and sometimes too slow. All this is easily understood, and only tends to magnify the infinite grace and exhaustless patience of God.]

And not only is there failure in the end, but also manifest uncertainty, and lack of calm elevation and holy independence in the progress of a work begun before God's time. Moses "*looked this way and that way*." There is no need of this when a man is acting with and for God, and in the full intelligence of His mind, as to the

details of his work. If God's time had really come, and if Moses was conscious of being divinely commissioned to execute judgement upon the Egyptian, and if he felt assured of the divine presence with him, he would not have "looked this way and that way."

This action teaches a deep practical lesson to all the servants of God. There are two things by which it is superinduced: namely, the fear of man's wrath, and the hope of man's favour. The servant of the living God should neither regard the one nor the other. What avails the wrath or favour of a poor mortal, to one who holds the divine commission, and enjoys the divine presence? It is, in the judgement of such an one, less than the small dust of the balance. "*Have not I commanded thee?* Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for *the Lord thy God is with thee*, whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1: 9) "Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak, unto them *all that I command thee*: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for *I am with thee*, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." (Jer 1: 17-19)

When the servant of Christ stands upon the elevated ground set forth in the above quotations, he will not "look this way and that way;" he will act on wisdom's heavenly counsel, "let thine eyes look straight on, and thine eyelids look straight before thee." Divine intelligence will ever lead us to look upward and onward. Whenever we look around to shun a mortal's frown or catch his smile, we may rest assured there is something wrong; we are off the proper ground of divine service. We lack the assurance of holding the divine commission, and of enjoying the divine presence, both of which are absolutely essential.

True, there are many who, through profound ignorance, or excessive self-confidence, stand forward in a sphere of service for which God never intended them, and for which He, therefore, never qualified them. And not only do they thus stand forward, but they exhibit an amount of coolness and self-possession perfectly amazing

to those who are capable of forming an impartial judgement about their gifts and merits. But all this will very speedily find its level; nor does it in the least interfere with the integrity of the principle that nothing can effectually deliver a man from the tendency to "look this way and that way," save the consciousness of the divine commission and the divine presence. When these are possessed, there is entire deliverance from human influence, and consequent independence. No man is in a position to serve others who is not wholly independent of them; but a man who knows his proper place can stoop and wash his brethren's feet.

When we turn away our eyes from man, and fix them upon the only true and perfect Servant, we do not find him looking this way and that way, for this simple reason, that He never had His eye upon men, but always upon God. He feared not the wrath of man nor sought his favour. He never opened His lips to elicit human applause, nor kept them closed to avoid human censure. This gave holy stability and elevation to all He said and did. Of Him alone could it be truly said, "His leaf shall not wither, and *whatsoever* he doeth shall prosper." Everything He did turned to profitable account, because everything was done to God. Every action, every word, every movement, every look, every thought, was like a beautiful cluster of fruit, sent up to refresh the heart of God. He was never afraid of the results of His work, because He always acted with and for God, and in the full intelligence of His mind. His own will, though divinely perfect, never once mingled itself in ought that He did, as a man, on the earth. He could say, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Hence, He brought forth fruit, "in its season" He did "always those things which pleased the Father," and, therefore, never had any occasion to "fear," to "repent," or to "look this way and that way."

Now in this, as in everything else, the blessed Master stands in marked contrast with His most honoured and eminent servants. Even a Moses "feared," and a Paul "repented;" but the Lord Jesus never did either. He never had to retrace a step, to recall a word, or correct a thought. All was absolutely perfect. All was "fruit in season." The current of His holy and heavenly life flowed onward without a ripple and without a curve. His will was divinely subject. The best and

most devoted men make mistakes; but it is perfectly certain that the more we are enabled, through grace, to mortify our own will, the fewer our mistakes will be. Truly happy it is when, in the main, our path is really a path of faith and single-eyed devotedness to Christ.

Thus it was with Moses. He was a man of faith—a man who drank deeply into the spirit of his Master, and walked with marvellous steadiness in His footprints. True, he anticipated, as has been remarked, by forty years, the Lord's time of judgement on Egypt and deliverance for Israel; yet, when we turn to the inspired commentary, in Hebrews 11, we find nothing about this. We there find only the divine principle upon which, in the main, his course was founded. "By faith Moses, *when he was come to years*, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." (Ver. 24-27)

This quotation furnishes a most gracious view of the actings of Moses. It is ever thus the Holy Ghost deals with the history of Old Testament saints. When He writes a man's history, He presents him to us as he is, and faithfully sets forth all his failures and imperfections. But when, in the New Testament, he comments upon such history, He merely gives the real principle and main result of a man's life. Hence, though we read, in Exodus, that "Moses looked this way and that way" — that "he feared and said, surely this thing is known" — and, finally, "Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh;" yet, we are taught, in Hebrews, that what he did, he did "by faith" — that he did not fear "the wrath of the king" — that "he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

Thus will it be, by and by, when "the Lord comes, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the *counsels of the hearts*: and then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Cor. 4: 5) This is a precious and consolatory truth for every upright mind and every loyal heart. Many a "Counsel" the "heart" may form, which, from various causes, the *hand* may not be able to execute. All such "counsels" will be made "manifest" when

"the Lord comes." Blessed be the grace that has told us so! The affectionate counsels of the heart are far more precious to Christ than the most elaborate works of the hand. The latter may shine before the eye of man; the former are designed *only* for the heart of Jesus. The latter may be spoken of amongst men; the former will be made manifest before God and His holy angels. May all the servants of Christ have their hearts undividedly occupied with His person, and their eyes steadily fixed upon His advent.

In contemplating the path of Moses, we observe how that faith led him entirely athwart the ordinary course of nature. It led him to despise all the pleasures, the attractions, and the honours of Pharaoh's court. And not only that, but also to relinquish an apparently wide sphere of usefulness. Human expediency would have conducted him along quite an opposite path. It would have led him to use his influence on behalf of the people of God — to act *for* them instead of suffering *with* them. According to man's judgement, Providence would seem to have opened for Moses a wide and most important sphere of labour; and surely if ever the hand of God was manifest in placing a man in a distinct position, it was in his case. By a most marvellous interposition — by a most unaccountable chain of circumstances, every link of which displayed the finger of the Almighty — by an order of events which no human foresight could have arranged, had the daughter of Pharaoh been made the instrument of drawing Moses out of the water, and of nourishing and educating him until he was "full forty years Old." With all these circumstances in his view, to abandon his high, honourable, and influential position, could only be regarded as the result of a misguided zeal which no sound judgement could approve.

Thus might poor blind nature reason. But faith thought differently; for nature and faith are always at issue. They cannot agree upon a single point. Nor is there anything, perhaps, in reference to which they differ so widely as what are commonly called "openings of Providence." Nature will constantly regard such openings as warrants for self-indulgence; whereas faith will find in them opportunities for self-denial. Jonah might have deemed it a very remarkable opening of Providence to find a ship going to

Tarshish; but in truth it was an opening through which he slipped off the path of obedience.

No doubt, it is the Christian's privilege to see his Father's hand, and hear His voice, in everything; but he is not to be guided by circumstances. A Christian so guided is like a vessel at sea without rudder or compass; she is at the mercy of the waves and the winds. God's promise to His child is, "I will guide thee with mine eye." (Ps: 32: 8) His warning is, "Be not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." It is much better to be guided by our Father's eye, than by the bit and bridle of circumstances; and we know that in the ordinary acceptation of the term, "Providence" is only another word for the impulse of circumstances.

Now, the power of faith may constantly be seen in refusing and forsaking the apparent openings of Providence. It was so in the case of Moses. "By faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" and "by faith he forsook Egypt." Had he judged according to the sight of his eyes, he would have grasped at the proffered dignity, as the manifest gift of a kind Providence, and he would have remained in the court of Pharaoh as in a sphere of usefulness plainly thrown open to him by the hand of God. But, then, he walked by faith, and not by the sight of his eyes; and, hence, he forsook all. Noble example! May we have grace to follow it!

And observe what it was that Moses "esteemed greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;" it was the "reproach of Christ." It was not merely reproach for Christ. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me." The Lord Jesus, in perfect grace, identified Himself with His people. He came down from heaven, leaving His Father's bosom, and laying aside all His glory, He took His people's place, confessed their sins, and bore their judgement on the cursed tree. Such was His voluntary devotedness, He not merely acted *for* us, but made Himself one *with* us, thus perfectly delivering us from all that was or could be against us.

Hence, we see how much in sympathy Moses was with the spirit and mind of Christ, in reference to the people of God. He was in the midst of all the ease the pomp and dignity of Pharaoh's house, where "the pleasures of sin," and "the treasures of Egypt," lay scattered around him, in richest profusion. All these things he might have enjoyed if he would. He could have lived and died in the midst of wealth and splendour. His entire path, from first to last, might, if he had chosen, have been enlightened by the sunshine of royal favour: but that would not have been "faith;" it would not have been Christ-like. From his elevated position, he saw his brethren bowed down beneath their heavy burden, and faith led him to see that his place was to be with them. Yes; with them, in all their reproach, their bondage, their degradation, and their sorrow. Had he been actuated by mere benevolence, philanthropy, or patriotism, he might have used his personal influence on behalf of his brethren. He might have succeeded in inducing Pharaoh to lighten their burden, and render their path somewhat smoother, by royal grants in their favour; but this would never do, never satisfy a heart that had a single pulsation in common with the heart of Christ. Such a heart Moses, by the grace of God, carried in his bosom; and, therefore, with all the energies and all the affections of that heart, he threw himself, body, soul, and spirit, into the very midst of his oppressed brethren. He "chose rather to suffer affliction *with* the people of God." And, moreover, he did this "by faith."

Let my reader ponder this deeply. We must not be satisfied with wishing well to, doing service for, or speaking kindly on behalf of, the people of God. We ought to be fully identified *with* them, no matter how despised or reproached they may be. It is, in a measure, an agreeable thing to a benevolent and generous spirit, to patronise Christianity; but it is a wholly different thing to be identified with Christians, or to suffer with Christ. A *patron* is one thing, a *martyr* is quite another. This distinction is apparent throughout the entire book of God. Obadiah took care of God's witnesses, but Elijah was a witness for God. Darius was so attached to Daniel that he lost a night's rest on his account, but Daniel spent that selfsame night in the lion's den, as a witness for the truth of God. Nicodemus ventured to speak a word *for* Christ, but a more matured discipleship would have led him to identify himself *with* Christ.

These considerations are eminently practical. The Lord Jesus does not want patronage; He wants fellowship. The truth concerning Him is declared to us, not that we might patronise His cause on earth, but have fellowship with His Person in heaven. He identified Himself with us, at the heavy cost of all that love could give. He might have avoided this. He might have continued to enjoy His eternal place "in the bosom of the Father." But how, then, could that mighty tide of love, which was pent up in His heart, flow down to us guilty and hell-deserving sinners? Between Him and us there could be no oneness, save on conditions which involved the surrender of everything on His part. But, blessed, throughout the everlasting ages, be His adorable Name, that surrender was voluntarily made. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify *unto himself* a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2: 14) He would not enjoy His glory alone. His loving heart would gratify itself by associating "many sons" with Him in that glory. "Father," He says, "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with Me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John 17: 24) Such were the thoughts of Christ in reference to His people; and we can easily see how much in sympathy with these precious thoughts was the heart of Moses. He, unquestionably, partook largely of his Master's spirit; and he manifested that excellent spirit in freely sacrificing every personal consideration, and associating himself, unreservedly, with the people of God.

The personal character and actings of this honoured servant of God will come before us again in the next section of our book. We shall here briefly consider him as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. That he was a type of Him is evident from the following passage, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18: 15) We are not, therefore, trafficking in human imagination in viewing Moses as a type; it is the plain teaching of scripture, and, in the closing verses of Exodus 2. we see this type in a double way: first, in the matter of his rejection by Israel; and, secondly, in his union with a stranger in the land of Midian. These points have already been, in some measure, developed in the history of Joseph, who, being cast out by his brethren, according to the

flesh, forms an alliance with an Egyptian bride. Here, as in the case of Moses, we see shadowed forth Christ's rejection by Israel, and His union with the Church, but in a different phase. In Joseph's case, we have the exhibition of positive enmity against his person. In Moses it is the rejection of his mission. In Joseph's case we read, "they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." (Gen. 37: 4) In the case of Moses, the word is, "*Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?*" In short, the former was personally hated; the latter, officially refused.

So also in the mode in which the great mystery of the Church is exemplified, in the history of those two Old Testament saints. "Asenath" presents quite a different phase of the Church from that which we have in the person of "Zipporah." The former was united to Joseph in the time of his exaltation; the latter was the companion of Moses, in the obscurity of his desert life. (Comp. Gen. 41: 41-45 with Ex. 2: 15; 3: 1) True, both Joseph and Moses were, at the time of their union with a stranger, rejected by their brethren; yet the former was "governor over all the land of Egypt;" whereas the latter tended a few sheep at "the backside of the desert."

Whether, therefore, we contemplate Christ, as manifested in glory: or as hidden from the world's gaze, the Church is intimately associated with Him. And now, inasmuch as the world seeth Him not, neither can it take knowledge of that body which is wholly one with Him. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (2 John 3: 1) By and by, Christ will appear in His glory, and the Church with Him. "When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3: 4) And, again, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved Me." (John 17: 22, 23)

[There are two distinct unities spoken of in John 17: 21, 23. The first is that unity which the Church was responsible to have maintained, but in which she has utterly failed. The second, that unity which God will infallibly accomplish, and which He will manifest in glory. If the reader will turn to the passage he will at once see the difference, both as to character and result, of the two.]

Such, then, is the Church's high and holy position. She is one with Him who is cast out by this world, but who occupies the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The Lord Jesus made Himself responsible for her on the cross, in order that she might share with Him His present rejection and His future glory. Would that all who form a part of such a highly privileged body were more impressed with a sense of what becomes them as to course and character down here! Assuredly, there should be a fuller and clearer response on the part of all the children of God, to that love wherewith He has loved them, to that salvation wherewith He has saved them, and to that dignity wherewith He has invested them. The walk of the Christian should ever be the natural result of realised privilege, and not the constrained result of legal vows and resolutions, the proper fruit of a position known and enjoyed by faith, and not the fruit of one's own efforts to reach a position "by works of law." All true believers are a part of the bride of Christ. Hence they owe Him those affections which become that relation. The relationship is not obtained because of the affections, but the affections flow out of the relationship.

So let it be, O Lord, with all thy beloved and blood bought people.

Exodus 3

We shall now resume the personal history of Moses, and contemplate him during that deeply-interesting period of his career which he spent in retirement—a period including, as we should say, forty of his very best years — the prime of life. This is full of meaning. The Lord had graciously, wisely, and faithfully, led His dear servant apart from the eyes and thoughts of men, in order that He might train him under His own immediate hand. Moses needed this. True, he had spent forty years in the house of Pharaoh; and, while his sojourn there was not without its influence and value, yet was it as nothing when compared with his sojourn in the desert. The former might be valuable; but the latter was indispensable.

Nothing can possibly make up for the lack of secret communion with God, or the training and discipline of His school "All the wisdom of the Egyptians" would not have qualified Moses for his future path. He might have pursued a most brilliant course through the schools and colleges of Egypt. He might have come forth laden with literary honours — his intellect stored with learning, and his heart full of pride and self-sufficiency. He might have taken out his degree in the school of man, and yet have to learn his alphabet in the school of God. Mere human wisdom and learning; how valuable soever in themselves, can never constitute any one a servant of God, nor equip him for any department of divine service. Such things may qualify unrenewed nature to figure before the world; but the man whom God will use must be endowed with widely different qualifications — such qualifications as can alone be found in the deep and hallowed retirement of the Lord's presence.

All God's servants have been made to know and experience the truth of these statements. Moses at Horeb, Elijah at Cherith, Ezekiel at Chebar, Paul in Arabia, and John at Patmos, are all striking examples of the immense practical importance of being alone with God. and when we look at the Divine Servant, we find that the time He spent in private was nearly ten times as long as that which He spent in public. He, though perfect in understanding and in will, spent nearly thirty years in the obscurity of a carpenter's

house at Nazareth, ere He made His appearance in public. And, even when He had entered upon His public career, how oft did He retreat from the gaze of men, to enjoy the sweet and sacred retirement of the divine presence!

Now we may feel disposed to ask, how could the urgent demand for workmen ever be met, if all need such protracted training, in secret, ere they come forth to their work? This is the Master's care — not ours. He can provide the workmen, and He can train them also. This is not man's work. God alone can provide and prepare a true minister. Nor is it a question with Him as to the length of time needful for the education of such an one. We know He could educate him in a moment, if it were His will to do so. One thing is evident, namely, that God has had all His servants very much alone with Himself, both before and after their entrance upon their public work; nor will any one ever get on without this. The absence of secret training and discipline will, necessarily leave us barren, superficial, and theoretic. A man who ventures forth upon a public career ere he has duly weighed himself in the balances of the sanctuary, or measured himself in the presence of God, is like a ship putting out to sea without proper ballast: he will doubtless upset with the first stiff breeze. On the contrary, there is a depth, a solidity, and a steadiness flowing from our having passed from form to form in the school of God, which are essential elements in the formation of the character of a true and effective servant of God.

Hence, therefore, when we find Moses, at the age of forty years, taken apart from all the dignity and splendour of a court, for the purpose of spending forty years in the obscurity of a desert, we are led to expect a remarkable course of service; nor are we disappointed. The man whom God educates, is educated, and none other. It lies not within the range of man to prepare an instrument for the service of God. The hand of man could never mould "a vessel meet for the Master's use." The One who is to use the vessel can alone prepare it; and we have before us a singularly beautiful sample of His mode of preparation.

"Now, Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." (Ex. 3: 1) Here,

then, we have a marvellous change of circumstances. In Genesis 46: 31, we read, "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians;" and yet Moses, who was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," is transferred from the Egyptian court to the back of a mountain to tend a flock of sheep, and to be educated for the service of God. Assuredly, this is not "the manner of man." This is not nature's line of things. Flesh and blood could not understand this. We should have thought that Moses' education was finished when he had become master of all Egypt's wisdom, and that, moreover, in immediate connection with the rare advantages which a court life affords. We should have expected to find in one so highly favoured, not only a solid and varied education; but also such an exquisite polish as would fit him for any sphere of action to which he might be called. But then, to find such a man with such attainments, called away from such a position to mind sheep at the back of a mountain, is something entirely beyond the utmost stretch of human thought and feeling. It lays prostrate in the dust all man's pride and glory. It declares plainly that this world's appliances are of little value in the divine estimation; yea, they are as "dung and dross," not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of all those who have been taught in His school.

There is a very wide difference between human and divine education. The former has for its end the refinement and exaltation of nature; the latter begins with withering it up and setting it aside. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2: 14) Educate the "natural man" as much as you please, and you cannot make him a "spiritual man." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit:" (John 3: 6) If ever an educated "natural man" might look for success in the service of God, Moses might have counted upon it; he was "grown," he was "learned," he was "mighty in word and deed," and yet he had to learn something at "the backside of the desert," which Egypt's schools could never have taught him. Paul learnt more in Arabia than ever he had learnt at the feet of Gamaliel.* None can teach like God; and all who will learn of Him must be alone *with* Him. "In the desert God will teach thee." There it was that Moses learnt his sweetest, deepest, most influential

and enduring lessons. Thither, too, must all repair who mean to be educated for the ministry.

{*Let not my reader suppose for a moment that the design of the above remarks is to detract from the value of really useful information, or the proper culture of the mental powers. By no means. If, for example, he is a parent, let him store his child's mind with useful knowledge; let him teach him everything which may, hereafter, turn to account in the Master's service: let him not burden him with ought which he would have to "lay aside in running his Christian course, nor conduct him, for educational purposes through a region from which it is well-nigh impossible to come forth with an unsoiled mind. You might just as well shut him up for ten years in a coal mine, in order to qualify him for discussing the properties of light and shade, as cause him to wade through the mire of a heathen mythology, in order to fit him for the interpretation of the oracles of God, or prepare him for leading the flock of Christ}

Beloved reader, may you prove, in your own deep experience, the real meaning of "the backside of the desert," that sacred spot where nature is laid in the dust, and God alone exalted. There it is that men and things — the world and self — present circumstances and their influence, are all valued at what they are really worth. There it is, and there alone, that you will find a divinely-adjusted balance in which to weigh all within and all around. There are no false colours, no borrowed plumes, no empty pretensions there. The enemy of your soul cannot gild the sand of that place. All is reality there. The heart that has found itself in the presence of God, at "the backside of the desert," has right thoughts about everything. It is raised far above the exciting influence of this world's schemes. The din and noise! the bustle and confusion of Egypt do not fall upon the ear in that distant place. The crash in the monetary and commercial world is not heard there. The sigh of ambition is not heaved there. This world's fading laurels do not tempt there. The thirst for gold is not felt there. The eye is never dimmed with lust, nor the heart swollen with pride there. Human applause does not elate, nor human censure depress there. In a word, everything is set aside save the stillness and light of the divine presence. God's voice alone is heard — His light enjoyed — His thoughts received. This is the place to

which all must go to be educated for the ministry; and there all must remain, if they would succeed in the ministry.

Would that all who come forward to serve in public knew more of what it is to breathe the atmosphere of this place. We should, then, have far less vapid attempts at ministry, but far more effective Christ-honouring service.

Let us now enquire what Moses saw and what he heard at "the backside of the desert." We shall find him learning lessons which lay far beyond the reach of Egypt's most gifted masters. It might appear, in the eyes of human reason, a strange loss of time for a man like Moses to spend forty years doing nothing save to keep a few sheep in the wilderness. But he was there with God, and the time that is thus spent is never lost. It is salutary for us to remember that there is something more than mere *doing* necessary on the part of the true servant. A man who is always doing will be apt to do too much. Such an one would need to ponder over the deeply-practical words of the perfect Servant, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to *hear* as the learned." (Isa. 1: 4) This is an indispensable part of the servant's business. The servant must frequently stand in his master's presence, in order that he may know what he has to do. The "ear" and the "tongue" are intimately connected, in more ways than one; but, in a spiritual or moral point of view, if my ear be closed and my tongue loose, I shall be sure to talk a great deal of folly. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to *hear*, slow to *speak*." (James 1: 19) This seasonable admonition is based upon two facts, namely, that everything good comes from above, and that the heart is brim full of naughtiness, ready to flow over. Hence, the need of keeping the ear open and the tongue quiet rare and admirable attainments! -attainments in which Moses made great proficiency at "the backside of the desert," and which all can acquire, if only they are disposed to learn in that school.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, And behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." (Ex. 3: 2, 3) This was, truly, "a great sight" — a bush

burning, yet not burnt. The palace of Pharaoh could never have afforded such a sight. But it was a gracious sight as well as a great sight, for therein was strikingly exhibited the condition of God's elect. They were in the furnace of Egypt; and Jehovah reveals Himself in a burning bush. But as the bush was not consumed, so neither were they, for God was there. "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Ps. 46) Here is strength and security — victory and peace. God *with* us, God *in* us, and God *for* us. This is ample provision for every exigence.

Nothing can be more interesting or instructive than the mode in which Jehovah was pleased to reveal Himself to Moses, as presented in the above quotation. He was about to furnish him with his commission to lead forth His people out of Egypt, that they might be His assembly — His dwelling-place, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan; and the place from which He speaks is a burning bush. Apt, solemn, and beautiful symbol of Jehovah dwelling in the midst of His elect and redeemed congregation! "Our God is a consuming fire," not to consume *us*, but to consume all in us and about us which is contrary to His holiness, and, as such, subversive of our true and permanent happiness. "Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever."

There are various instances, both in the Old and New Testaments, in which we find God displaying Himself as "a consuming fire." Look, for example, at the case of Nadab and Abihu, in Leviticus 10. This was a deeply solemn occasion. God was dwelling in the midst of His people, and He would keep them in a condition worthy of Himself. He could not do otherwise. It would neither be for His glory nor for their profit, were He to tolerate ought in them inconsistent with the purity of His presence. God's dwelling-place must be holy.

So, also, in Joshua 7 we have another striking proof, in the case of Achan, that Jehovah could not possibly sanction, by His presence, evil, in any shape or form, how covert soever that evil might be. He was "a Consuming fire," and, as such, He should act, in reference to any attempt to defile that assembly in the midst of which He dwelt. To seek to connect God's presence with evil unjudged, is the very highest character of wickedness.

Again, in Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira teach us the same solemn lesson. God the Holy Ghost was dwelling in the midst of the Church, not merely as an influence, but as a divine Person, in such a way as that one could lie to Him. The Church was, and is still, His dwelling place; and He must rule and judge in the midst thereof. Men may walk in company with deceit, covetousness, and hypocrisy; but God cannot. If God is going to walk with us, we must judge our ways, or we will judge them for us. (See also 1 Cor. 11: 29-32)

In all these cases, and many more which might be adduced, we see the force of that solemn word, "holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." The moral effect of this will ever be similar to that produced in the case of Moses, as recorded in our chapter. "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for *the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*" (Verse 5) The place of God's presence is holy, and can only be trodden with unshod feet. God, dwelling in the midst of His people, imparts a character of holiness to their assembly, which is the basis of every holy affection and every holy activity. The character of the dwelling place takes its stamp from the character of the Occupant.

The application of this to the Church, which is now the habitation of God, through the Spirit, is of the very utmost practical importance. While it is blessedly true that God, by His Spirit, inhabits each individual member of the Church, thereby imparting a character of holiness to the individual; it is equally true that He dwells in the assembly; and, hence the assembly must be holy. The centre round which the members are gathered is nothing less than the Person of a living, victorious, and glorified Christ. The energy by which they are gathered is nothing less than God the Holy Ghost; and the Lord God Almighty dwells in them and walks in them. (See Matt. 18: 20; 1 Cor. 6: 19; 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; Eph. 2: 21, 22) Such being the holy elevation belonging to God's dwelling-place, it is evident that nothing which is unholy, either in principle or practice, must be tolerated. Each one connected therewith should feel the weight and solemnity of that word, "the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." (1 Cor. 3: 17) Most weighty words these, for every member

of God's assembly — for every stone in His holy temple! May we all learn to tread Jehovah's courts, with unshod feet!

However, the visions of Horeb bear witness to the grace of the God of Israel as well as to His holiness. If God's holiness is infinite, His grace is infinite also; and, while the manner in which He revealed Himself to Moses, declared the former, the very fact of His revealing Himself at all evidenced the latter. He came down, because He was gracious; but when come down, He should reveal Himself as holy. "Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." (Verse 6) The effect of the divine presence must ever be to make nature hide itself; and, when we stand before God, with unshod feet and covered head, i.e. in the attitude of soul which those acts so aptly and beautifully express, we are prepared to hearken to the sweet accents of grace. When man takes his suited place, God can speak, in the language of unmingled mercy.

"And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . Now, therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come up unto me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them." (Ver. 7-9) Here the absolute, free, unconditional grace of the God of Abraham, and the God of Abraham's seed, shines forth in all its native brightness, unhindered by the "ifs" and "buts," the vows, resolutions, and conditions of man's legal spirit. God had come down to display Himself, in sovereign grace, to do the whole work of salvation, to accomplish His promise made to Abraham, and repeated to Isaac and Jacob. He had not come down to see if, indeed, the subjects of His promise were in such a condition as to *merit* His salvation. It was sufficient for Him that they *needed it*. Their oppressed state, their sorrows, their tears, their sighs, their heavy bondage, had all come in review before Him; for, blessed be His name, He counts His people's sighs and puts their tears into His bottle. He was not

attracted by their excellencies or their virtues. It was not on the ground of aught that was good in them, either seen or foreseen, that he was about to visit them, for He knew what was in them. In one word, we have the true ground of His gracious acting set before us in the words, "I am the God of Abraham," and "I have seen the affliction of my people."

These words reveal a great fundamental principle in the ways of God. It is on the ground of what He is, that He ever acts. "I AM," secures all for "MY PEOPLE." Assuredly He was not going to leave *His* people amid the brick-kilns of Egypt, and under the lash of Pharaoh's taskmasters. They were His people, and He would act toward them in a manner worthy of Himself. To be His people — to be the favoured objects of Jehovah's electing love — the subjects of His unconditional promise, settled everything. Nothing should hinder the public display of His relationship with those for whom His eternal purpose had secured the land of Canaan. He had come down to deliver them; and the combined power of earth and hell could not hold them in captivity one hour beyond His appointed time. He might and did use Egypt as a school, and Pharaoh as a schoolmaster; but when the needed work was accomplished, both the school and the schoolmaster were set aside, and His people were brought forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm.

Such, then, was the double character of the revelation made to Moses at Mount Horeb. What he saw and what he heard combined the two elements of holiness and grace — elements which, as we know, enter into, and distinctly characterise, all the ways and all the relationships of the blessed God, and which should also mark the ways of all those who, in any wise, act for, or have fellowship with, Him. Every true servant is sent forth from the immediate presence of God, with all its holiness and all its grace; and he is called to be holy and gracious — he is called to be the reflection of the grace and holiness of the divine character; and, in order that he may be so, he should not only start from the immediate presence of God, at the first, but abide there, in spirit, habitually. This is the true secret of effectual service.

"Childlike, attend what thou wilt say

Go forth and do it, while 'tis day,

Yet never leave my sweet retreat."

The spiritual man alone can understand the meaning of the two things, "go forth and do," and, "yet never leave." In order to act *for* God outside, I should be *with* Him inside. I must be in the secret sanctuary of His presence, else I shall utterly fail.

Very many break down on this point. There is the greatest possible danger of getting out of the solemnity and calmness of the divine presence, amid the bustle of intercourse with men, and the excitement of active service. This is to be carefully guarded against. If we lose that hallowed tone of spirit which is expressed in "the unshod foot," our service will, very speedily, become vapid and unprofitable. If I allow my work to get between my heart and the Master, it will be little worth. We can only effectually serve Christ as we are enjoying Him. It is while the heart dwells upon His powerful attractions that the hands perform the most acceptable service to His name; nor is there any one who can minister Christ with unction, freshness, and power to others, if he be not feeding upon Christ, in the secret of his own soul. True, he may preach a sermon, deliver a lecture, utter prayers, write a book, and go through the entire routine of outward service, and yet not minister Christ. The man who will present Christ to others must be occupied with Christ for himself.

Happy is the man who ministers thus, whatever be the success or reception of his ministry. For should his ministry fail to attract attention, to command influence, or to produce apparent results, he has his sweet retreat and his unfailing portion in Christ, of which nothing can deprive him. Whereas, the man who is merely feeding upon the fruits of his ministry, who delights in the gratification which it affords, or the attention and interest which it commands, is like a mere pipe, conveying water to others, and retaining only rust itself. This is a most deplorable condition to be in; and yet is it the actual condition of every servant who is more occupied with his work and its results, than with the Master and His glory.

This is a matter which calls for the most rigid self-judgement. The heart is deceitful, and the enemy is crafty; and, hence there is great need to hearken to the word of exhortation, "be sober, be vigilant." It is when the soul is awakened to a sense of the varied and manifold dangers which beset the servant's path, that it is, in any measure, able to understand the need there is for being much alone with God: it is there one is secure and happy. It is when we begin, continue, and end our work at the Master's feet, that our service will be of the right kind.

From all that has been said, it must be evident to any reader that every servant of Christ will find the air of "the backside of the desert" most salutary. Horeb is really the starting post for all whom God sends forth to act for Him. It was at Horeb that Moses learnt to put off his shoes and hide his face. Forty years before he had gone to work; but his movement was premature. It was amid the flesh-subduing solitudes of the mount of God, and forth from the burning bush, that the divine commission fell on the servant's ear, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (Ver. 10) Here was real authority. There is a vast difference between God sending a man, and a man running unsent. But it is very manifest that Moses was not ripe for service when first he set about acting. If forty years of secret training were needful for him, how could he have got on without it? Impossible! He had to be divinely educated, and divinely commissioned; and so must all who go forth upon a path of service and testimony for Christ. Oh! that these holy lessons may be deeply graven on all our hearts, that so our every work may wear upon it the stamp of the Master's authority, and the Masters approval.

However, we have something further to learn at the foot of Mount Horeb. The soul finds it seasonable to linger in this place. "It is good to be here." The presence of God is ever a deeply practical place; the heart is sure to be laid open there. The light that shines in that holy place makes everything manifest; and this is what is so much needed in the midst of the hollow pretension around us, and the pride and self complacency within.

We might be disposed to think that, the very moment the divine commission was given to Moses, his reply would be, "Here am I," or "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" But no; he had yet to be brought to this. Doubtless, he was affected by the remembrance of his former failure. If a man acts in anything without God, he is sure to be discouraged, even when God is sending him. "And Moses said unto God, Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ver. 11) This is very unlike the man who, forty years before, "supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them." Such is man! — at one time too hasty; at another time too slow. Moses had learnt a great deal since the day in which he smote the Egyptian. He had grown in the knowledge of himself, and this produced diffidence and timidity. But, then, he manifestly lacked confidence in God. If I am merely looking at myself, I shall do "nothing;" but if I am looking at Christ, "I can do all things." Thus, when diffidence and timidity led Moses to say, "Who am I" God's answer was, "Certainly *I* will be with thee." (Ver. 12.) This ought to have been sufficient. If God be with me, it makes very little matter who I am, or what I am. When God says, "I will send thee," and "I will be with thee," the servant is amply furnished with divine authority and divine power; and he ought, therefore, to be perfectly satisfied to go forth.

But Moses puts another question; for the human heart is full of questions. "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" It is marvellous to see how the human heart reasons and questions, when unhesitating obedience is that which is due to God; and still more marvellous is the grace that bears with all the reasonings and answers all the questions. Each question seems but to elicit some new feature of divine grace.

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Ver. 14) The title which God here gives Himself is one of wondrous significancy. In tracing through Scripture the various names which God takes, we find them intimately connected with the

varied need of those with whom He was in relation. "Jehovah-jireh," (the Lord will provide.) "Jehovah-nissi," (the Lord my banner.) "Jehovah-shalom," (the Lord send peace.) "Jehovah-tsidkenu," (the Lord our righteousness.) All these His gracious titles are unfolded to meet the necessities of His people; and when He calls Himself "I AM," it comprehends them all. Jehovah, in taking this title, was furnishing His people with a blank cheque, to be filled up to any amount. He calls Himself "I AM," and faith has but to write over against that ineffably precious name whatever we want. God is the only significant figure, and human need may add the ciphers. If we want life, Christ says, "I AM the life." If we want righteousness, He is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." If we want peace, "He is our peace" If we want wisdom, sanctification, and redemption," He "is made" all these "unto us." In a word, we may travel through the wide range of human necessity, in order to have a just conception of the amazing depth and fullness of this profound and adorable name, "I AM."

What a mercy to be called to walk in companionship with One who bears such a name as this! We are in the wilderness, and there we have to meet with trial, sorrow, and difficulty; but, so long as we have the happy privilege of betaking ourselves, at all times, and under all circumstances, to One who reveals Himself in His manifold grace, in connection with our every necessity and weakness, we need not fear the wilderness: God was about to bring His people across the sandy desert, when He disclosed this precious and comprehensive name; and, although the believer now, as being endowed with the Spirit of adoption, can cry, "Abba Father," yet is he not deprived of the privilege of enjoying communion with God in each and every one of those manifestations which He has been pleased to make of Himself. For example, the title "God" reveals Him as acting in the solitariness of His own being, displaying His eternal power and Godhead in the works of creation. "The Lord God" is the title which He takes in connection with man. Then, as "the Almighty God," He rises before the view of His servant Abraham, in order to assure his heart in reference to the accomplishment of His promise touching the seed. As Jehovah, He made Himself known to Israel, in delivering them out of the land of Egypt, and bringing them into the land of Canaan.

Such were the various measures and various modes in which "God spake in times past unto the fathers, by the prophets:" (Heb. 1: 1) and the believer, under this dispensation or economy, as possessing the spirit of sonship, can say, "It was my Father who thus revealed himself — thus spoke — thus acted."

Nothing can be more interesting or practically important in its way than to follow out those great dispensational titles of God. These titles are always used in strict moral consistency with the circumstances under which they are disclosed; but there is, in the name "I AM," a height, a depth, a length, a breadth, which truly pass beyond the utmost stretch of human conception.

"When God would teach mankind His name,
He calls Himself the great "I AM,"
And leaves a blank — believers may
Supply those things for which they pray."

And, be it observed, it is only in connection with His own people that He takes this name. He did not address Pharaoh in this name. When speaking to him, He calls Himself by that commanding and majestic title, "The Lord God of the Hebrews;" i.e., God, in connection with the very people whom he was seeking to crush. This ought to have been sufficient to show Pharaoh his awful position with respect to God. "I AM" would have conveyed no intelligible sound to an uncircumcised ear — no divine reality to an unbelieving heart. When God manifest in the flesh declared to the unbelieving Jews of His day those words, "before Abraham was, *I am*," they took up stones to cast at Him. It is only the true believer who can feel, in any measure, the power, or enjoy the sweetness of that ineffable name, "I AM." Such an one can rejoice to hear from the lips of the blessed Lord Jesus such declarations as these: — "*I am* that bread of life," "*I am* the light of the world," "*I am* the good shepherd," "*I am* the resurrection and the life," "*I am* the way, the truth, and the life," "*I am* the true vine," "*I am* alpha and Omega," "*I am* the bright and morning star." In a word, he can take every name

of divine excellence and beauty, and, having placed it after "I AM," find JESUS therein, and admire, adore, and worship.

Thus, there is a sweetness, as well as a comprehensiveness, in the name "I AM," which is beyond all power of expression. Each believer can find therein that which exactly suits his own spiritual need, whatever it be. There is not a single winding in all the Christian's wilderness journey, not a single phase of his soul's experience, not a single point in his condition which is not divinely met by this title, for the simplest of all reasons, that whatever he wants, he has but to place it, by faith, over against "I AM" and find it all in Jesus. To the believer, therefore, however feeble and faltering, there is unmingled blessedness in this name.

But, although it was to the elect of God that Moses was commanded to say, "I AM hath sent me unto you," yet is there deep solemnity and reality in that name, when looked at with reference to the unbeliever. If one who is yet in his sins contemplates, for a moment, this amazing title, he cannot, surely, avoid asking himself the question, "How do I stand as to this Being who calls Himself, 'I AM THAT I AM.' If, indeed, it be true that HE Is, then what *is* He *to me*? What am *I* to write over against this solemn name, "I AM" I shall not rob this question of its characteristic weight and power by any words of my own; but I pray that God the Holy Ghost may make it searching to the conscience of any reader who really needs to be searched thereby.

I cannot close this section without calling the attention of the Christian reader to the deeply-interesting declaration contained in the 15th verse: "And God said, moreover, unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: *this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations.*" This statement contains a very important truth — a truth which many professing Christians seem to forget, namely, that God's relationship with Israel is an eternal one. He is just as much Israel's God now, as when He visited them in the land of Egypt. Moreover, He is just as Positively dealing with them now as then, only in a different way. His word is clear and emphatic: "This is my name for ever." He does not say, "This is my name for a time,

so long as they continue what they ought to be." No; "this is my name *for ever*, and this is my memorial unto *all generations*." Let my reader ponder this. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." (Rom. 11: 2) They are His people still, whether obedient or disobedient, united together, or scattered abroad; manifested to the nations, or hidden from their view. They are His people, and He is their God. Exodus 3: 15 is unanswerable. The professing church has no warrant whatever, for ignoring a relationship which God says is to endure "for ever." Let us beware how we tamper with this weighty word, "for ever." If we say it does not mean for ever, when applied to Israel, what proof have we that it means for ever when applied to us? God means what He says; and He will, ere long, make manifest to all the nations of the earth, that His connection with Israel is one which shall outlive all the revolutions of time. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." When He said, "this is my name for ever," He spoke absolutely. "I AM" declared Himself to be Israel's God for ever; and all the Gentiles shall be made to understand and bow to this; and to know, moreover, that all God's providential dealings with them, and all their destinies, are connected, in some way or other, with that favoured and honoured, though now judged and scattered, people. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people. Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." (Deut. 32: 8, 9)

Has this ceased to be true? Has Jehovah given up His "portion," and surrendered "the lot of His inheritance?" Does His eye of tender love no longer rest on Israel's scattered tribes, long lost to man's vision are the walls of Jerusalem no longer before Him! or has her dust ceased to be precious in His sight? To reply to these inquiries would be to quote a large portion of the Old Testament, and not a little of the New but this would not be the place to enter elaborately upon such a subject. I would only say, in closing this section, let not Christendom "be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness *in part* is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so *all Israel shall be saved*." (Rom. 11: 25, 26)

Exodus 4

We are still called to linger at the foot of Mount Horeb, at "the backside of the desert;" and, truly, the air of this place is most healthful for the spiritual constitution. Man's unbelief and God's boundless grace are here made manifest in a striking way.

"And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." How hard it is to overcome the unbelief of the human heart! How difficult man ever finds it to trust God! How slow he is to venture forth upon the naked promise of Jehovah. Anything, for nature, but that. The most slender reed that the human eye can *see* is counted more substantial, by far, as a basis for nature's confidence, than the unseen "Rock of ages." Nature will rush, with avidity, to any creature stream or broken cistern, rather than abide by the unseen "Fountain of living waters.

"We might suppose that Moses had seen and heard enough to set his fears entirely aside. The consuming fire in the unconsumed bush, the condescending grace, the precious, endearing, and comprehensive titles, the divine commission, the assurance of the divine presence, — all these things might have quelled every anxious thought, and imparted a settled assurance to the heart. Still, however, Moses raises questions, and still God answers them; and, as we have remarked, each successive question brings out fresh grace. "And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod." The Lord would just take him as he was, and use what he had in his hand. The rod with which he had tended Jethro's sheep was about to be used to deliver the Israel of God, to chastise the land of Egypt, to make a way through the deep, for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over, and to bring forth water from the flinty rock to refresh Israel's thirsty hosts in the desert. God takes up the weakest instruments to accomplish His mightiest ends. "A rod," "a ram's horn," "a cake of barley meal," "an earthen pitcher," "a shepherds sling," anything, in short, when used of God, will do the appointed work. Men imagine that splendid ends can only be reached by splendid means; but such is not God's way. He can use a

crawling worm as well as a scorching sun, a gourd as well as a vehement east wind. (See Jonah.)

But Moses had to learn a deep lesson, both as to the rod and the hand that was to use it. and the people had to be convinced. Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee." This is a deeply significant sign. The rod became a serpent, so that Moses fled from it; but, being commissioned by Jehovah, he took the serpent by the tail, and it became a rod. Nothing could more aptly express the idea of Satan's power being turned against himself. This is largely exemplified in the ways of God. Moses himself was a striking example. The serpent is entirely under the hand of Christ; and when he has reached the highest point in his mad career, he shall be hurled into the lake of fire, there to reap the fruits of his work throughout eternity's countless ages. "That old serpent, the accuser, and the adversary," shall be eternally crushed beneath the rod of God's Anointed.

"Then the end — beneath His rod,

Man's last enemy shall fall;

Hallelujah! Christ in God,

God in Christ, is all in all."

"And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom; and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh." The leprous hand and the cleansing thereof present to us the moral effect of sin, as also the way in which sin has been met in the perfect work of Christ. The clean hand, placed in the bosom, becomes leprous; and the leprous hand placed there becomes

clean. Leprosy is the well-known type of sin; and sin came in by the first man and was put away by the second. "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15: 21) Man brought in ruin, man brought in redemption; man brought in guilt, man brought in pardon; man brought in sin, man brought in righteousness; man filled the scene with death, man abolished death and filled the scene with life, righteousness, and glory. Thus, not only shall the serpent himself be eternally defeated and confounded, but every trace of his abominable work shall be eradicated and wiped away by the atoning sacrifice of Him who "was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil."

"And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land." This was a solemn and most expressive figure of the consequence of refusing to bow to the divine testimony. This sign was only to be wrought in the event of their refusing the other two. It was, first, to be a sign to Israel, and afterwards a plague upon Egypt. (Comp. Ex. 7: 17)

All this, however, fails to satisfy the heart of Moses. "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." Terrible backwardness! Nought save Jehovah's infinite patience could have endured it. Surely when God Himself had said, "I will be with thee," it was an infallible security. in reference to everything which could possibly be needed. If an eloquent tongue were necessary, what had Moses to do but to set it over against "I AM?" Eloquence, wisdom, might, energy, everything was contained in that exhaustless treasury. "And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not *I the Lord?* Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Profound, adorable, matchless grace! worthy of God! There is none like unto the Lord our God, whose patient grace surmounts all our difficulties, and proves itself amply sufficient for our manifold need and weakness. "I THE LORD"

Ought to silence for ever the reasonings of our carnal hearts. But, alas! these reasonings are hard to be put down. Again and again they rise to the surface, to the disturbance of our peace, and the dishonour of that blessed One, who sets Himself before our souls, in all His own essential fullness, to be used according to our need.

It is well to bear in mind that when we have the Lord with us, our very deficiencies and infirmities become an occasion for the display of His all-sufficient grace and perfect patience. Had Moses remembered this, his want of eloquence need not have troubled him. The Apostle Paul learnt to say, "most gladly, therefore, *will I rather glory* in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore *I take pleasure* in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12: 9, 10) This is, assuredly, the utterance of one who had reached an advanced form in the school of Christ. It is the experience of one who would not have been much troubled because of not possessing an eloquent tongue, inasmuch as he had found an answer to every description of need in the precious grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of this truth ought to have delivered Moses from his diffidence and inordinate timidity. When the Lord had so graciously assured him that He would be with his mouth, it should have set his mind at rest as to the question of eloquence. The Maker of man's mouth could fill that mouth with the most commanding eloquence, if such were needed. This, in the judgement of faith, is most simple; but, alas! the poor doubting heart would place far more confidence in an eloquent tongue than in the One who created it. This would seem most unaccountable, did we not know the materials of which the natural heart is composed. That heart cannot trust God; and hence it is that even the people of God, when they suffer themselves to be, in any measure, governed by nature; exhibit such a humiliating lack of confidence in the living God. Thus, in the scene before us, we find Moses still demurring. "And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." This was, in reality, casting from him the high honour of being Jehovah's sole messenger to Egypt and to Israel.

It were needless to say that divinely-wrought humility is an inestimable grace. To "be clothed with humility" is a divine precept; and humility is, unquestionably, the most becoming dress in which a worthless sinner can appear. But, it cannot be called humility to refuse to take the place which God assigns, or to tread the path which His hand marks out for us. That it was not true humility in Moses is obvious from the fact that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against him." So far from its being humility, it had actually passed the limit of mere weakness. So long as it wore the aspect of an excessive timidity, however reprehensible, God's boundless grace bore with it, and met it with renewed assurances; but when it assumed the character of unbelief and slowness of heart, it drew down Jehovah's just displeasure; and Moses, instead of being the sole, is made a joint, instrument in the work of testimony and deliverance.

Nothing is more dishonouring to God or more dangerous for us than a mock humility. When we refuse to occupy a position which the grace of God assigns us, because of our not possessing certain virtues and qualifications, this is not humility, inasmuch as if we could but satisfy our own consciences in reference to such virtues and qualifications, We should then deem ourselves entitled to assume the position. If, for instance, Moses had possessed such a measure of eloquence as he deemed needful, we may suppose he would have been ready to go. Now the question is, how much eloquence would he have needed, to furnish him for his mission? The answer is, without God no amount of human eloquence would have availed; but, with God, the merest stammerer would have proved an efficient minister.

This is a real practical truth. Unbelief is not humility, but thorough pride. It refuses to believe God because it does not find, in *self*, a reason for believing. This is the very height of presumption. If, when God speaks, I refuse to believe, on the ground of something in myself, I make Him a liar. (1 John 5: 10) When God declares His love, and I refuse to believe because I do not deem myself a sufficiently worthy object, I make Him a liar and exhibit the inherent pride of my heart. The bare supposition that I could ever be worthy of ought save the lowest pit of hell, can only be regarded as

the most profound ignorance of my own condition and of God's requirements. And the refusal to take the place which the redeeming love of God assigns me, on the ground of the finished atonement of Christ, is to make God a liar, and cast gross dishonour upon the sacrifice of the cross. God's love flows forth spontaneously. It is not drawn forth by my deserts, but by my misery. Nor is it a question as to the place which I deserve, but which Christ deserves. Christ took the sinner's place, on the cross, that the sinner might take His place in the glory. Christ got what the sinner deserved, that the sinner might get what Christ deserves. Thus, *self* is totally set aside, and this is true humility. No one can be truly humble until he has reached heaven's side of the cross; but there he finds divine life, divine righteousness, and divine favour. He is done with himself for ever, as regards any expectation of goodness or righteousness, and he feeds upon the princely wealth of another. He is morally prepared to join in that cry which shall echo through the spacious vault of heaven, throughout the everlasting ages, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." (Ps. 115: 1)

It would ill become us to dwell upon the mistakes or infirmities of so honoured a Servant as Moses, of whom we read that he "was verily faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after." (Heb. 3: 5) But, though we should not dwell upon them, in a spirit of self-complacency, as if we would have acted differently, in his circumstances, we should, nevertheless, learn from such things those holy and seasonable lessons which they are manifestly designed to teach. We should learn to judge ourselves and to place more implicit confidence in God — to set self aside, that He might act in us, through us, and for us. This is the true secret of power.

We have remarked that Moses forfeited the dignity of being Jehovah's sole instrument in that glorious work which He was about to accomplish. But this was not all. "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses; and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well: and, also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And *thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth:* and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you

what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." (Ex. 4: 14-17) This passage contains a mine of most precious practical instruction. We have noted the timidity and hesitation of Moses, notwithstanding the varied promises and assurances with which divine grace had furnished him. And, now, although there was nothing gained in the way of real power, although there was no more virtue or efficacy in one mouth than in another, although it was Moses after all who was to speak unto Aaron; yet was Moses quite ready to go when assured of the presence and co-operation of a poor feeble mortal like himself; whereas he could not go when assured, again and again, that Jehovah would be with him.

Oh! my reader, does not all this hold up before us a faithful mirror in which you and I can see our hearts reflected? Truly it does. We are more ready to trust anything than the living God. We move along, with bold decision, when we possess the countenance and support of a poor frail mortal like ourselves; but we falter, hesitate, and demur, when we have the light of the Master's countenance to cheer us, and the strength of His omnipotent arm to support us. This should humble us deeply before the Lord, and lead us to seek a fuller acquaintance with Him, so that we might trust Him with a more unmixed confidence, and walk on with a firmer step, as having Him *alone* for our resource and portion.

No doubt, the fellowship of a brother is most valuable — "Two are better than one" — whether in labour, rest, or conflict. The Lord Jesus, in sending forth His disciples, "sent them two by two," — for unity is ever better than isolation — still, if our personal acquaintance with God, and our experience of His presence, be not such as to enable us, if needful, to walk alone, we shall find the presence of a brother of very little use. It is not a little remarkable, that Aaron, whose companionship seemed to satisfy Moses, was the man who afterwards made the golden calf. (Ex. 32: 21) Thus it frequently happens, that the very person whose presence we deem essential to our progress and success, afterwards proves a source of deepest sorrow to our hearts. May we ever remember this!

However, Moses, at length, consents to go; but ere he is fully equipped for his work, he must pass through another deep exercise; yea, he must have the sentence of death inscribed by the hand of God upon his very nature. He had learnt deep lessons at "the backside of the desert;" he is called to learn something deeper still, "by the way in the inn." It is no light matter to be the Lord's servant. No ordinary education will qualify a man for such a position. Nature must be put in the place of death and kept there. " We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. (2 Cor. 1: 9) Every successful servant will need to know something of this. Moses was called to enter into it, in his own experience, ere he was morally qualified. He was about to sound in the ears of Pharaoh the following deeply-solemn message, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." Such was to be his message to Pharaoh; a message of death, a message of judgement; and, at the same time, his message to Israel was a message of life and salvation. But, be it remembered, that the man who will speak, on God's behalf, of death and judgement, life and salvation, must, ere he does so, enter into the practical power of these things in his own soul. Thus it was with Moses. We have seen him, at the very outset, in the place of death, typically; but this was a different thing from entering into the experience of death in his own person. Hence we read, "And it came to pass, by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision." This passage lets us into a deep secret, in the personal and domestic history of Moses. It is very evident that Zipporah's heart had, up to this point, shrunk from the application of *the knife* to that around which the affections of nature were entwined. She had avoided that mark which had to be set in the flesh of every member of the Israel of God. She was not aware that her relationship with Moses was one involving death to nature. She recoiled from the cross. This was natural. But Moses had yielded to her in the matter; and this explains to us the mysterious scene "in the inn." If Zipporah refuses to circumcise her *son*, Jehovah will lay His

hand upon her *husband*; and if Moses spares the feelings of his wife, Jehovah will "seek to kill him." The sentence of death must be written on nature; and if we seek to avoid it in one way, we shall have to encounter it in another.

It has been already remarked, that Zipporah furnishes an instructive and interesting type of the Church. She was united to Moses, during the period of his rejection; and from the passage just quoted, we learn that the Church is called to know Christ, as the One related to her "by blood." It is her privilege to drink of his cup, and be baptised with His baptism. Being crucified with Him, she is to be conformed to His death; to mortify her members which are on the earth; to take up the cross daily, and follow Him. Her relationship with Christ is founded upon blood, and the manifestation of the power of that relationship will, necessarily, involve death to nature. "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. 2: 10-12)

Such is the doctrine as to the Church's place with Christ — a doctrine replete with the richest privileges for the Church, and each member thereof. Everything, in short, is involved: the perfect remission of sin, divine righteousness, complete acceptance, everlasting security, full fellowship with Christ in all His glory. "Ye are complete in him." This, surely, comprehends everything. What could be added to one who is "complete" Could "philosophy, "the tradition of men," "the rudiments of the world," "meats, drinks, holy days, new moons," "Sabbaths" "Touch not" this, "taste not that, "handle not" the other, "the commandments and doctrines of men," "days and months, and times, and years," could any of these things, or all of them put together, add a single jot or tittle to one whom God has pronounced "complete?" We might just as well enquire, if man could have gone forth upon the fair creation of God, at the close of the six days' work, to give the finishing touch to that which God had pronounced "very good?"

Nor is this completeness to be, by any means, viewed as a matter of attainment, some point which we have not yet reached, but after which we must: diligently strive, and of the possession of which we cannot be sure until we lie upon a bed of death, or stand before a throne of judgement. It is the portion of the feeblest, the most inexperienced, the most unlettered child of God. The very weakest saint is included in the apostolic "ye." All the people of God "are complete in Christ." The apostle does not say, "ye *will* be," "ye *may* be," "*hope* that ye may be," "*pray* that ye may be:" no; he, by the Holy Ghost, states, in the most absolute and unqualified manner, that "ye *are* complete." This is the true Christian starting-post: and for man to make a goal of what God makes a starting-post, is to upset everything.

But, then, some will say, "have we no sin, no failure, no imperfection?" Assuredly we have. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1: 8) We have sin in us, but no sin on us. Moreover, our standing is not in self, but in Christ. It is "in him" we "are complete." God says the believer in Christ, with Christ, and as Christ. This is his changeless condition, his everlasting standing. "The body of the sins of the flesh" is "put off by the circumcision of Christ." The believer is not in the flesh, though the flesh is in him. He is united to Christ in the power of a new and an endless life, and that life is inseparably connected with divine righteousness in which the believer stands before God. The Lord Jesus has put away everything that was against the believer, and He has brought him nigh to God, in the self-same favour as that which He Himself enjoys. In a word, Christ is his righteousness. This settles every question, answers every objection, silences every doubt. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one." (Heb. 2: 11)

The foregoing line of truth has flowed out of the deeply-interesting type presented to us in the relationship between Moses and Zipporah. We must, now, hasten to close this section, and take our leave, for the present, of "the backside of the desert," though not of its deep lessons and holy impressions, so essential to every servant of Christ, and every messenger of the living God. All who would serve effectually, either in the important work of

evangelization, or in the varied ministries of the house of God — which is the Church — will need to imbibe the precious instructions which Moses received at the foot of Mount Horeb, and "by the way in the inn."

Were these things properly attended to, we should not have so many running unspent — so many rushing into spheres of ministry for which they were never designed. Let each one who stands up to preach, or teach, or exhort, or serve in any way, seriously enquire if, indeed, he be fitted, and taught, and sent of God. If not, his work will neither be owned of God nor blessed to men, and the sooner he ceases, the better for himself and for those upon whom he has been imposing the heavy burden of hearkening to him. Neither a humanly-appointed, nor a self-appointed ministry, will ever suit within the hallowed precincts of the Church of God. All must be divinely gifted, divinely taught, and divinely sent.

"And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him." This was a fair and beautiful scene — a scene of sweet brotherly love and union — a scene which stands in marked contrast with many of those scenes which were afterwards enacted in the wilderness-career of these two men. Forty years of wilderness life are sure to make great changes in men and things. Yet it is sweet to dwell upon those early days of one's Christian course, before the stern realities of desert life had, in any measure, checked the gush of warm and generous affections — before deceit, and corruption, and hypocrisy had well-nigh dried up the springs of the heart's confidence, and placed the whole moral being beneath the chilling influences of a suspicious disposition.

That such results have been produced, in many cases, by years of experience, is, alas! too true. Happy is he who, though his eyes have been opened to see nature in a clearer light than that which this world supplies, can, nevertheless, serve his generation by the energy of that grace which flows forth from the bosom of God. Who ever knew the depths and windings of the human heart as Jesus knew them? "He knew *all*, and needed not that any should testify of man:

for he knew what was in man." (John 2: 24, 25) So well did He know man that He could not commit Himself unto him. He could not accredit man's professions, or endorse his pretensions. And yet, who so gracious as He? Who so loving, so tender, so compassionate, so sympathising? With a heart that understood all, He could feel for all. He did not suffer His perfect knowledge of human worthlessness to keep Him aloof from human need. "He went about doing good." Why? Was it because He imagined that all those who flocked around Him were real? No; but because God was with him." (Acts 10: 38) This is our example. Let us follow it, though, in doing so, we shall have to trample on *self* and all its interests, at every step of the way.

Who would desire that wisdom, that knowledge of nature, that experience, which only lead men to ensconce themselves within the enclosures of a hard-hearted selfishness, from which they look forth with an eye of dark suspicion upon everybody? Surely such a result could never follow from ought of a heavenly or excellent nature. God gives wisdom; but it is not a wisdom which locks the heart against all the appeals of human need and misery. He gives a knowledge of nature; but it is not a knowledge which causes us to grasp with a selfish eagerness that which we, falsely, call "our own." He gives experience; but it is not an experience which results in suspecting everybody except myself. If I am walking in the footprints of Jesus, if I am imbibing, and therefore manifesting, His excellent spirit, if, in short, I can say, "to me to live is Christ;" then, would I walk through the world, with a knowledge of what the world is; while I come in contact with man, with a knowledge of what I am to expect from him; I am able, through grace, to manifest Christ in the midst of it all. The springs which move me, and the objects which animate me, are all above, where He is, who if "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." (Heb. 13: 8) It was this which sustained the heart of that beloved and honoured servant, whose history, even so far, has furnished us with such deep and solid instruction. It was this which carried him through the trying and varied scenes of his wilderness course. And we may safely assert that, at the close of all, notwithstanding the trial and exercise of forty years, Moses could embrace his brother, when he stood on Mount Hor, with the same warmth as he had when first he met him,

"in the mount of God." True, the two occasions were very different. At "the mount of God" they met, and embraced, and started together on their divinely-appointed mission. Upon "Mount Hor" they met by the commandment of Jehovah, in order that Moses might strip his brother of his priestly robes, and see him gathered to his fathers, because of an error in which he himself had participated. (How solemn! How touching!) Circumstances vary: men may turn away from one; but with God "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1: 17)

"And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel; and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." (Ver. 29-31) When God works, every barrier must give way. Moses had said, "the people will not believe me." But the question was not, as to whether they would believe him, but whether they would believe God. When a man is enabled to view himself simply as the messenger of God, he may feel quite at ease as to the reception of his message. It does not detract, in the smallest degree, from his tender and affectionate solicitude, in reference to those whom he addresses. Quite the contrary; but it preserves him from that inordinate anxiety of spirit which can only tend to unfit him for calm, elevated, steady testimony. The messenger of God should ever remember whose message he bears. When Zacharias said to the angel, "Whereby shall I know this?" was the latter perturbed by the question? Not in the least. His calm, dignified reply was, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee: these glad tidings." (Luke 1: 18, 19) The angel rises before the doubting mortal, with a keen and exquisite sense of the dignity of his message. It is as if he would say, "How can you doubt, when a messenger has actually been dispatched from the very Presence-chamber of the Majesty of heaven?" Thus should every messenger of God, in his measure, go forth, and, in this spirit, deliver his message.

Exodus 5 - 6

The effect of the first appeal to Pharaoh seemed ought but encouraging. The thought of losing Israel made him clutch them with greater eagerness and watch them with greater vigilance. Whenever Satan's power becomes narrowed to a point, his rage increases. Thus it is here. The furnace is about to be quenched by the hand of redeeming love; but, ere it is, it blazes forth with greater fierceness and intensity. The devil does not like to let go any one whom he has had in his terrible grasp. He is "a strong man armed," and while he "keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." But, blessed be God, there is "a stronger than he," who has taken from him "his armour wherein he trusted," and divided the spoils among the favoured objects of His everlasting love.

"And afterward, Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." (Ex. 5: 3) Such was Jehovah's message to Pharaoh. He claimed full deliverance for the people, on the ground of their being His; and, in order that they might hold a feast to Him in the wilderness. Nothing can ever satisfy God in reference to His elect, but their entire emancipation from the yoke of bondage. "Loose him, and let him go" is, really, the grand motto in God's gracious dealings with those who, though held in bondage by Satan, are, nevertheless, the objects of His eternal love.

When we contemplate Israel amid the brick-kilns of Egypt, we behold a graphic figure of the condition of every child of Adam by nature. There they were, crushed beneath the enemy's galling yoke, and having no power to deliver themselves. The mere mention of the word liberty only caused the oppressor to bind his captives with a stronger fetter, and to lade them with a still more grievous burden. It was absolutely necessary that deliverance should come from without. But from whence has it to come? Where were the resources to pay their ransom? or where was the power to break their chains? And, even were there both the one and the other, where was the *will*? Who would take the trouble of delivering them? Alas! there was no hope, either within or around. They had only to look up, their refuge was in God. He had both the power and the will. He could

accomplish a redemption both by price and by power. In Jehovah, and in Him alone, was there salvation for ruined and oppressed Israel.

Thus is it in every case. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12) The sinner is in the hands of one who rules him with despotic power. He is "sold under sin" "led captive by Satan at his will" — fast bound in the fetters of lust, passion, and temper, "without strength" — "without hope" — "without God." Such is the sinner's condition. How, then, can he help himself? What can he do? He is the slave of another, and everything he does is done in the capacity of a slave. His thoughts, his words, his acts, are the thoughts, words, and acts of a slave. Yea, though he should weep and sigh for emancipation, his very tears and sighs are the melancholy proofs of his slavery. He may struggle for freedom; but his very struggle, though it evinces a desire for liberty, is the positive declaration of his bondage.

Nor is it merely a question of the sinner's condition; his very nature is radically corrupt — wholly under the power of Satan. Hence, he not only needs to be introduced into a new condition, but also to be endowed with a new nature. The nature and the condition go together. If it were possible for the sinner to better his condition, what would it avail so long as his nature was irrecoverably bad? A nobleman might take a beggar off the streets and adopt him; he might endow him with a noble's wealth and set him in a noble's position; but he could not impart to him nobility of nature; and thus the nature of a beggarman would never be at home in the condition of a nobleman. There must be a nature to suit the condition; and there must be a condition to suit the capacity, the desires, the affections, and the tendencies of the nature.

Now, in the gospel of the grace of God, we are taught that the believer is introduced into an entirely new condition; that he is no longer viewed as in his former state of guilt and condemnation, but as in a state of perfect and everlasting justification; that the condition in which God now sees him is not only one of full pardon; but it is such that infinite holiness cannot find so much as a single stain. He has been taken out of his former condition of guilt, and

placed absolutely and eternally in a new condition of unspotted righteousness. It is not, by any means, that his old condition is improved. This was utterly impossible. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight." "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Nothing can be more opposed to the fundamental truth of the gospel than the theory of a gradual improvement in the sinner's condition. He is born in a certain condition, and until he is "born again" he cannot be in any other. We may try to improve. He may resolve to be better for the future turn over a new leaf" — to live a different sort of life; but, all the while, he has not moved a single hair's breadth out of his real condition as a sinner. He may become "religious" as it is called, he may try to pray, he may diligently attend to ordinances, and exhibit an appearance of moral reform; but none of these things can, in the smallest degree, affect his positive condition before God.

The case is precisely similar as to the question of nature. How can a man alter his nature? He may make it undergo a process, he may try to subdue it, to place it under discipline; but it is nature still. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." There must be a new nature as well as a new condition. And how is this to be had? By believing God's testimony concerning His Son. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to *them that believe on his Name*: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1: 12, 13) Here we learn that those who believe on the name of the only-begotten Son of God, have the right or privilege of being sons of God. They are made partakers of a new nature. They have gotten eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." (John 3: 36) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that *heareth* my word, and *believeth* on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. " (John 5: 24) "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17.3) "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "He that hath the Son *hath* life." (1 John 5: 11, 12)

Such is the plain doctrine of the Word in reference to the momentous questions of condition and nature. But on what is all this founded? How is the believer introduced into a condition of divine righteousness and made partaker of the divine nature? It all rests on the great truth that "JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN." That Blessed One left the bosom of eternal love — the throne of glory — the mansions of unfading light came down into this world of guilt and woe — took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh; and, having perfectly exhibited and perfectly glorified God, in all the movements of His blessed life here below, He died upon the cross, under the full weight of His people's transgressions. By so doing, He divinely met all that was, or could be, against us. He magnified the law and made it honourable; and, having done so, He became a curse by hanging on the tree. Every claim was met, every enemy silenced, every obstacle removed. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Infinite justice was satisfied, and infinite love can flow, in all its soothing and refreshing virtues, into the broken heart of the sinner; while, at the same time, the cleansing and atoning stream that flowed from the pierced side of a crucified Christ, perfectly meets all the cravings of a guilty and convicted conscience. The Lord Jesus, on the cross, stood in our place. He was our representative. He died, "the just for the unjust." "He was made sin for us." (2 Cor. 5: 21; 2 Peter 3: 18) He died the sinner's death, was buried, and rose again, having accomplished all. Hence, there is absolutely nothing against the believer. He is linked with Christ and stands in the same condition of righteousness. "As he is so are we in this world." (1 John 4: 17)

This gives settled peace to the conscience. If I am no longer in a condition of guilt, but in a condition of justification; if God only sees me in Christ and as Christ, then, clearly, my portion is perfect peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5: 1) The blood of the Lamb has cancelled all the believer's guilt, blotted out his heavy debt, and given him a perfectly blank page, in the presence of that holiness which "cannot look upon sin."

But the believer has not merely found peace with God; he is made a child of God, so that he can taste the sweetness of

communion with the Father and the Son, through the power of the Holy Ghost. The cross is to be viewed in two ways: first, as satisfying God's claims; secondly, as expressing God's affections. If I look at my sins in connection with the claims of God as a Judge, I find, in the cross, a perfect settlement of those claims. God, as a Judge, has been divinely satisfied — yea, glorified, in the cross. But there is more than this. God had affections as well as claims; and, in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, all those affections are sweetly and touchingly told out into the sinner's ear; while, at the same time, he is made the partaker of a new nature which is capable of enjoying those affections and of having fellowship with the heart from which they flow. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3: 18) Thus we are not only brought into a condition, but unto a *Person*, even God Himself, and we are endowed with a *nature* which can delight in Him. *We also joy in God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." (Rom. 5: 11)

What force and beauty, therefore, can we see in those emancipating words, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Luke 4: 18) The glad tidings of the gospel announce full deliverance from every yoke of bondage. Peace and liberty are the boons which that gospel bestows on all who believe it, as God has declared it.

And mark, it is "that they may hold a feast to me." If they were to get done with Pharaoh, it was that they might begin with God. This was a great change. Instead of toiling under Pharaoh's taskmasters, they were to feast in company with Jehovah; and, although they were to pass from Egypt into the wilderness, still the divine presence was to accompany them; and if the wilderness was rough and dreary, it was the way to the land of Canaan. The divine purpose was, that they should hold a feast unto the Lord, in the wilderness; and, in order to do this, they should be "*let go*" out of Egypt.

However, Pharaoh was in no wise disposed to yield obedience to the divine mandate. "Who is the Lord," said he, "that I should obey his voice to let Israel go. I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. 5: 2) Pharaoh most truly expressed, in these words, his real condition. His condition was one of ignorance and consequent disobedience. Both go together. If God be not known, He cannot be obeyed; for obedience is ever founded upon knowledge. When the soul is blessed with the knowledge of God, it finds this knowledge to be life, (John 17: 3) and life is power; and when I get power I can act, It is obvious that one cannot act without life; and therefore it is most unintelligent to set people upon doing certain things, in order to get that by which alone they can do anything.

But Pharaoh was as ignorant of himself as he was of the Lord. He did not know that he was a poor, vile worm of the earth, and that he had been raised up for the express purpose of making known the glory of the very One whom he said he knew not. (Ex. 9: 16; Rom. 9: 17) "And they said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword, And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their work? Get you unto your burdens let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words." (Ver. 3-9)

What a development of the secret springs of the human heart we have here! What complete incompetency to enter into the things of God! All the divine titles and the divine revelations were, in Pharaoh's estimation, "vain words." What did he know or care about "three days journey into the wilderness," or "a feast to Jehovah?" How could he understand the need of such a journey, or the nature or object of such a feast? Impossible. He could understand burden-bearing and brick-making; these things had an air of reality about them, in his judgement; but as to ought of God, His service, or His worship, he could only regard it in the light of an idle chimera, devised by those who only wanted an excuse to make their escape from the stern realities of actual life.

Thus has it, too often, been with the wise and great of this world. They have ever been the most forward to write folly and vanity upon the divine testimonies. Hearken, for example, to the estimate which the "most noble Feasts" formed of the grand question at issue between Paul and the Jews: "they had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of *one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.*" (Acts 25: 19) Alas! how little he knew what he was saying! How little he knew what was involved in the question, as to whether "Jesus" was "dead" or "alive!" He thought not of the solemn bearing of that momentous question upon himself and his friends, Agrippa and Bernice; but that did not alter the matter; he and they know somewhat more about it now, though in their passing moment of earthly glory they regarded it as a superstitious question, wholly beneath the notice of men of common sense, and only fit to occupy the disordered brain of visionary enthusiasts. Yes; the stupendous question which fixes the destiny of every child of Adam — on which is founded the present and everlasting condition of the Church and the world which stands connected with all the divine counsels — this question was, in the judgement of Feasts, a vain superstition.

Thus was it in Pharaoh's case. He knew nothing of "the Lord God of the Hebrews" — the great "I AM," and hence he regarded all that Moses and Aaron had said to him, in reference to doing sacrifice to God, as "vain words." The things of God must ever seem vain, profitless, and unmeaning, to the unsanctified mind of man. His name may be made use of as part of the flippant phraseology of a cold and formal religiousness; but He Himself is not known. His precious name, which, to a believer's heart, has wrapped up in it all that he can possibly need or desire, has no significancy, no power, no virtue for an unbeliever. All, therefore, connected with God, His words, His counsels, His thoughts, His ways, everything, in short, that treats of, or refers to, Him, is regarded as "vain words."

However, the time is rapidly approaching when it will not be thus. The judgement-seat of Christ, the terrors of the world to come, the surges of the lake of fire, will not be "Vain words." Assuredly not; and it should be the great aim of all who, through grace, believe them now to be realities, to press them upon the consciences of

those who, like Pharaoh, regard the making of bricks as the only thing worth thinking about — the only thing that can be called reel and solid.

Alas! that even Christians should so frequently be found living in the region of sight, the region of earth, the region of nature, as to lose the deep, abiding, influential sense of the reality of divine and heavenly things. We want to live more in the region of faith, the region of heaven, the region of the "new creation." Then we should see things as God sees them, think about them as He thinks; and our whole course and character would be more elevated, more disinterested, more thoroughly separated from earth and earthly things.

But Moses' sorest trial did not arise from Pharaoh's judgement about his mission. The true and Wholehearted servant of Christ must ever expect to be looked on, by the men of this world, as a mere visionary enthusiast. The point of view from which they contemplate him is such as to lead us to look for this judgement and none other. The more faithful he is to his heavenly Master, the more he walks in His footsteps, the more conformed he is to His image, the more likely he is to be considered, by the sons of earth, as one "beside himself." This, therefore, should neither disappoint nor discourage him. But then it is a far more painful thing when his service and testimony are misunderstood, unheeded, or rejected by those who are themselves the specific objects thereof. When such is the case, he needs to be much with God, much in the secret of His mind, much in the power of communion, to have his spirit sustained in the abiding reality of his path and service. Under such trying circumstances, if one be not fully persuaded of the divine commission, and conscious of the divine presence, he will be almost sure to break down.

Had not Moses been thus upheld, his heart must have utterly failed him when the augmented pressure of Pharaoh's power elicited from the officers of the children of Israel such desponding and depressing words as these: — "The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our saviour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." This was gloomy enough; and Moses felt it so, for "he

returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came unto Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." The aspect of things had become most discouraging, at the very moment when deliverance seemed at hand; just as, in nature, the darkest hour of the night is often that which immediately precedes the dawn of the morning. Thus will it assuredly be, in Israel's history, in the latter day. The moment of most profound darkness and depressing gloom will precede the bursting of "the Sun of Righteousness" from behind the cloud, with healing in His fingers, to heal eternally, "the hurt of the daughter of His people."

We may well question how far genuine faith, or a mortified will, dictated the "*wherefore?*" and the "*why?*" of Moses, in the above quotation. Still, the Lord does not rebuke a remonstrance drawn forth by the intense pressure of the moment. He most graciously replies, "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land." (Ex. 6: 1) This reply breathes peculiar grace. Instead of reproving the petulance which could presume to call in question the unsearchable ways of the great I AM, that ever gracious One seeks to relieve the harassed spirit of His servant, by unfolding to him what He was about to do. This was worthy of the blessed God — the unupbraiding Giver of every good and every perfect gift. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Ps. 103: 24)

Nor is it merely in His actings that He would cause the heart to find its solace, but in Himself — in His very name and character. This is full, divine, and everlasting blessedness. When the heart can find its sweet relief in God Himself — when it can retreat into the strong tower which His name affords — when it can find, in His character, a perfect answer to all its need, then truly, it is raised far above the region of the creature-it can turn away from earth's fair promises — it can place the proper value on man's lofty pretensions. The heart which is endowed with an experimental knowledge of God can not only look forth upon earth, and say "all is vanity," but it

can also look straight up to Him, and say, "all my springs are in thee."

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant." "JEHOVAH" is the title which He takes as the Deliverer of His people, on the ground of His covenant of pure and sovereign grace He reveals Himself as the great self-existing Source of redeeming love, establishing His counsels, fulfilling His promises, delivering His elect people from every enemy and every evil. It was Israel's privilege ever to abide under the safe covert of that significant title — a title which displays God acting for His own glory, and taking up His oppressed people in order to show forth in them that glory.

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgements. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord." (Ver. 6-8.) All this speaks the purest, freest, richest grace. Jehovah presents Himself to the hearts of His people as the One who was to act in them, *for* them, and *with* them, for the display of His own glory. Ruined and helpless as they were, He had come down to show forth His glory, to exhibit His grace, and to furnish a sample of His power, in their full deliverance. His glory and their salvation were inseparably connected. They were afterwards reminded of all this, as we read in the book of Deuteronomy. "The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord

loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Ex. 7: 7, 8)

Nothing is more calculated to assure and establish the doubting, trembling heart than the knowledge that God has taken us up, *just as we are*, and in the full intelligence of what we are; and, moreover, that He can never make any fresh discovery to cause an alteration in the character and measure of His love. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." (John 13) *Whom* He loves and as He loves, He loves unto the end. This is an unspeakable comfort. God knew all about us — He knew the very worst of us, when He manifested His love to us in the gift of His Son. He knew what we needed, and He provided it. He knew what was due, and He paid it. He knew what was to be wrought, and He wrought it. His own requirements had to be met, and He met them. It is all His own work. Hence, we find Him saying to Israel, as in the above passage, "I will bring you out" — "I will bring you in" — "I will take you to me" — "I will give you the land" — "I am Jehovah." It was all what *He could* do, as founded upon what *He was*. Until this great truth is fully laid hold of, until it enters into the soul, in the power of the Holy Ghost, there cannot be settled peace. The heart can never be happy or the conscience at rest until one knows and believes that all divine requirements have been divinely answered.

The remainder of our section is taken up with a record of "the heads of their fathers' houses," and is very interesting, as showing us Jehovah coming in and numbering those that belonged to Himself, though they were still in the possession of the enemy. Israel was God's people, and He here counts up those on whom He had a sovereign claim. Amazing grace! To find an object in those who were in the midst of all the degradation of Egyptian bondage! This was worthy of God. The One who had made the worlds, who was surrounded by hosts of unfallen angels, ever ready to "do his pleasure," should come down for the purpose of taking up a number of bondslaves with whom He condescended to connect His name. He came down and stood amid the brick-kilns of Egypt, and there

beheld a people groaning beneath the lash of the task-masters, and He uttered those memorable accents, "Let my people go;" and, having so said, He proceeded to count them up, as much as to say, "These are mine; let me see how many I have, that not one may be left behind." "He taketh up the beggar from the dunghill, to set him amongst the princes of his people, and to make him inherit the throne of glory." (1 Sam. 2)

Exodus 7 - 11

These five chapters form one distinct section, the contents of which may be distributed into the three following divisions, namely, the ten judgements from the hand of Jehovah; the resistance of "Jannes and Jambres;" and the four objections of Pharaoh.

The whole land of Egypt was made to tremble beneath the successive strokes of the rod of God. All from the monarch on his throne to the menial at the mill, were made to feel the terrible weight of that rod. "He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines: also, and their fig-trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. He spake, and their locusts came, and the caterpillars, and that without number, and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength. (Ps. 105: 26-36)

Here the inspired Psalmist has given a condensed view of those appalling afflictions which the hardness of Pharaoh's heart brought upon his land and upon his people. This haughty monarch had set himself to resist the sovereign will and course of the Most High God; and, as a just consequence, he was given over to judicial blindness and hardness of heart. "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had spoken unto Moses. And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh: and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have

I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Ex. 9: 12-16)

In contemplating Pharaoh and his actings, the mind is carried forward to the stirring scenes of the Book of Revelation, in which we find the last proud oppressor of the people of God bringing down upon his kingdom and upon himself the seven vials of the wrath of the Almighty. It is God's purpose that Israel shall be pre-eminent in the earth; and, therefore, every one who presumes to stand in the way of that pre-eminence must be set aside. Divine grace must find its object; and every one who would act as a barrier in the way of that grace must be taken out of the way. Whether it be Egypt, Babylon, or "the beast that was, is not, and shall be present," it matters not. Divine power will clear the channel for divine grace to flow, and eternal woe be to all who stand in the way. They shall taste, throughout the everlasting course of ages, the bitter fruit of having exalted themselves against "the Lord God of the Hebrews." He has said to His people, "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper," and His infallible faithfulness will assuredly make good what His infinite grace hath promised.

Thus, in Pharaoh's case, when he persisted in holding, with an iron grasp, the Israel of God, the vials of divine wrath were poured forth upon him; and the land of Egypt was covered, throughout its entire length and breadth, with darkness, disease, and desolation. So will it be, by and by, when the last great oppressor shall emerge from the bottomless pit, armed with Satanic power, to crush beneath his "foot of pride" the favoured objects of Jehovah's choice. His throne shall be overturned, his kingdom devastated by the seven last plagues, and, finally, he himself plunged, not in the Red Sea, but "in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." (Comp. Rev. 17: 8; Rev. 20: 10)

Not one jot or one tittle of what God has promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, shall fail. He will accomplish all. Notwithstanding all that has been said and done to the contrary, God remembers His promises, and He will fulfil them. They are all "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." Dynasties have risen and acted on the stage of this world; thrones have been erected on the apparent ruins of Jerusalem's ancient glory; empires have flourished for a time, and

then fallen to decay; ambitious potentates have contended for the possession of "the land of promise" — all these things have taken place; but Jehovah has said concerning Palestine," the land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine." (Lev. 25: 23) No one, therefore, shall ever finally possess that land but Jehovah Himself, and He will inherit it through the seed of Abraham. One plain passage of scripture is quite sufficient to establish the mind in reference to this or any other subject. The land of Canaan is for the seed of Abraham, and the seed of Abraham for the land of Canaan; nor can any power of earth or hell ever reverse this divine order. The eternal God has pledged His word, and the blood of the everlasting covenant has flowed to ratify that word. Who, then, shall make it void? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but that word shall never pass away." Truly, "there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." (Deut. 33: 46-29)

We shall now consider, in the second place, the opposition of "Jannes and Jambres," the magicians of Egypt. We should not have known the names of these ancient opposers of the truth of God, had they not been recorded by the Holy Ghost, in connection with "the perilous times" of which the Apostle Paul warns his son Timothy. It is important that the Christian reader should clearly understand the real nature of the opposition given to Moses by those magicians, and in order that he may have the subject fully before him, I shall quote the entire passage from St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy. It is one of deep and awful solemnity.

"This know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,

unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all, as theirs also was." (2 Tim. 3: 1-9)

Now, it is peculiarly solemn to mark the nature of this resistance to the truth. The mode in which "Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses" was simply by imitating, so far as they were able, whatever he did. We do not find that they attributed his actings to a false or evil energy, but rather that they sought to neutralise their power upon the conscience, by doing the same things. What Moses did they could do, so that, after all there was no great difference. One was as good as the other. A miracle is a miracle. If Moses wrought miracles to get the people out of Egypt, they could work miracles to keep them in; so where was the difference?

From all this we learn the solemn truth that the most Satanic resistance to God's testimony, in the world, is offered by those who, though they imitate the effects of the truth, have but "the form of godliness," and "deny the power thereof." Persons of this class can do the same things, adopt the same habits and forms, use the same phraseology, profess the same opinions as others. If the true Christian, constrained by the love of Christ, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, visits the sick, circulates the scriptures, distributes tracts, supports the gospel, engages in prayer, sings praise, preaches the gospel, the formalist can do every one of these things; and this, be it observed, is the special character of the resistance offered to the truth "in the last days" — this is the spirit of "Jannes and Jambres." How needful to understand this! How important to remember that, "as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do" those self-loving, world-seeking, pleasure-hunting professors, "resist the truth!" They would not be without "a form of godliness;" but, while adopting "the

form," because it is customary, they hate "the power," because it involves self-denial. "The power" of godliness involves the recognition of God's claims, the implanting of His kingdom in the heart, and the consequent exhibition thereof in the whole life and character; but the formalist knows nothing of this. "The power" of godliness could never comport with any one of those hideous features set forth in the foregoing quotation; but "the form," while it covers them over, leaves them wholly unsubdued; and this the formalist likes. He does not want his lusts subdued, his pleasures interfered with, his passions curbed, his affections governed, his heart purified. He wants just as much religion as will enable him "to make the best of both worlds." He knows nothing of giving up the world that is, because of having; found "the world to come."

In marking the forms of Satan's opposition to the truth of God, we find that his method has ever been, first, to oppose it by open violence; and then, if that did not succeed, to corrupt it by producing a counterfeit. Hence, he first sought to slay Moses, (Ex. 2: 15), and having failed to accomplish his purpose, he sought to imitate his works.

Thus, too, has it been in reference to the truth committed to the Church of God. Satan's early efforts showed themselves in connection with the wrath of the chief priests and elders, the judgement-seat, the prison, and the sword. But, in the passage just quoted from 2 Timothy, we find no reference to any such agency. Often violence has made way for the far more wily and dangerous instrumentality of a powerless form, an empty profession, a human counterfeit. The enemy, instead of appearing with the sword of persecution in his hand, walks about with the cloak of profession on his shoulders. He professes and imitates that which he once opposed and persecuted; and, by so doing, gains most appalling advantages, for the time being. The fearful forms of moral evil which, from age to age, have stained the page of human history, instead of being found only where we might naturally look for them, amid the dens and caves of human darkness, are to be found carefully arranged beneath the drapery of a cold, powerless, uninfluential profession; and this is one of Satan's grand masterpieces.

That man, as a fallen, corrupt creature, should love himself, be covetous, boastful, proud, and the like, is natural; but that he should be all these, beneath the fair covering of "a form of godliness," marks the special energy of Satan in his resistance to the truth in "the last days." That man should stand forth in the bold exhibition of those hideous vices, lusts, and passions, which are the necessary results of departure from the source of infinite holiness and purity, is only what might be expected, for man will be what he is to the end of the chapter. But on the other hand, when we find the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ connected with man's wickedness and deadly evil — when we find holy principles connected with unholy practices — when we find all the characteristics of Gentile corruption, referred to in the first chapter of Romans, associated with "a form of godliness," then, truly, we may say, these are the terrible features of "the last days" — this is the resistance of "Jannes and Jambres."

However, there were only three things in which the magicians of Egypt were able to imitate the servants of the true and living God, namely, in turning their rods into serpents, (Ex. 7: 12) turning the water into blood, (Ex. 7: 29) and bringing up the frogs; (Ex. 8: 7) but, in the fourth, which involved the exhibition of life, in connection with the display of nature's humiliation, they were totally confounded, and obliged to own, "this is the finger of God." (Ex. 8: 16-19) Thus it is also with the latter-day resisters of the truth. All that they do is by the direct energy of Satan, and lies within the range of his power. Moreover, its specific object is to "resist the truth."

The three things which "Jannes and Jambres" were able to accomplish were characterised by Satanic energy, death, and uncleanness; that is to say, the serpents, the blood, and the frogs. Thus it was they "withstood Moses;" and "so do these also resist the truth," and hinder its moral weight and action upon the conscience. There is nothing which so tends to deaden the power of truth as the fact that persons who are not under its influence at all, do the self-same things as those who are. This is Satan's agency just now. He seeks to have all regarded as Christians. He would fain make us believe ourselves surrounded by "a Christian world;" but it is

counterfeit Christianity, which, so far from being a testimony to the truth, is designed by the enemy of the truth, to withstand its purifying and elevating influence.

In short, the servant of Christ and the witness for the truth is surrounded, on all sides, by the spirit of "Jannes and Jambres;" and it is well for him to remember this — to know thoroughly the evil with which he has to grapple — to bear in mind that it is Satan's imitation of God's reality, produced, not by the wand of an openly-wicked magician, but by the actings of false professors, who have "a form of godliness, hut deny the power thereof," who do things apparently right and good, but who have neither the life of Christ in their souls, the love of God in their hearts, nor the power of the word in their consciences.

"But," adds the inspired apostle, "they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifested unto all, as theirs also was." Truly the "folly" of "Jannes and Jambres" was manifest unto all, when they not only failed to imitate the further actings of Moses and Aaron, but actually became involved in the judgements of God. This is a solemn point. The folly of all who are merely possessed of the form will, in like manner, be made manifest. They will not only be quite unable to imitate the full and proper effects of divine life and power, but they will themselves become the subjects of those judgements which will result from the rejection of that truth which they have resisted.

Will any one say that all this has no voice for a day of powerless profession? Assuredly, it has. It should speak to each conscience in living power; it should tell on each heart, in accents of impressive solemnity. It should lead each one to enquire seriously whether he is testifying for the truth, by walking in the power of godliness, or hindering it, and neutralising its action, by having only the form. The effect of the power of godliness will be seen by our" continuing in the things which we have learned." None will continue, save those who are taught of God; those, by the power of the Spirit of God, have drunk in divine principle, at the pure fountain of inspiration.

Blessed be God, there are many such throughout the various sections of the professing Church. There are many, here and there, whose consciences have been bathed in the atoning blood of "the Lamb of God," whose hearts beat high with genuine attachment to His Person, and whose spirits are cheered by "that blessed hope" of seeing Him as He is, and of being eternally conformed to His image. It is encouraging to think of such. It is an unspeakable mercy to have fellowship with those who can give a reason of the hope that is in them, and for the position which they occupy. May the Lord add to their number daily. May the power of godliness spread far and wide in these last days, so that a bright and well-sustained testimony may be raised to the name of Him who is worthy.

The third point in our section yet remains to be considered, namely, Pharaoh's four subtle objections to the full deliverance and complete separation of God's people from the land of Egypt. The first of these we have in Ex. 8: 25. "And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, *Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.*" It is needless to remark here, that whether the magicians withstood, or Pharaoh objected, it was in reality, Satan that stood behind the scenes; and his manifest object, in this proposal of Pharaoh, was to hinder the testimony to the Lord's name — a testimony connected with the thorough separation of His people from Egypt. There could, evidently, be no such testimony had they remained in Egypt, even though they were to sacrifice to Him. They would have taken common ground with the uncircumcised Egyptians, and put Jehovah on a level with the gods of Egypt. In this case an Egyptian could have said to an Israelite, "I see no difference between us; you have your worship and we have ours; it is all alike."

As a matter of course, men think it quite right for every one to have a religion, let it be what it may. Provided we are sincere, and do not interfere with our neighbour's creed, it does not matter what shape our religion may happen to wear. Such are the thoughts of men in reference to what they call religion; but it is very obvious that the glory of the name of Jesus finds no place in all this. The demand for separation is that which the enemy will ever oppose, and which the heart of man cannot understand. The heart may crave religiousness because conscience testifies that all is not right; but it

craves the world as well. It would like to "sacrifice to God in the land;" and Satan's object is gained when people accept of a worldly religion, and refuse to "come out and be separate." (2 Cor. 6) His unvarying purpose, from the beginning, has been to hinder the testimony to God's name on the earth. Such was the dark tendency of the proposal, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." What a complete damper to the testimony, had this proposal been acceded to! God's people in Egypt and God Himself linked with the idols of Egypt! Terrible blasphemy!

Reader, we should deeply ponder this. The effort to induce Israel to worship God in Egypt reveals a far deeper principle than we might, at first sight, imagine. The enemy would rejoice, at any time, by any means, or under any circumstances, to get even the semblance of divine sanction for the world's religion. He has no objection to such religion. He gains his end as effectually by what is termed "the religious world" as by any other agency; and, hence, when he can succeed in getting a true Christian to accredit the religion of the day, he gains a grand point. As a matter of actual fact, one knows that nothing elicits such intense indignation as the divine principle of separation from this present evil world. You may hold the same opinions, preach the same doctrines, do the same work; but if you only attempt, in ever so feeble a manner, to act upon the divine commands, "from such turn away," (2 Tim. 3: 5) and "come out from among them," (2 Cor. 6: 17) you may reckon assuredly upon the most vigorous opposition. Now how is this to be accounted for? Mainly by the fact that Christians, in separation from this world's hollow religiousness, bear a testimony for Christ which they never can bear while connected with it.

There is a very wide difference between human religion and Christ. A poor, benighted Hindu might talk to you of his religion, but he knows nothing of Christ. The apostle does not say, "if there be any consolation in religion;" though, doubtless, the votaries of each kind of religion find what they deem consolation therein. Paul, on the other hand, found his consolation in Christ, having fully proved the worthlessness of religion, and that too, in its fairest and most imposing form. (Comp. Gal. 1: 13, 14; Phil. 3: 4-11)

True, the Spirit of God speaks to us of "pure religion and undefiled;" but the unregenerate man cannot, by any means, participate therein; for how could he possibly take part in ought that is "pure and undefiled?" This religion is from heaven, the source of all that is pure and lovely; it is exclusively before the eye of "God and the Father:" it is for the exercise of the functions of that new name, with which all are endowed who believe on the name of the Son of God. (John 1: 12, 13; James 1: 18; 1 Peter 1: 23; 1 John 5: 1) Finally, it ranges itself under the two comprehensive heads of active benevolence and personal holiness; "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1: 27)

Now if you go through the entire catalogue of the genuine fruits of Christianity, you will find them all classed under these two heads; and it is deeply interesting to observe that, whether we turn to the eighth of Exodus or to the first of James, we find separation from the world put forward as an indispensable quality in the true service of God, Nothing could be acceptable before God — nothing could receive from His hand the stamp of "pure and undefiled," which was polluted by contact with an "evil world." "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6: 17, 18)

There was no meeting-place for Jehovah and His redeemed in Egypt; yes, with them, redemption and separation from Egypt were one and the same thing. God had said, "I am come down to deliver them," and nothing short of this could either satisfy or glorify Him. A salvation which would have left them still in Egypt, could not possibly be God's salvation. Moreover, we must bear in mind that Jehovah's purpose, in the salvation of Israel, as well as in the destruction of Pharaoh, was, that "His name might be declared throughout all the earth;" and what declaration could there be of that name or character, were His people to attempt to worship Him in Egypt? Either none whatever or an utterly false one. Wherefore, it was essentially necessary, in order to the full and faithful declaration of God's character, that His people should be wholly delivered and

completely separated from Egypt, and it is as essentially necessary now, in order to a clear and unequivocal testimony for the Son of God, that all who are really His should be separated from this present world. Such is the will of God; and for this end Christ gave Himself. "Grace unto you, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."(Gal. 1: 3-5)

The Galatians were beginning to accredit a carnal and worldly religion — a religion of ordinances — a religion of "days, and months, and times, and years;" and the apostle commences his epistle by telling them that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for the purpose of delivering His people from that very thing. God's people must be separate, not, by any means, on the ground of their superior personal sanctity, but because they are His people, and in order that they may rightly and intelligently answer His gracious end in taking them into connection with Himself, and attaching His name to them. A people, still amid the defilements and abominations of Egypt, could not have been a witness for the Holy One; nor can any one, now, while mixed up with the defilements of a corrupt worldly religion, possibly be a bright and steady witness for a crucified and risen Christ.

The answer given by Moses to Pharaoh's first objection was a truly memorable one. "And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God; lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us." (Ex. 8: 26, 27) Here is true separation from Egypt — "three days journey." Nothing less than this could satisfy faith. The Israel of God must be separated from the land of death and darkness, in the power of resurrection. The waters of the Red Sea must roll between God's redeemed and Egypt, ere they can properly sacrifice to Jehovah. Had they remained in Egypt, they would have to sacrifice to the Lord the very objects of Egypt's abominable worship.* This would never do. There could be no

tabernacle, no temple, no altar, in Egypt. It had no site, throughout its entire limits, for ought of that kind. In point of fact, as we shall see further on, Israel never presented so much as a single note of praise, until the whole congregation stood, in the full power of an accomplished redemption, on Canaan's side of the Red Sea. Exactly so is it now. The believer must know where the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ have, for ever, set him, ere he can be an intelligent worshipper, an acceptable servant, or an effectual witness.

{*The word "abominations" has reference to that which the Egyptians worshipped.}

It is not a question of being a child of God, and, as such, a saved person. Many of the children of God are very far from knowing the full results, as regards themselves, of the death and resurrection of Christ. They do not apprehend the precious truth, that the death of Christ has made an end of their sins for ever, and that they are the happy partakers of His resurrection life, with which sin can have nothing whatever to do. Christ became a curse for us, not, as some would teach us, by being born under the curse of a broken law, but by hanging on a tree. (Compare attentively Deut. 21: 23; Gal. 3: 13) We were under the curse, because we had not kept the law; but Christ, the perfect Man, having magnified the law and made it honourable, by the very fact of His obeying it perfectly, became a curse for us, by hanging on the tree. Thus, in His life He magnified God's law; and in His death He bore our curse. There is, therefore, now, no guilt, no curse, no wrath, no condemnation for the believer; and, albeit, he must be manifested before the judgement-seat of Christ, he will find that judgement-seat every hit as friendly by and by, as the mercy-seat is now. It will make manifest the truth of his condition, namely, that there is nothing against him; what he is, it is God "that hath wrought him." He is God's workmanship. He was taken up in a state of death and condemnation, and made just what God would have him to be. The Judge Himself has put away all his sins, and is his righteousness, so that the judgement-seat cannot but be friendly to him; yea, it will be the full, public, authoritative declaration to heaven, earth, and hell, that the one who is washed from his sins in the blood of the Lamb, is as clean as God can make

him. (See John 5: 24; Rom. 8: 1; 2 Cor. 5: 5, 10, 11; Eph. 2: 10.) All that had to be done, God Himself has done it. He surely will not condemn His own work. The righteousness that was required, God Himself has provided it. He, surely, will not find any flaw therein. The light of the judgement seat will be bright enough to disperse every mist and cloud which might tend to obscure the matchless glories and eternal virtues which belong to the cross, and to show that the believer is "clean every whit." (John 13: 10; John 15: 3; Eph. 5: 27)

It is because these foundation-truths are not laid hold of in the simplicity of faith that many of the children of God complain of their lack of settled peace — the constant variation in their spiritual condition — the continual ups and downs in their experience. Every doubt in the heart of a Christian is a dishonour done to the word of God and the sacrifice of Christ. It is because he does not, even now, bask in the light which shall shine from the judgement-seat, that he is ever afflicted with a doubt or a fear. And yet those things which so many have to deplore — those fluctuation's and waverings are but trifling consequences, comparatively, inasmuch as they merely affect their experience. The effect produced upon their worship, their service, and their testimony, is far more serious, inasmuch as the Lord's honour is concerned. But, alas ! this latter is but little thought of, generally speaking, simply because personal salvation is the grand object — the aim and end, with the majority of professing Christians. We are prone to look upon everything that affects ourselves as *essential*; whereas, all that merely affects the glory of Christ in and by us is counted *non-essential*.

However, it is well to see with distinctness, that the same truth which gives the soul settled peace, puts it also into the position of intelligent worship, acceptable service, and effectual testimony. In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle sets forth the death and resurrection of Christ as the grand foundation of everything. "Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins

according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (Ver. 1-4) Here is the gospel, in one brief and comprehensive statement. A dead and risen Christ is the ground-work of salvation. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4: 25) To see Jesus, by the eye of faith, nailed to the cross, and seated on the throne, must give solid peace to the conscience and perfect liberty to the heart. We can look into the tomb and see it empty; we can look up to the throne, and see it occupied, and go on our way rejoicing. The Lord Jesus settled everything on the cross on behalf of His people; and the proof of this settlement is that He is now at the right hand of God. A risen Christ is the eternal proof of an accomplished redemption; and if redemption is an accomplished fact, the believer's peace is a settled reality. We did not make peace and never could make it; indeed, any effort on our part to make peace could only tend more fully to manifest us as peace breakers. But Christ, having made peace by the blood of His cross, has taken His scat on high, triumphant over every enemy. By Him God preaches peace. The Lord of the gospel conveys this peace; and the soul that believes the gospel has peace — settled peace before God, for Christ is his peace. (See Acts 10: 36; Rom. 5: 1; Eph. 2: 14; Col. 1: 20.) In this way, God has not only satisfied His own claims, but, in so doing, He has found out a divinely-righteous vent through which His boundless affections may flow down to the guiltiest of Adam's guilty progeny.

Then, as to the practical result of all this. The cross of Christ has not only put away the believer's sins, but also dissolved for ever His connection with the world; and, on the ground of this, he is privileged to regard the world as a crucified *thing*, and to be regarded by it as a crucified one. Thus it stands with the believer and the world. It is crucified to him and he to it. This is the real, dignified position of every true Christian. The world's judgement about Christ was expressed in the position in which it deliberately placed Him. It got its choice as to whether it would have a murderer or Christ. It allowed the murderer to go free, but nailed Christ to the cross, between two thieves. Now, if the believer walks in the footprints of Christ — if he drinks into, and manifests, His spirit, he will occupy the very same place in the world's estimation; and, in

this way, he will not merely know that, as to standing before God, he is crucified with Christ, but be led to realise it in his walk and experience every day.

But while the cross has thus effectually cut the connection between the believer and the world, the resurrection has brought him into the power of new ties and associations. If, in the cross, we see the world's judgement about Christ, in resurrection we see God's judgement. The world crucified Him; but "God hath highly exalted him." Man gave Him the very lowest, God the very highest, place; and, inasmuch as the believer is called into full fellowship with God, in his thoughts about Christ, he is enabled to turn the tables upon the world, and look upon it as a crucified thing. If, therefore, the believer is on one cross and the world on another, the moral distance between the two is vast indeed. And if it is vast in principle, so should it be in practice. The world and the Christian should have absolutely nothing in common; nor will they, except so far as he denies his Lord and Master. The believer proves himself false to Christ, to the very same degree that he has fellowship with the world.

All this is plain enough; but, my beloved Christian reader, where does it put us as regards this world? Truly, it puts us outside and that completely. We are dead to the world and alive with Christ. We are at once partakers of His rejection by earth and His acceptance in heaven; and the joy of the latter makes us count as nothing the trial connected with the former. To be cast out of earth, without knowing that I have a place and a portion on high, would be intolerable; but when the glories of heaven fill the soul's vision, a little of earth goes a great way.

But some may feel led to ask, "What is the world?" It would be difficult to find a term more inaccurately defined than "world," or "worldliness;" for we are generally disposed to make worldliness begin a point or two above where we are ourselves. The Word of God, however, has, with perfect precision, defined what "the world" is, when it marks it as that which is "not of the Father." Hence, the deeper my fellowship with the Father, the keener will be my sense of what is worldly. This is the divine way of teaching. The more you delight in the Father's love, the more you reject the world. But who

reveals the Father The Son. How? By the power of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, the more I am enabled, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, to drink in the Son's revelation of the Father, the more accurate does my judgement become as to what is of the world. It is as the limits of God's kingdom expand in the heart, that the judgement as to worldliness becomes refined. You can hardly attempt to define worldliness. It is, as some one has said, "shaded off gradually from white to jet black." This is most true. You cannot place a bound and say, "here is where worldliness begins;" but the keen and exquisite sensibilities of the divine nature recoil from it; and all we need is, to walk in the power of that nature, in order to keep aloof from every form of worldliness. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Walk with God, and ye shall not walk with the world. Cold distinctions and rigid rules will avail nothing. The power of the divine life is what we want. We want to understand the meaning and spiritual application of the "three days' journey into the wilderness" whereby we are separated for ever, not only from Egypt's brick-kilns and taskmasters, but also from its temples and altars.

Pharaoh's second objection partook very much of the character and tendency of the first. "And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; *only ye shall not go very far away.*" (Ex. 8: 28) If he could not keep them *in* Egypt, he would at least seek to keep them *near* it, so that he might act upon them by its varied influences. In this way, they might be brought back again. and the testimony more effectually quashed than if they had never left Egypt at all. There is always much more serious damage done to the cause of Christ by persons seeming to give up the world and returning to it again, than if they had remained entirely of it; for they virtually confess that, having tried heavenly things, they have discovered that earthly things are better and more satisfying.

Nor is this all. The moral effect of truth upon the conscience of unconverted people is sadly interfered with, by the example of professors going back again into those things which they seemed to have left. Not that such cases afford the slightest warrant to any one for the rejection of God's truth, inasmuch as each one is personally

responsible and will have to give account of himself to God. Still, however, the effect in this, as well as in everything else, is bad. " For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.(2 Peter 2: 20, 21.)

Wherefore, if people do not "go very far away," they had better not go at all. The enemy knew this well; and hence his second objection. The maintenance of a border position suits his purpose amazingly. Those who occupy this ground are neither one thing nor the other; and, in point of fact, whatever influence they possess, tells entirely in the wrong direction.

It is deeply important to see that Satan's design, in all these objections, was to hinder that testimony to the name of the God of Israel, which could only be rendered by a "three days' journey into the wilderness." This was, in good truth, going "very far away." It was much farther than Pharaoh could form any idea of, or than he could follow them. And oh! how happy it would be if all who profess to set out from Egypt would really, in the spirit of their minds and in the tone of their character, go thus far away from it if they would intelligently recognise the cross and grave of Christ as forming the boundary between them and the world! No man, in the mere energy of nature, can take this ground. The Psalmist could say, " Enter not into judgement with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." (Ps. 143: 2) So also is it with regard to true and effectual separation from the world. "*No man living*" can enter into it. It is only as "*dead* with Christ," and "*risen again* with him, through faith of the operation of God," that any one can either be "justified" before God, or separated from the world This is what we may all going " very far away. May all who profess and call themselves Christians go thus far! Then will their lamp yield a steady light. Then would their trumpet give a certain sound. Their path would be elevated; their experience deep and rich. Their peace would flow as a river; their affections would be heavenly and their

garments unspotted. And, far above all, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be magnified in them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, according to the will of God their Father.

The third objection demands our most special attention. "And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, go, serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the Lord. And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so; go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence." (Ex. 10: 8-11) Here again we have the enemy aiming a deadly blow at the testimony to the name of the God of Israel. Parents in the wilderness and their children in Egypt! Terrible anomaly! This would only have been a half deliverance, at once useless to Israel and dishonouring to Israel's God. This could not be. If the children remained in Egypt, the parents could not possibly be said to have left it, inasmuch as their children were part of themselves. The most that could be said in such a case was, that in part they were serving Jehovah, and in part Pharaoh. But Jehovah could have no part with Pharaoh. He should either have all or nothing. This is a weighty principle for Christian parents. May we lay it deeply to heart! It is our happy privilege to count on God for our children, and to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6) We should not be satisfied with any other portion for "Our little ones" than that which we ourselves enjoy.

Pharaoh's fourth and last objection had reference to the flocks and herds. "And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you." (Ex. 10: 24.) With what perseverance did Satan dispute every inch of Israel's way out of the land of Egypt! He first sought to keep them in the land, then to keep them near the land, next to keep part of themselves in the land, and, finally, when he could not succeed in any of these three, he sought to send them forth without any ability to serve the Lord. If he could not keep the

servants, he would seek to keep their ability to serve, which would answer much the same end. If he could not induce them to sacrifice in the land, he would send them out of the land without sacrifices.

In Moses' reply to this last objection, we are furnished with a fine statement of the Lord's paramount claim upon His people and all pertaining to them. "And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; *there shall not an hoof be left behind*: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." (Ver. 25, 26) It is only when the people of God take their stand, in simple Childlike faith, upon that elevated ground, on which death and resurrection set them, that they can have anything like an adequate sense of His claims upon them. "We know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." That is, they had no knowledge of the divine claim or their responsibility, until they had gone "three days' journey." These things could not be known amid the dense and polluted atmosphere of Egypt. Redemption must be known as an accomplished fact, ere: there can be any just or full perception of responsibility. All this is perfect and beautiful. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." I must be up out of Egypt, in the power of death and resurrection, and then, but not until then, shall I know what the Lord's service really is. It is when we take our stand, by faith, in that "large room," that wealthy place into which the precious blood of Christ introduces us; when we look around us and survey the rich, rare, and manifold results of redeeming love; when we gaze upon the Person of Him who has brought us into this place, and endowed us with these riches, then we are constrained to say, in the language of one of our own poets,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were an offering far too small;

Love so amazing, so divine,

Demands my heart, my life, my all."

"There shall not an hoof be left behind." Noble words! Egypt is not the place for ought that pertains to God's redeemed. He is worthy of all, "body, soul, and spirit;" all we are and all we have belongs to Him. "We are not our own, we are bought with a price;" and it is our happy privilege to consecrate ourselves and all that we possess to Him whose we are, and whom we are called to serve. There is nought of a legal spirit in this. The words, "until we come thither," furnish a divine guard against this horrible evil. We have travelled the "three days' journey," ere a word concerning sacrifice can be heard or understood. We are put in full and undisputed possession of resurrection life and eternal righteousness. We have left that land of death and darkness; we have been brought to God Himself, so that we may enjoy Him, in the energy of that life with which we are endowed, and in the sphere of righteousness in which we are placed: thus it is our joy to serve. There is not an affection in the heart of which He is not worthy; there is not a sacrifice in all the flock too costly for His altar. The more closely we walk with Him, the more we shall esteem it to be our meat and drink to do His blessed will. The believer counts it his highest privilege to serve the Lord. He delights in every exercise and every manifestation of the divine nature. He does not move up and down with a grievous yoke upon his neck, or an intolerable weight upon his shoulder. The yoke is broken "because of the anointing," the burden has been for ever removed, by the blood of the cross, while he himself walks abroad, "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled," in pursuance of those soul-stirring words, "LET MY PEOPLE GO."

NOTE. — We shall consider the contents of Ex. 11 in connection with the security of Israel, under the shelter of the blood of the paschal lamb.

Exodus 12

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether." (Ex. 11: 1) One more heavy blow must fall upon this hard-hearted monarch and his land, ere he will be compelled to let go the favoured objects of Jehovah's sovereign grace.

How utterly vain it is for man to harden and exalt himself against God; for, truly, He can grind to powder the hardest heart, and bring down to the dust the haughtiest spirit. "Those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (Dan. 4: 37) Man may fancy himself to be something; he may lift up his head, in pomp and vain glory, as though he were his own master. Vain man how little he knows of his real condition and character He is but the tool of Satan, taken up and used by him, in his malignant efforts to counteract the purposes of God. The most splendid intellect, the most commanding genius, the most indomitable energy, if not under the direct control of the Spirit of God, are but so many instruments in Satan's hand to carry forward his dark designs. No man is his own master; he is either governed by Christ or governed by Satan. The king of Egypt might fancy himself to be a free agent, yet was he but a tool in the hands of another. Satan was behind the throne; and, as the result of Pharaoh's having set himself to resist the purposes of God, he was judicially handed over to the blinding and hardening influence of his self-chosen master.

This will explain to us an expression occurring very frequently throughout the earlier chapters of this book. "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart." There is no need, whatever, for any one to seek to avoid the full, plain sense of this most solemn statement. If man resists the light of divine testimony, he is shut up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart. God leaves him to himself, and then Satan comes in and carries him headlong to perdition. There was abundant light for Pharaoh, to show him the extravagant folly of his course in seeking to detain those whom God had commanded him to let go. But the real disposition of his heart was to act against God, and therefore God left him to himself, and made him a monument

for the display of His glory "through all the earth." There is no difficulty in this to any, save those whose desire is to argue against God — "to rush upon the thick bosses of the shield of the Almighty" — to ruin their own immortal souls.

God gives people, at times, according to the real bent of their hearts' desire. ". . . . because of this, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but *had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" (2 Thess. 2: 11, 12) If men will not have the truth when it is put before them, they shall, assuredly, have a lie. If they will not have Christ, they shall have Satan; if they will not have heaven, they shall have hell.* Will the infidel mind find fault with this? Ere it does so, let it prove that all who are thus judicially dealt with have fully answered their responsibilities. Let it, for instance, prove, in Pharaoh's case, that he acted, in any measure, up to the light he possessed. The same is to be proved in every case. Unquestionably, the task of proving rests on those who are disposed to quarrel with God's mode of dealing with the rejecters of His truth. The simple-hearted child of God will justify Him, in view of the most inscrutable dispensations; and even if he cannot meet and satisfactorily solve the difficult questions of a sceptical mind, he can rest perfectly satisfied with this word, "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" There is far more wisdom in this method of settling an apparent difficulty, than in the most elaborate argument; for it is perfectly certain that: the heart which is in a condition to reply against God," will not be convinced by the arguments of man.

{*There is a vast difference between the divine method of dealing with the heathen (Rom. 1) and with the rejecters of the gospel. (2 Thess. 1, 2) In reference to the former, we read, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind:" but with respect to the latter the word is "because they received not the love of *the truth* that they might be *saved*, . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe *a lie*; that they all might be *damned.*" The heathen refuse the testimony of creation, and are, therefore, left to themselves. The rejecters of the gospel refuse the full blaze of light which shines from the cross, and, therefore, "a strong delusion" will,

ere long, be sent from God upon them. This is deeply solemn for an age like this, in the which there is so much light and so much profession.}

However, it is God's prerogative to answer all the proud reasonings, and bring down the lofty imaginations of the human mind. He can write the sentence of death upon nature, in its fairest forms. "It is appointed unto men once to die." This cannot be avoided. Man may seek to hide his humiliation in various ways to cover his retreat through the valley of death, in the most heroic manner possible; to call the last humiliating stage of his career by the most honourable titles he can devise; to gild the bed of death with a false light; to adorn the funeral procession and the grave with the appearance of pomp, pageantry, and glory; to arise above the mouldering ashes a splendid monument, on which are engraven the records of human shame. all these things he may do; but death is death after all, and he cannot keep it off for a moment, or make it ought else than what it is, namely, "the ravages of sin."

The foregoing thoughts are suggested by the opening verse of Ex. 11. "One plague more!" Solemn word! It signed the death-warrant of Egypt's firstborn — "the chief of all their strength." "And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more." (Ex. 11: 4-6) This was to be the final plague — death in every house. "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast; that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." It is the Lord alone who can "put a difference" between those who are His and those who are not. It is not our province to say to any one, "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou:" this is the language of a Pharisee. "But when God puts a difference!" we are bound to enquire what that difference is; and, in the case before us, we see it to be a simple question of *life or death*. This is God's grand "difference." He draws a line of demarcation, and on one side of this

line is "life," on the other "death." Many of Egypt's firstborn might have been as fair and attractive as those of Israel, and much more so; but Israel had life and light, founded upon God's counsels of redeeming love, established, as we shall see presently, by the blood of the lamb. This was Israel's happy position; while, on the other hand, throughout the length and breadth of the land of Egypt, from the monarch on the throne to the menial behind the mill, nothing was to be seen but death; nothing to be heard but the cry of bitter anguish, elicited by the heavy stroke of Jehovah's rod. God can bring down the haughty spirit of man. He can make the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrain the remainder. "And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves-unto me, saying, Get thee out and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out." God will accomplish His own ends. His schemes of mercy must be carried out at all cost, and confusion of face must be the portion of all who stand in the way. "O! give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for His mercy endureth for ever..... To him that smote Egypt in their first-born: for his mercy endureth for ever: and brought out Israel from among them; for his mercy endureth for ever: with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm; for his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalm 136)

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." (Ex. 12: 1, 2) There is, here, a very interesting change in the order of time. The common or civil year was rolling on in its ordinary course, when Jehovah interrupted it in reference to His people, and thus, in principle, taught them that they were to begin a new era in company with Him. Their previous history was, henceforth, to be regarded as a blank. Redemption was to constitute the first step in *real life*.

This teaches a plain truth. A man's life is really of no account until he begins to walk with God, in the knowledge of full salvation and settled peace, through the precious blood of the Lamb. Previous to this he is, in the judgement of God, and in the language of scripture, "dead in trespasses and sins;" "alienated from the life of God." His whole history is a complete blank, even though, in man's account, it may have been one uninterrupted scene of bustling

activity. All that which engages the attention of the man of this world, the honours, the riches, the pleasures, the attractions, of life, so called — all, when examined in the light of the judgement of God, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, must be accounted as a dismal blank, a worthless void, utterly unworthy of a place in the records of the Holy Ghost. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." (John 3: 36) Men speak of "seeing life," when they launch forth into society, travel hither and thither, and see all that is to be seen; but they forget that the only true, the only real, the only divine way to "see life," is to "believe on the Son of God."

How little do men think of this! They imagine that "real life" is at an end when a man becomes a Christian, in truth and reality, not merely in name and outward profession; whereas God's word teaches us that it is only then we can see life and taste true happiness. "He that hath the Son hath life." (1 John 5: 12) And, again, "Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (Ps. 32: 1) We can get life and happiness *only* in Christ. Apart from Him, all is death and misery, in Heaven's judgement, whatever the outward appearance may be. It is when the thick veil of unbelief is removed from the heart, and we are enabled to behold, with the eye of faith, the bleeding Lamb, bearing our heavy burden of guilt upon the cursed tree, that we enter upon the path of life, and partake of the cup of divine happiness — a life which begins at the cross, and flows onward into an eternity of glory — a happiness which, each day, becomes deeper and purer, more connected with God and founded on Christ, until we reach its proper sphere, in the presence of God and the Lamb. To seek life and happiness in any other way, is vainer work by far than seeking to make bricks without straw.

True, the enemy of souls spreads a gilding over this passing scene, in order that men may imagine it to be all gold. He sets up many a puppet-show to elicit the hollow laugh from a thoughtless multitude, who will not remember that it is Satan who is in the box, and that his object is to keep them from Christ, and drag them down into eternal perdition. There is nothing real, nothing solid, nothing satisfying, but in Christ. Outside of Him, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." In Him alone true and eternal joys are to be found; and we

only begin to live when we begin to live *in*, live *on*, live *with*, and live *for* Him. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. "The time spent in the brick-kilns and by the flesh-pots must be ignored. It is, henceforth, to be of no account save that the remembrance thereof should, ever and anon, serve to quicken and deepen their sense of what divine grace had accomplished on their behalf.

"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house . . . Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats: and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. "Here we have the redemption of the people founded upon the blood of the lamb, in pursuance of God's eternal purpose. This imparts to it all its divine stability. Redemption was no after-thought with God. Before the world was, or Satan, or sin — before ever the voice of God was heard breaking the silence of eternity, and calling worlds into existence, He had His deep counsels of love; and these counsels could never find a sufficiently solid basis in creation. All the blessings, the privileges, and the dignities of creation were founded upon a creature's obedience, and the moment that failed, all was gone. But, then, Satan's attempt to mar creation only opened the way for the manifestation of God's deeper purposes of redemption.

This beautiful truth is typically presented to us in the circumstance of the lamb's being "kept up" from the "tenth" to "the fourteenth day." That this lamb pointed to Christ is unquestionable. 1 Cor 5: 7, settles the application of this interesting type beyond all question; "for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." We have, in the first epistle of Peter, an allusion to the keeping up of the lamb: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was *foreordained before the foundation of the world*, but was *manifest in these last times for you*.(Ex. 1: 18-20)

All God's purposes, from everlasting, had reference to Christ; and no effort of the enemy could possibly interfere with those counsels: yea, his efforts only tended to the display of the unfathomable wisdom and immovable stability thereof. If the "Lamb without blemish and without spot" was "foreordained before the foundation of the world," then, assuredly, redemption must have been in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. The Blessed One had not to pause in order to devise some plan to remedy the terrible evil which the enemy had introduced into His fair creation. No, He had only to bring forth, from the unexplored treasury of His precious counsels, the truth concerning the spotless Lamb, who was foreordained from everlasting, and to be "manifest in these last times for us."

There was no need for the blood of the Lamb in creation, as it came fresh from the hand of the Creator, exhibiting in every stage, and every department of it, the beautiful impress of His hand — "the infallible proofs" of "His eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. 1) But when, "by one man," sin was introduced into the world, then came out the higher, richer, fuller, deeper thought of redemption by the blood of the Lamb. This glorious truth first broke through the thick clouds which surrounded our first parents, as they retreated from the garden of Eden; its glimmerings appear in the types and shadows of the Mosaic economy; it burst upon the world in full brightness, when "the dayspring from on high" appeared in the Person of "God manifest in the flesh;" and its rich and rare results will be realised when the white-robed, palm-bearing multitude shall cluster round the throne of God and the Lamb, and the whole creation shall rest beneath the peaceful sceptre of the Son of David.

Now, the lamb taken on the tenth day, and kept up until the fourteenth day, shows us Christ foreordained of God, from eternity, but manifest for us, in time. God's eternal purpose in Christ becomes the foundation of the believer's peace. Nothing short of this would do. We are carried back far beyond creation, beyond the bounds of time, beyond the entrance in of sin, and everything that could possibly affect the ground-work of our peace. The expression, "foreordained before the foundation of the world," conducts us back into the unfathomed depths of eternity, and shows us God forming His

own counsels of redeeming love, and basing them all upon the atoning blood of His own precious, spotless Lamb. Christ was ever the primary thought in the divine mind; and, hence, the moment He began to speak or act, He took occasion to shadow forth that One who occupied the highest place in His counsels and affections; and, as we pass along the current of inspiration, we find that every ceremony, every rite, every ordinance, and every sacrifice pointed forward to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and not one more strikingly than the Passover. The paschal lamb, with all the attendant circumstances, forms one of the most profoundly interesting and deeply instructive types of Scripture.

In the interpretation of Exodus 12 we have to do with one assembly and one sacrifice. "The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." (Ver. 6) It is not so much a number of families with several lambs — a thing quite true in itself — as one assembly and one lamb. Each house was but the local expression of the whole assembly gathered round the lamb. The antitype of this we have in the whole Church of God, gathered by the Holy Ghost, in the name of Jesus, of which each separate assembly, wherever convened, should be the local expression.

"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof." (Ver. 7-9) We have to contemplate the paschal lamb in two aspects, namely, as the ground of peace and the centre of unity. The blood on the lintel secured Israel's peace. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." (Ver. 13) There was nothing more required, in order to enjoy settled peace, in reference to the destroying angel, than the application of the blood of sprinkling. Death had to do its work in every house throughout the land of Egypt. "It is appointed unto men once to die. But God, in His great mercy, found an unblemished substitute for Israel on which the sentence of death was executed. Thus God's claims and Israel's need were met by one and the same thing, namely, the blood of the lamb. That blood outside proved that all

was perfectly, because divinely, settled; and therefore perfect peace reigned within. A shade of doubt in the bosom of an Israelite, would have been a dishonour offered to the divinely-appointed ground of peace—the blood of atonement.

True it is that each one within the blood-sprinkled door would, necessarily, feel that were he to receive his due reward, the sword of the destroyer should, most assuredly, find its object in him; but then the lamb was treated in his stead. This was the solid foundation of his peace. The judgement that was due to him fell upon a divinely-appointed victim; and believing this, he could feed in peace within. A single doubt would have made Jehovah a liar; for He had said, "when *I* see the *blood*, I will pass over you." This was enough. It was no question of personal worthiness. Self had nothing whatever to do in the matter. All under the cover of the blood were safe. They were not merely in a saveable state, they were *saved*. They were not hoping or praying to be saved, they knew it as an assured fact, on the authority of that word which shall endure throughout all generations. Moreover, they were not partly saved and partly exposed to judgement; they were wholly saved. The blood of the lamb and the word of the Lord formed the foundation of Israel's peace on that terrible night in which Egypt's firstborn were laid low. If an hair of an Israelite's head could be touched, it would have proved Jehovah's word void, and the blood of the lamb valueless.

It is most needful to be simple and clear as to what constitutes the ground of a sinner's peace, in the presence of God. So many things are mixed up with the finished work of Christ, that souls are plunged into darkness and uncertainty, as to their acceptance. They do not see the absolutely-settled character of redemption through the blood of Christ, in its application to themselves. They seem not to be aware that full forgiveness of sins rests upon the simple fact that a full atonement has been offered — a fact attested in the view of all created intelligence, by the resurrection of the sinner's Surety from the dead. They know that there is no other way of being saved but by the blood of the cross — but the devils know this, yet it avails them nought. What is so much needed is to know that *we are saved*. The Israelite not merely knew that there was safety in the blood; he knew that *he* was *safe*. And why safe? Was it because of anything

that he had done, or felt, or thought? By no means, but because God had said, "when I see the blood I will pass over you." He rested upon God's testimony. He believed what God said, because God said it. "He set to his seal that God was true."

And, observe, my reader, it was not upon his own thoughts, feelings, or experiences, respecting the blood, that the Israelite rested. This would have been a poor sandy foundation to rest upon. His thoughts and feelings might be deep or they might be shallow; but deep or shallow, they had nothing to do with the ground of his peace. It was not said, "when you see the blood, and value it as you ought, I will pass over you." This would have been sufficient to plunge him in dark despair about himself, inasmuch as it was quite impossible that the human mind could ever sufficiently appreciate the precious blood of the Lamb. What gave peace was the fact that Jehovah's eye rested upon the blood, and that He knew its worth. This tranquillised the heart. The blood was outside, and the Israelite inside, so that he could not possibly see it; but God saw it, and that was quite enough.

The application of this to the question of a sinner's peace is very plain. The Lord Jesus Christ, having shed His precious blood, as a perfect atonement for sin, has taken it into the presence of God, and sprinkled it there; and God's testimony assures the believing sinner, that everything is settled on his behalf — settled not by his estimate of the blood, but by the blood itself which God estimates so highly, that because of it, without a single jot or tittle added thereto, He can righteously forgive all sin, and accept the sinner as perfectly righteous in Christ. How can any one ever enjoy settled peace, if his peace depends upon his estimate of the blood? Impossible. The loftiest estimate which the human mind can form of the blood must fall infinitely short of its divine preciousness; and, therefore, if our peace were to depend upon our valuing it as we ought, we could no more enjoy settled peace than if we were seeking it by "works of law." There must either be a sufficient ground of peace in the blood alone, or we can never have peace. To mix up our estimate with it, is to upset the entire fabric of Christianity, just as effectually as if we were to conduct the sinner to the foot of mount Sinai, and put him under a covenant of works. Either Christ's atoning sacrifice is

sufficient or it is not. If it is sufficient, why those doubts and fears? The words of our lips profess that the work is finished; but the doubts and fears of the heart declare that it is not. Every one who doubts his full and everlasting forgiveness, denies, so far as he is concerned, the completeness of the sacrifice of Christ.

But there are very many who would shrink from the idea of deliberately and avowedly calling in question the efficacy of the blood of Christ, who, nevertheless, have not settled peace. Such persons profess to be quite assured of the sufficiency of the blood, if only *they* were sure of an interest therein — *if only* they had the right kind of faith. There are many precious souls in this unhappy condition. They are occupied with their interest and their faith, instead of with Christ's blood, and God's word. In other words, they are looking in at self, instead of out at Christ. This is not faith; and, as a consequence, they have not peace. An Israelite within the blood-stained lintel could teach such souls a most seasonable lesson. He was not saved by his interest in, or his thoughts about, the blood, but simply by the blood. No doubt, he had a blessed interest in it; and he would have his thoughts, likewise; but, then, God did not say, "When I see your interest in the blood, I will pass over you." Oh! no; THE BLOOD, in all its solitary dignity and divine efficacy, was set before Israel; and had they attempted to place even a morsel of unleavened bread beside the blood, as a ground of security: they would have made Jehovah a liar, and denied the sufficiency of His remedy.

We are ever prone to look at something in or connected with ourselves as necessary, in order to make up, with the blood of Christ, the groundwork of our peace. There is a sad lack of clearness and soundness on this vital point, as is evident from the doubts and fears with which so many of the people of God are afflicted. We are apt to regard the fruits of the Spirit in us, rather than the work of Christ *for* us, as the foundation of peace. We shall see, presently, the place which the work of the Holy Spirit occupies in Christianity; but it is never set forth in Scripture as being that on which our peace reposes. The Holy Ghost did not make peace, but Christ did. The Holy Ghost is not said to be our peace, but Christ is. God did not send preaching peace by the Holy Ghost, but by Jesus Christ.

(Compare Acts 10: 36; Eph. 2: 14, 17; Col. 1: 20) My reader cannot be too simple in his apprehension of this important distinction. It is the blood of Christ which gives peace, imparts perfect justification, divine righteousness, purges the conscience, brings us into the holiest of all, justifies God in receiving the believing sinner, and constitutes our title to all the joys, the dignities, and the glories of heaven. (See Rom. 3: 24-28; Rom. 5: 9; Eph. 2: 13-18; Col. 1: 20-22; Heb. 9: 14; Heb. 10: 19; 1 Peter 1: 19; 1 Peter 2: 24; 1 John 1: 7; Rev. 7: 14-17)

It will not, I fondly hope, be supposed that, in seeking to put "the precious blood of Christ" in its divinely-appointed place, I would write a single line which might seem to detract from the value of the Spirit's operations. God forbid. The Holy Ghost reveals Christ; makes us to know, enjoy, and feed upon Christ; He bears witness to Christ; He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the power of communion, the seal, the witness, the earnest, the unction. In short, His blessed operations are absolutely essential. Without Him, we can neither see, hear, know, feel, experience, enjoy, nor exhibit ought of Christ. This is plain. The doctrine of the Spirit's operations is clearly laid down in the word, and is understood and admitted by every true and rightly instructed Christian.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, the work of the Spirit is not the ground of peace; for, if it were, we could not have settled peace until Christ's coming, inasmuch as the work of the Spirit, in the Church, will not, properly speaking, be complete till then. He still carries on His work in the believer. "He maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom 8) He labours to bring us up to the predestinated standard, namely, perfect conformity, in all things, to the image of "the Son." He is the sole Author of every right desire, every holy aspiration, every pure affection, every divine experience, every sound conviction; but, clearly, His work in us will not be complete until we have left this present scene and taken our place with Christ in the glory. Just as, in the case of Abraham's servant, his work was not complete, in the matter of Rebecca, until he had presented her to Isaac.

Not so the work of Christ FOR us. That is absolutely and eternally complete. He could say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17: 4) And, again, "It is finished." (John 19: 30) The Holy Ghost cannot yet say He has finished His work. As the true Vicar of Christ upon earth, He still labours amid the varied hostile influences which surround the sphere of His operations. He works in the hearts of the people of God to bring them up, practically and experimentally, to the divinely-appointed standard. But He never teaches a soul to lean on His work for peace in the presence of God. His office is to speak of Jesus. "He," says Christ, "shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." (John 16: 13, 14) If, then, it is only by the Spirit's teaching that any one can understand the true ground of peace, it is obvious that He can only present Christ's work as the foundation on which the soul must rest for ever; yea, it is in virtue of that work that He takes up His abode and carries on His marvellous operations in the believer. He is not our title, though He reveals that title and enables us to understand and enjoy it.

Hence, therefore, the paschal lamb, as the ground of Israel's peace, is a marked and beautiful type of Christ as the ground of the believer's peace. There was nothing to be added to the blood on the lintel; neither is there anything to be added to the blood on the mercy-seat. The "unleavened bread" and "bitter herbs" were necessary, but not as forming, either in whole or in part, the ground of peace. They were for the inside of the house and formed the characteristics of the communion there; but **THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB WAS THE FOUNDATION OF EVERYTHING**. It saved them from death and introduced them into a scene of life, light, and peace.' It formed the link between God and His redeemed people. As a people linked with God, on the ground of accomplished redemption, it was their high privilege to meet certain responsibilities; but these responsibilities did not form the link, but merely flowed out of it.

And I would further remind my reader that the obedient *life* of Christ is not set forth in Scripture as the procuring cause of our forgiveness. It was His death upon the cross that opened those everlasting floodgates of love which else should have remained pent

up for ever. If he had remained to this very hour, going through the cities of Israel, "doing good," the veil of the temple would continue unrent, to bar the worshipper's approach to God. It was His death that rent that mysterious curtain "from top to bottom." It is "by *His stripes*," not by His obedient life, that "we are healed;" and those "stripes" He endured *on the cross*, and nowhere else. His own words, during the progress of His blessed life, are quite sufficient to settle this point. "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke 12: 50) To what does this refer but to His death upon the cross, which was the accomplishment of His baptism and the opening up of a righteous vent through which His love might freely flow out to the guilty sons of Adam? Again, He says, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone." (John 12: 24) He was that precious "corn of wheat:" and He should have remained for ever "alone," even though incarnate, had He not, by His death upon the accursed tree, removed out of the way everything that could have hindered the union of his people with Him in resurrection. "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

My reader cannot too carefully ponder this subject. It is one of immense weight and importance. He has to remember two points in reference to this entire question, namely, that there could be no union with Christ, save in resurrection; and that Christ *only* suffered for sins on the cross. We are not to suppose that incarnation was, by any means, Christ taking us into union with Himself. This could not be. How could sinful flesh be thus united? The body of sin had to be destroyed by death. Sin had to be put away, according to the divine requirement; all the power of the enemy had to be abolished. How was all this to be done? Only by the precious, spotless Lamb of God submitting to the death of the cross. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect *through sufferings*." (Heb. 2: 10) "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and *the third day I shall be perfected*." (Luke 13: 32) The expressions "perfect" and "perfected" in the above passages do not refer to Christ in His own Person abstractedly, for He was perfect from all eternity, as Son of God; and as to His humanity, He was absolutely perfect likewise. But then, as "the

captain of salvation" — as "bringing many sons unto glory" — as "bringing forth much fruit" — -as associating redeemed people with Himself, He had to reach "the third day" in order to be "perfected." He went down *alone* into the "horrible pit, and miry clay;" but, directly He plants His "foot on the rock" of resurrection, He associates with Himself the "many sons." (Ps 40: 1-3) He fought the fight alone; but, as the mighty Conqueror, He scatters around Him, in rich profusion, the spoils of victory, that we might gather them up and enjoy them for ever.

Moreover, we are not to regard the cross of Christ as a mere circumstance in a life of sin-bearing. It was the grand and only scene of sin-bearing. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter 2: 14) He did not bear them anywhere else. He did not bear them in the manger, nor in the wilderness, nor in the garden; but ONLY "ON THE TREE." He never had ought to say to sin, save on the cross; and there He bowed His blessed head, and yielded up His precious life, under the accumulated weight of His people's sins. Neither did He ever suffer at the hand of God save on the cross; and there Jehovah hid His face from Him because He was "made sin." (2 Cor. 5)

The above train of thought, and the various passages of scripture referred to, may, perhaps, enable my reader to enter more fully into the divine power of the words, "*When I see The blood I will pass over you.*" The lamb needed to be without blemish, no doubt, for what else could meet the holy eye of Jehovah? But, had the blood not been shed, there could have been no passing over, for "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22) This subject will, the Lord permitting, come more fully and appropriately before us in the types of Leviticus. It demands the prayerful attention of every one who loves our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

We shall now consider the second aspect of the Passover, as the centre round which the assembly was gathered, in peaceful, holy, happy fellowship. Israel, saved by the blood, was one thing; and Israel, feeding on the lamb, was quite another. They were saved *only* by the blood; but the object round which they were gathered was, manifestly, the roasted lamb. This is not, by any means, a distinction without a difference. The blood of the Lamb forms the foundation

both of our connection with God, and our connection with one another. It is as those who are washed in that blood, that we are introduced to God and to one another. Apart from the perfect atonement of Christ, there could obviously be no fellowship either with God or His assembly. Still we must remember that it is to a living Christ in heaven that believers are gathered by the Holy Ghost. It is with a living Head we are connected — to "a living stone" we have come. He is our centre. Having found peace, through His blood, we own Him as our grand gathering point and connecting link. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18: 20) The Holy Ghost is the only Gatherer; Christ Himself is the only object to which we are gathered; and our assembly, when thus convened, is to be characterised by holiness, so that the Lord our God may dwell among us. The Holy Ghost can only gather to Christ. He cannot gather to a system, a name, a doctrine, or an ordinance. He gathers to a Person, and that Person is a glorified Christ in heaven. This must stamp a peculiar character on God's assembly. Men may associate, on any ground, round any centre, or for any object they please; but, when the Holy Ghost associates, it is on the ground of accomplished redemption, around the Person of Christ, in order to form a holy dwelling place for God. (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 1 Cor. 6: 19; Eph. 2: 21, 22; 1 Peter 2: 4, 5)

We shall now look in detail at the principles brought before us in the paschal feast. The assembly of Israel, as under the cover of the blood, was to be ordered by Jehovah in a manner worthy of Himself. In the matter of safety from judgement, as we have already seen, nothing was needed but the blood; but in the fellowship which flowed out of this safety, other things were needed which could not be neglected with impunity.

And first, then, we read, "They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof." (Ver. 8, 9) The lamb, round which the congregation was assembled, and on which it feasted, was a roasted lamb—a lamb which had undergone the action of fire. In this we see "Christ our Passover"

presenting Himself to the action of the fire of divine holiness and judgement which found in Him a perfect material. He could say, "Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." (Ps. 17: 3) All in Him was perfect. The fire tried Him and there was no dross. "His head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof." That is to say, the seat of His understanding; His outward, walk with all that pertained thereto — all was submitted to the action of the fire, and all was entirely perfect. The process of roasting was therefore deeply significant, as is every circumstance in the ordinances of God. Nothing should be passed over, because all is pregnant with meaning.

Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water." Had it been eaten thus, there would have been no expression of the great truth which it was the divine purpose to shadow forth; namely, that our paschal Lamb was to endure, on the cross, the fire of Jehovah's righteous wrath — a truth of infinite preciousness to the soul. We are not merely under the eternal shelter of the blood of the Lamb, but we feed, by faith, upon the Person of the Lamb. Many of us come short here. We are apt to rest satisfied with being saved by what Christ has done for us, without cultivating holy communion with Himself. His loving heart could never be satisfied with this. He has brought us nigh to Himself, that we might enjoy Him, that we might feed on Him, and delight in Him. He presents Himself to us as the One who has endured, to the uttermost, the intense fire of the wrath of God, that He may, in this wondrous character, be the food of our ransomed souls.

But how was this lamb to be eaten? "With unleavened bread and bitter herbs." Leaven is, invariably, used, throughout scripture, as emblematical of evil. Neither in the Old nor in the New Testament is it ever used to set forth anything pure, holy, or good. Thus, in this chapter, "the feast of unleavened bread" is the type of that practical separation from evil which is the proper result of being washed from our sins in the blood of the Lamb, and the proper accompaniment of communion with His sufferings. Nought but perfectly unleavened bread could at all comport with a roasted lamb. A single particle of that which was the marked type of evil, would

have destroyed the moral character of the entire ordinance. How could we connect any species of evil with our fellowship with a suffering Christ? Impossible. All who enter by the power of the Holy Ghost, into the meaning of the cross will, assuredly, by the same power, put away leaven from all their borders. "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: *therefore* let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8) The feast spoken of in this passage is that which, in the life and conduct of the Church, corresponds with the feast of unleavened bread. This latter lasted "seven days;" and the Church collectively, and the believer individually, are called to walk in practical holiness, during the seven days, or entire period, of their course here below; and this, moreover, as the direct result of being washed in the blood, and having communion with the sufferings of Christ.

The Israelite did not put away leaven in order to be saved, but because he was saved; and if he failed to put away leaven, it did not raise the question of security through the blood, but simply of fellowship with the assembly. "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land." (Ver. 19) The cutting off of an Israelite from the congregation answers precisely to the suspension of a Christian's fellowship, if he be indulging in that which is contrary to the holiness of the divine presence. God cannot tolerate evil. A single unholy thought will interrupt the soul's communion; and until the soil contracted by any such thought is got rid of by confession, founded on the advocacy of Christ, the communion cannot possibly be restored. (See 1 John 1: 9-10) The true-hearted Christian rejoices in this. He can ever "give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness." He would not, if he could, lower the standard a single hair's breadth. It is his exceeding joy to walk in company with one who will not go on, for a moment, with a single jot or tittle of leaven."

Blessed be God, we know that nothing can ever snap asunder the link which binds the true believer to Him. We are "saved in the

Lord," not with a temporary or conditional, but "with an everlasting salvation." But then salvation and communion are not the same thing. Many are saved, who do not know it; and many, also, who do not enjoy it. It is quite impossible that I can enjoy a blood-stained lintel if I have leavened borders. This is an axiom in the divine life. May it be written on our hearts! Practical holiness, though not the basis of our *salvation*, is intimately connected with our *enjoyment* thereof. An Israelite was not saved by unleavened bread, but by the blood; and yet leaven would have cut him off from communion. And as to the Christian, he is not saved by his practical holiness, but by the blood; but if he indulges in evil, in thought, word, or deed, he will have no true enjoyment of salvation, and no true communion with the Person of the Lamb.

This, I cannot doubt, is the secret of much of the spiritual barrenness and lack of settled peace which one finds amongst the children of God. They are not cultivating holiness; they are not keeping "the feast of unleavened bread." The blood is on the lintel, but the leaven within their borders keeps them from enjoying the security which the blood provides. The allowance of evil destroys our fellowship, though it does not break the link which binds our souls eternally to God. Those who belong to God's assembly must be holy. They have not only been delivered from the guilt and consequences of sin, but- also from the practice of it, the power of it, and the love of it. The very fact of being delivered by the blood of the paschal lamb, rendered Israel responsible to put away leaven from all their quarters. They could not say, in the frightful language of the antinomian, "now that we are delivered, we may conduct ourselves as we please." By no means. If they were saved by grace, they were saved to holiness. The soul that can take occasion, from the freedom of divine grace, and the completeness of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, to "continue in sin," proves very distinctly that he understands neither the one nor the other.

Grace not only saves the soul with an everlasting salvation, but also imparts a nature which delights in everything that belongs to God, because it is divine. We are made partakers of the divine nature, which cannot sin, because it is born of God. To walk in the energy of this nature is, in reality, to keep" the feast of unleavened

bread. There is no "old leaven" nor "leaven of malice and wickedness" in the new nature, because it is of God, and God is holy, and "God is love." Hence it is evident that we do not put away evil from us in order to better our old nature, which is irremediable; nor yet to obtain the new nature, but because we have it. We have life, and, in the power of that life, we put away evil. It is only when we are delivered from the guilt of sin that we can understand or exhibit the true power of holiness. To attempt it in any other way is hopeless labour. The feast of unleavened bread can only be kept beneath the perfect shelter of the blood.

We may perceive equal significancy and moral propriety in that which was to accompany the unleavened bread, namely, the "bitter herbs." We cannot enjoy communion with the sufferings of Christ, without remembering what it was which rendered those sufferings needful, and this remembrance must necessarily produce a chastened and subdued tone of spirit, which is aptly expressed by the bitter herbs in the paschal feast. If the roasted lamb expressed Christ's endurance of the wrath of God in His own Person, on the cross, the bitter herbs express the believer's recognition of the truth that He "suffered *for us*." "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." (Is 53: 5) It is well, owing to the excessive levity of our hearts, to understand the deep meaning of the bitter herbs. Who can read such Psalms as the 6, 22, 38, 49, 88, and 109, and not enter, in some measure, into the meaning of the unleavened bread with bitter herbs? Practical holiness of life with deep subduedness of soul must flow from real communion with Christ's suffering, for it is quite impossible that moral evil and levity of spirit can exist in view of those sufferings.

But, it may be asked, is there not a deep joy for the soul in the consciousness that Christ has borne our sins; that He has fully drained, on our behalf, the cup of God's righteous wrath? Unquestionably. This is the solid foundation of all our joy. But can we ever forget that it was for "*our sins*" He suffered? Can we ever lose sight of the soul-subduing truth that the blessed Lamb of God bowed His head beneath the weight of our transgressions. Surely not. We must eat our lamb with bitter herbs, which, be it remembered, do not set forth the tears of a worthless and shallow

sentimentality, but the deep and real experiences of a soul that enters, with spiritual intelligence and power, into the meaning and into the practical effect of the cross.

In contemplating the cross, we find in it that which cancels all our guilt. This imparts sweet peace and joy. But we find in it also the complete setting aside of nature, the crucifixion of "the flesh," the death of "the old man." (See Rom. 6: 6; Gal. 2: 20; Gal. 6: 14; Col 2: 11 This, in its practical results, will involve much that is "bitter" to nature. It will call for self-denial, the mortification of our members which are on the earth, (Col. 3: 5) the reckoning of self to be dead indeed unto sin. (Rom. 6) All these things may seem terrible to look at; but when one gets inside the bloodstained door-post he thinks quite differently. The very herbs which, to an Egyptian's taste, would, no doubt, have seemed so bitter, formed an integral part of Israel's redemption feast. Those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, who know the joy of fellowship with Him, esteem it a "feast" to put away evil and to keep nature in the place of death.

"And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire." (Ver. 10) In this command, we are taught that the communion of the congregation was, in no wise, to be separated from the sacrifice on which that communion was founded. The heart must ever cherish the vivid remembrance that all true fellowship is inseparably connected with accomplished redemption. To think of having communion *with God*, on any other ground is to imagine that He could have fellowship with our evil; and to think of fellowship *with man*, on any other ground, is but to form an unholy club, from which nothing could issue but confusion and iniquity. In a word, all must be founded upon, and inseparably linked with, the blood. This is the simple meaning of eating the paschal lamb the same night on which the blood was shed. The fellowship must not be separated from its foundation.

What a beautiful picture, then, we have in the blood-sheltered assembly of Israel, feeding peacefully on the roasted lamb, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs! No fear of judgement, no fear of the wrath of Jehovah, no fear of the terrible hurricane of righteous vengeance which was sweeping vehemently over the land of Egypt,

at the midnight hour. All was profound peace within the blood-stained lintel. They had no need to fear anything from without; and nothing within could trouble them, save leaven, which would have proved a death-blow to all their peace and blessedness. What a picture for the Church! What a picture for the Christian! May we gaze upon it with an enlightened eye and a teachable spirit!

However, we are not yet done with this most instructive ordinance. We have been looking at Israel's position, and Israel's food, let us now look at Israel's habit.

"And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover." (Ver. 11) They were to eat it as a people prepared to leave behind them the land of death and darkness, wrath and judgement, to move onward toward the land of promise — their destined inheritance. The blood which had preserved them from the fate of Egypt's firstborn was also the foundation of their deliverance from Egypt's bondage; and they were now to set out and walk with God toward the land that flowed with milk and honey. True, they had not yet crossed the Red Sea; they had not yet gone the "three days' journey." Still they were, in principle, a redeemed people, a separated people, a pilgrim people, an expectant people, a dependent people; and their entire habit was to be in keeping with their present position and future destiny. The girded loins bespoke intense separation from all around them, together with a readiness to serve. The shod feet declared their preparedness to leave that scene; while the staff was the expressive emblem of a pilgrim people, in the attitude of leaning on something outside themselves. Precious characteristics! Would that they were more exhibited by every member of God's redeemed family.

Beloved Christian reader, let us "meditate on these things." We have tasted, through grace, the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus; as such it is our privilege to feed upon His adorable Person and delight ourselves in His "unsearchable riches;" to have fellowship in His sufferings and be made conformable to His death. Oh! let us, therefore, be seen with the unleavened bread and bitter herbs, the girded loins, the shoes and staff. In a word, let us be marked as a holy people, a crucified people, a watchful and diligent

people — a people manifestly "on our way to God" — on our way to glory — "bound for the kingdom." May God grant us to enter into the depth and power of all these things; so that they may not be mere theories in our intellects mere principles of scriptural knowledge and interpretation; but living, divine realities, known by experience, and exhibited in the life, to the glory of God.

We shall close this section by glancing, for a moment, at verses 43-49. Here we are taught that while it was the place and privilege of every true Israelite to eat the Passover, yet no uncircumcised stranger should participate therein. "There shall no stranger eat thereofall the congregation of Israel shall keep it." Circumcision was necessary ere the Passover could be eaten. In other words, the sentence of death must be written upon nature ere we can intelligently feed upon Christ, either as the ground of peace or the centre of unity. Circumcision has its antitype in the cross. The male alone was circumcised. The female was represented in the male. So, in the cross, Christ represented His Church, and, hence, the Church is crucified with Christ; nevertheless, she lives by the life of Christ, known and exhibited on earth, through the power of the Holy Ghost. "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover unto the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. 8: 8)

The ordinance of circumcision formed the grand boundary line between the Israel of God and all the nations that were upon the face of the earth; and the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ forms the boundary between the church and the world. It matters not, in the smallest degree, what advantages of person or position a man possessed, he could have no part with Israel until he submitted to that flesh-cutting operation. A circumcised beggar was nearer to God than an uncircumcised king. So, also, now, there can be no participation in the joys of God's redeemed, save by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that cross sweeps away all pretensions, levels all distinctions, and unites all in one holy congregation of blood-washed worshippers. The cross forms a boundary so lofty, and a defence so impenetrable, that not a single atom of earth or of nature

can cross over or pass through to mingle itself with "the new creation." *All* things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself." (2 Cor 5: 18)

But, not only was Israel's separation from all strangers strictly maintained, in the institution of the Passover; Israel's unity was also as clearly enforced. "*In one house* shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house. neither shall ye break a bone thereof." (Ver. 46) Here is as fair and beautiful a type as we could have of the "one body and one Spirit. The Church of God is one. God sees it as such, maintains it as such, and will manifest it as such, in the view of angels, men, and devils, notwithstanding all that has been done to interfere with that hallowed unity. Blessed be God, the unity of His Church is as much in His keeping as is her justification, acceptance, and eternal security. "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken." (Ps. 34: 20) And, again, "a bone of him shall not be broken." (John 19: 36) Despite the rudeness and hard-heartedness of Rome's soldiery, and despite all the hostile influences which have been set to work, from age to age, the body of Christ is one and its divine unity can never be broken. "THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT;" and that, moreover, down here, on this very earth. Happy are they who have got faith to recognise this precious truth, and faithfulness to carry it out, in these last days; notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties which attend upon their profession and their practice! I believe God will own and honour such.

The Lord deliver us from that spirit of unbelief which would lead us to judge by the sight of our eyes, instead of by the light of His changeless Word!

Exodus 13

In the opening verses of this chapter, we are taught, clearly and distinctly, that personal devotedness and personal holiness are fruits which redeeming love produces in those who are the happy subjects thereof. The dedication of the firstborn and the feast of unleavened bread are here set forth in their immediate connection with the deliverance of the people out of the land of Egypt. "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine. And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten." And again, "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee: neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters."

Then we have the reason of both these significant observances laid down. "And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done *because of that* which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt." And, again, "It shall be, when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast: *therefore* I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem."

The more fully we enter, by the power of the Spirit of God, into the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the more decided will be our separation, and the more whole-hearted will be our devotedness. The effort to produce either the one or the other, until redemption is known, will prove the most hopeless labour possible. All our doings must be "because of that which the Lord hath done," and not in order to get anything from Him. Efforts after life and peace prove that we are, as yet, strangers to the power of the blood;

whereas the pure fruits of an experienced redemption are to the praise of Him who has redeemed us. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest Any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2: 8, 10) God has already prepared a path of good works for us to walk in; and He, by grace, prepares us to walk therein. It is only as saved that we can walk in such a path. Were it otherwise, we might boast; but seeing that we ourselves are as much God's workmanship as the path in which we walk, there is no room whatever for boasting.

True Christianity is but the manifestation of the life of Christ, implanted in us by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in pursuance of God's eternal counsels of sovereign grace; and all our doings, previous to the implantation of this life, are but "dead works," from which we need to have our consciences purged just as much as from "wicked works." (Heb. 9: 14) The term "dead works," comprehends all works which men do with the direct object of getting life. If a man is seeking for life, it is very evident that he has not yet gotten it. He may be very sincere in seeking it, but his very sincerity only makes it the more obvious that, as yet, he has not consciously reached it. Hence, therefore, everything done in order to get life is a dead work, inasmuch as it is done without life — the life of Christ, the only true life, the only source from whence good works can flow. And, observe, it is not a question of "wicked works;" no one would think of getting life by such. No; you will find, on the contrary, that persons continually have recourse to "dead works," in order to ease their consciences, under the sense of "wicked works," whereas divine revelation teaches us that the conscience needs to be purged from the one as well as the other.

Again, as to righteousness, we read that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." It is not said that "all our wickednesses," merely, "are as filthy rags." This would, at once, be admitted. But the fact is, that the very best fruit which we can produce, in the shape of religiousness and righteousness, is represented, on the page of eternal truth, as "dead works," and "filthy rags." Our very efforts after life, do but prove us to be dead;

and our very efforts after righteousness do but prove us to be enwrapped in filthy rags. It is only as the actual possessors of eternal life and divine righteousness that we can walk in the divinely-prepared path of good works. Dead works and filthy rags could never be suffered to appear in such a path. None but "the redeemed of the Lord" can walk therein. It was as a redeemed people that Israel kept the feast of unleavened bread, and dedicated their firstborn to Jehovah. The former of these observances we have already considered; as to the latter, it contains a rich mine of instruction.

The destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt to destroy all the firstborn; but Israel's firstborn escaped through the death of a divinely-provided substitute. Accordingly, these latter appear before us, in this chapter, as a living people, dedicated to God. Saved by the blood of the lamb, they are privileged to consecrate their ransomed life to Him who had ransomed it. Thus it was only as redeemed that they possessed life. The grace of God alone had made them to differ, and had given them the place of living men in His presence. In their case, assuredly, there was no room for boasting; for, as to any personal merit or worthiness, we learn from this chapter that they were put on a level with an unclean and worthless thing. "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck; and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem." (Ver. 13) There were two classes, the clean and the unclean; and man was classed with the latter. The lamb was to answer for the unclean; and if the ass were not redeemed, his neck was to be broken; so that an unredeemed man was put upon a level with an unclean animal, and that, moreover, in a condition than which nothing could be more worthless and unsightly. What a humiliating picture of man in his natural condition! Oh! that our poor proud hearts could enter more into it. Then should we rejoice more unfeignedly in the happy privilege of being washed from our guilt in the blood of the Lamb, and having all our personal vileness left behind for ever, in the tomb where our Surety lay buried.

Christ was the Lamb — the clean, the spotless Lamb. We are unclean. But for ever adored be His matchless name! He took our

position; and, *on the cross*, was made sin, and treated as such. That which we should have endured throughout the countless ages of eternity, He endured for us on the tree. He bore *all* that was due to us, there and then, in order that we might enjoy what is due to Him, for ever. He got our deserts that we might get His. The clean took, for a time, the place of the unclean, in order that the unclean might take for ever the place of the clean. Thus, whereas, by nature, we are represented by the loathsome figure of an ass with his neck broken; by grace we are represented by a risen and glorified Christ in heaven. Amazing contrast! It lays man's glory in the dust and magnifies the riches of redeeming love. It silences man's empty boastings and puts into his mouth a hymn of praise to God and the Lamb, which shall swell throughout the courts of heaven during the everlasting ages.*

{*It is interesting to see that by nature we are ranked with an unclean animal; by grace we are associated with Christ the spotless Lamb. There can be nothing lower than the place which belongs to us by nature; nothing higher than that which belongs to us by grace. Look, for example, at an ass with his neck broken; there is what an unredeemed man is worth. Look at "the precious blood of Christ;" there is what a redeemed man is worth. "Unto you that believe is the preciousness." That is, all who are washed in the blood partake of Christ's preciousness. As He is "a living stone," they are "living stones;" as He is "a precious stone, they are "precious stones." They get life and preciousness all from Him and in Him. They are as He is. Every stone in the edifice is precious, because purchased at no less a price than "the blood of the Lamb." May the people of God know more fully their place and privileges in Christ!}

How forcibly is one here reminded of the apostle's memorable and weighty words to the Romans, " Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye

your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. 6: 8-14) We are not only ransomed from the power of death and the grave, but also united to Him who has ransomed us at the heavy cost of His own precious life, that we might, in the energy of the Holy Ghost, dedicate our new life, with all its powers, to His service, so that His worthy name may be glorified in us according to the will of God and our Father.

We are furnished, in the last few verses of Exodus 13 with a touching and beautiful example of the Lord's tender consideration of His people's need. "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm 103: 14) When He redeemed Israel and took them into relationship with Himself, He, in His unfathomed and infinite grace, charged Himself with all their need and weakness. It mattered not what they were or what they needed, when I AM was with them, in all the exhaustless treasures of that name. He had to conduct them from Egypt to Canaan, and we here find Him occupying Himself in selecting a suitable path for them. "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." (Ver. 17, 18)

The Lord, in His condescending grace, so orders for His people, that they do not, at their first setting out, encounter heavy trials which might have the effect of discouraging their hearts and driving them back. "The way of the wilderness" was a much more protracted route; but God had deep and varied lessons to teach His people, which could only be learnt in the desert. They were, afterwards, reminded of this fact, in the following passage: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years, in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither

did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years." (Deut. 8: 2-4) Such precious lessons as these could never have been learnt in "the way of the land of the Philistines." In that way, they might have learnt what war was, at an early stage of their career; but "in the way of the wilderness," they learnt what flesh was, in all its crookedness, unbelief, and rebellion. But I AM was there, in all His patient grace, unerring wisdom, and infinite power. None but Himself could have met the demand. None but He could endure the opening up of the depths of a human heart. To have my heart unlocked anywhere, save in the presence of infinite grace, would plunge me in hopeless despair. The heart of man is but a little hell. What boundless mercy, then, to be delivered from its terrible depths!

"Oh! to grace how great a debtor

Daily I'm constrained to be;

Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,

Bind my wandering heart to thee!"

"And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." Jehovah not only selected a path for His people, but He also came down to walk with them therein, and make Himself known to them according to their need. He not only conducted them safely outside the bounds of Egypt, but He also came down, as it were, in His travelling chariot, to be their companion through all the vicissitudes of their wilderness journey. This was divine grace. They were not merely delivered out of the furnace of Egypt and then allowed to make the best of their way to Canaan. Such was not God's manner toward them. He knew that they had a toilsome and perilous journey before them, through serpents and scorpions, snares and difficulties, drought and

barrenness; and He, blessed be His name for ever, would not suffer them to go alone. He would be the companion of all their toils and dangers; yea, "He went before them." He was "a guide, a glory, a defence, to save from every fear. Alas! that they should ever have grieved that Blessed One by their hardness of heart. Had they only walked humbly, contentedly, and confidingly with Him, their march would have been a triumphant one from first to last. With Jehovah in their forefront, no power could have interrupted their onward progress from Egypt to Canaan. He would have carried them through and planted them in the mountain of His inheritance, according to His promise, and by the power of His right hand; nor should as much as a single Canaanite have been allowed to remain therein to be a thorn in their side. Thus will it be, by and by, when Jehovah shall set His hand, a second time, to deliver His people from under the power of all their oppressors. day the Lord hasten the time!

Exodus 14

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." (Ps. 107: 23, 24) How true is this! and yet our coward hearts do so shrink from those "great waters!" We prefer carrying on our traffic in the shallows, and, as a result, we fail to see "the works" and "wonders" of our God; for these can only be seen and known "in the deep."

It is in the day of trial and difficulty that the soul experiences something of the deep and untold blessedness of being able to count on God. Were all to go on smoothly, this would not be so. It is not in gliding along the surface of a tranquil lake that the reality of the Master's presence is felt; but actually when the tempest roars, and the waves roll over the ship. The Lord does not hold out to us the prospect of exemption from trial and tribulation; quite the opposite: He tells us we shall have to meet both the one and the other; but He promises to be with us in them; and this is infinitely better. God's presence in the trial is much better than exemption *from* the trial. The sympathy of His heart *with us* is sweeter far than the power of His hand *for us*. The Master's presence with His faithful servants, while passing through the furnace, was better far than the display of His power to keep them out of it. (Dan. 3) We would frequently desire to be allowed to pass on our way without trial, but this would involve serious loss. The Lord's presence is never so sweet as in moments of appalling difficulty.

Thus it was in Israel's case, as recorded in this chapter. They were brought into an overwhelming difficulty. They are called to "do business in great waters." "They are at their wit's end." Pharaoh, repenting himself of having let them go out of his land, determines to make one desperate effort to recover them. "And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them..... And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid; and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord." Here was a deeply-trying scene - one in which

human effort could avail nothing. As well might they have attempted to put back with a straw the ocean's mighty tide, as seek to extricate themselves by ought that they could do. The sea was before them, Pharaoh's hosts behind them, and the mountains around them. And all this, be it observed, permitted and ordered of God. He had marked out their position before "Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon." Moreover, He permitted Pharaoh to come upon them, And why? Just to display Himself in the salvation of His people, and the total overthrow of their enemies. "To him that divided the Red Sea into parts; for his mercy endureth for ever. And made Israel to pass through the midst of it; for his mercy endureth for ever: but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; for his mercy endureth for ever." (Ps. 136)

There is not so much as a single position in all the desert-wanderings of God's redeemed, the boundaries of which are not marked off, with studious accuracy, by the hand of unerring wisdom and infinite love. The special bearings and peculiar influences of each position are carefully arranged. The Pi-hahiroths and the Migdols are all ordered with immediate reference to the moral condition of those whom God is conducting through the windings and labyrinths of the wilderness, and also to the display of His own character. Unbelief may oftentimes suggest the enquiry, "why is it thus?" God knows why; and He will, without doubt, reveal the why, whenever the revelation would promote His glory and His people's good. How often do we feel disposed to question as to the why and the wherefore of our being placed in such and such circumstances! How often do we perplex ourselves as to the reason of our being exposed to such and such trials! How much better to bow our heads in meek subjection, and say, 'it is well,' and 'it shall be well' When God fixes our position for us, we may rest assured it is a wise and salutary one; and even when we foolishly and wilfully choose a position for ourselves, He most graciously overrules our folly, and causes the influences of our self-chosen circumstances to work for our spiritual benefit.

It is when the people of God are brought into the greatest straits and difficulties, that they are favoured with the finest displays of God's character and actings; and for this reason He oftentimes leads

them into a trying position, in order that He may the more markedly show Himself. He could have conducted Israel through the Red Sea, and far beyond the reach of Pharaoh's hosts, before ever the latter had started from Egypt; but that would not have so fully glorified His own name, or so entirely confounded the enemy, upon whom He designed to "get him honour." We too frequently lose sight of this great truth, and the consequence is that our hearts give way in the time of trial. If we could only look upon a difficult crisis as an occasion of bringing out, on our behalf, the sufficiency of divine grace, it would enable us to preserve the balance of our souls, and to glorify God, even in the deepest waters.

We feel disposed, it may be, to marvel at Israel's language, on the occasion now before us. We may feel at a loss to account for it; but the more we know of our own evil hearts of unbelief, the more we shall see how marvellously like them we are. They would seem to have forgotten the recent display of divine power on their behalf. They had seen the gods of Egypt judged, and the power of Egypt laid prostrate beneath the stroke of Jehovah's omnipotent hand. They had seen the iron chain of Egyptian bondage riven, and the furnace quenched by the same hand. All these things they had seen, and yet the moment a dark cloud appeared upon their horizon, their confidence gave way, their hearts failed, and they gave utterance to their unbelieving murmurings in the following language: Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt!It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." (Ver. 11, 12) Thus is "blind unbelief," ever, "sure to err, and scan God's ways in vain." This unbelief is the same in all ages. It led David, in an evil hour, to say, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." (1 Sam. 27: 1) And how did it turn out? Saul fell on Mount Gilboa; and David's throne was established for ever. Again, it led Elijah the Tishbite, in a moment of deep depression, to flee for his life, from the wrathful threatenings of Jezebel. How did it turn out? Jezebel was dashed to pieces on the pavement, and Elijah was taken in a chariot of fire to heaven.

So it was with Israel in their very first moment of trial. They really thought that the Lord had taken such pains to deliver them out of Egypt merely to let them die in the wilderness. They imagined that they had been preserved by the blood of the paschal lamb, in order that they might be buried in the wilderness. Thus it is that unbelief ever reasons. It leads us to interpret God in the presence of the difficulty, instead of interpreting the difficulty in the presence of God. Faith gets behind the difficulty, and there finds God, in all His faithfulness, love, and power. It is the believer's privilege ever to be in the presence of God. He has been introduced thither by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing should be suffered to take him thence. The place itself he never can lose, inasmuch as his Head and Representative, Christ, occupies it on His behalf. But although he cannot lose the thing itself, he can, very easily, lose all enjoyment of it, the experience and power of it. Whenever his difficulties come between his heart and the Lord, he is, evidently, not enjoying the Lord's presence, but suffering in the presence of his difficulties. Just as when a cloud comes between us and the sun, it robs us, for the time, of the enjoyment of his beams. It does not prevent him from shining, it merely hinders our enjoyment of him. Exactly so is it when we allow trials and sorrows, difficulties and perplexities, to hide from our souls the bright beams of our Father's countenance, which ever shine, with changeless lustre, in the face of Jesus Christ. There is no difficulty too great for our God; yea, the greater the difficulty, the more room there is for Him to act in His proper character, as the God of all power and grace. No doubt, Israel's position, in the opening of our chapter, was a deeply trying one — to flesh and blood perfectly overwhelming. But, then, the Maker of heaven and earth was there, and they had but to use Him.

Yet, alas! my reader, how speedily we fail when trial arises! These sentiments sound very nicely on the ear, and look very well upon paper; and, blessed be God, they are divinely true but, then, the thing is to practise them, when opportunity offers. It is in the practice of them that their power and blessedness are really proved. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John 7: 17)

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Ver. 13, 14) Here is the first attitude which faith takes in the presence of a trial. "*Stand still.*" This is impossible to flesh and blood. All who know in any measure, the restlessness of the human heart, under anticipated trial and difficulty, will be able to form some conception of what is involved in standing still. Nature must be doing something. It will rush hither and thither. It would fain have some hand in the matter. And although it may attempt to justify and sanctify its worthless doings, by bestowing upon them the imposing and popular title of "a legitimate use of means," yet are they the plain and positive fruits of unbelief which always shuts out God, and sees nought save the dark cloud of its own creation. Unbelief creates or magnifies difficulties, and then sets us about removing them by our own bustling and fruitless activities, which, in reality, do but raise a dust around us, which prevents our seeing God's salvation.

Faith, on the contrary, raises the soul above the difficulty, straight to God Himself, and enables one to "stand still." We gain nothing by our restless and anxious efforts. "We cannot make one hair white or black," nor "add one cubit to our stature." What could Israel do at the Red Sea? Could they dry it up? Could they level the mountains? Could they annihilate the hosts of Egypt Impossible. There they were, enclosed within an impenetrable wall of difficulties, in view of which nature could but tremble and feel its own perfect impotency. But this was just the time for God to act. When unbelief is driven from the scene, then God can enter; and, in order to get a proper view of His actings, we must "stand still." Every movement of nature is, so far as it goes, a positive hindrance to our perception and enjoyment of divine interference on our behalf.

This is true of us in every single stage of our history. It is true of us as sinners when, under the uneasy sense of sin upon the conscience, we are tempted to resort to our own doings, in order to obtain relief. Then, truly, we must "stand still" in order to "see the

salvation of God." For what could we do in the matter of making an atonement for sin? Could we have stood with the Son of God upon the cross? Could we have accompanied Him down into the "horrible pit and the miry clay?" Could we have forced our passage upward to that eternal rock on which, in resurrection, He has taken His stand? Every right mind will at once pronounce the thought to be a daring blasphemy. God is alone in redemption; and as for us, we have but to "stand still and see the salvation of God." The very fact of its being God's salvation proves that man has nought to do in it.

The same is true of us, from the moment we have entered upon our Christian career. In every fresh difficulty, be it great or small, our wisdom is to stand still — to cease from our own works, and find our sweet repose in God's salvation. Nor can we make any distinction as to difficulties. We cannot say that there are some trifling difficulties which we ourselves can compass; while there are others in which nought save the hand of God can avail. No; all are alike beyond us. We are as little able to change the colour of a hair as to remove a mountain — to form a blade of grass as to create a world. All are alike to us, and all are alike to God. We have only, therefore, in confiding faith, to cast ourselves on Him who "humbleth himself (alike) to behold the things that are in heaven and on earth." We sometimes find ourselves carried triumphantly through the heaviest trials, while at other times, we quail, falter, and break down under the most ordinary dispensations. Why is this? Because, in the former, we are constrained to roll our burden over on the Lord; whereas, in the latter, we foolishly attempt to carry it ourselves. The Christian is, in himself, if he only realised it, like an exhausted receiver, in which a guinea and a feather have equal moments.

"The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Precious assurance How eminently calculated to tranquillise the spirit in view of the most appalling difficulties and dangers! The Lord not only places Himself between us and our sins, but also between us and our circumstances. By doing the former, He gives us peace of conscience; by doing the latter, He gives us peace of heart. That the two things are perfectly distinct, every experienced Christian knows. Very many have peace of conscience, who have

not Peace of heart. They have, through grace and by faith, found Christ, in the divine efficacy of His blood, between them and all their sins; but they are not able, in the same simple way, to realise Him as standing, in His divine wisdom, love, and power, between them and their circumstances. This makes a material difference in the practical condition of the soul, as well as in the character of one's testimony. Nothing tends more to glorify the name of Jesus than that quiet repose of spirit which results from having Him between us and everything that could be a matter of anxiety to our hearts. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

But some feel disposed to ask the question, "Are we not to do anything?" This may be answered by asking another, namely, what can we do? All who really know themselves must answer, nothing. If, therefore, we can do nothing, had we not better "stand still" If the Lord is acting for us, had we not better stand back? Shall we run before Him? Shall we busily intrude ourselves upon His sphere of action! Shall we come in His way? There can be no possible use in two acting, when one is so perfectly competent to do all. No one would think of bringing a lighted candle to add brightness to the sun at mid-day: and yet the man who would do so might well be accounted wise, in comparison with him who attempts to assist God by his bustling officiousness.

However, when God, in His great mercy, opens the way, faith can walk therein. It only ceases from man's way in order to walk in God's. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." It is only when we have learnt to "stand still" that we are able effectually to go forward. To attempt the latter, until we have learnt the former, is sure to issue in the exposure of our folly and weakness. It is, therefore, true wisdom, in all times of difficulty and perplexity, to "stand still" — to wait only upon God, and He will, assuredly, open a way for us; and then we can peacefully we happily "go forward." There is no uncertainty when God makes a way for us; but every self-devised path must prove a path of doubt and hesitation. The unregenerate man may move along with great apparent firmness and decision in his own ways; but one of the most distinct elements, in

the new creation, is self distrust, and the element which answers thereto is confidence in God. It is when our eyes have seen God's salvation that we can walk therein; but this can never be distinctly seen until we have been brought to the end of our own poor doings.

There is peculiar force and beauty in the expression, "see the salvation of God." The very fact of our being called to "*see*" God's salvation, proves that the salvation is a complete one. It teaches that salvation is a thing wrought out and revealed by God, to be seen and enjoyed by us. It is not a thing made up partly of God's doing, and partly of man's. Were it so, it could not be called *God's* salvation. In order to be His, it must be wholly divested of everything pertaining to man. The only possible effect of human efforts is to raise a dust which obscures the view of God's salvation.

"Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward." Moses himself seems to have been brought to a stand, as appears from the Lord's question, "Wherefore criest thou to me?" Moses could tell the people to "stand still and see the salvation of God," while his own spirit was giving forth its exercises in an earnest cry to God. However, there is no use in crying when we ought to be acting; just as there is no use in acting when we ought to be waiting. Yet such is, ever, our way. We attempt to move forward when we ought to stand still, and we stand still when we ought to move forward. In Israel's case, the question might spring up in the heart, "whither are we to go?" To all appearance there is an insurmountable barrier in the way of any movement forward. How were they to go through the sea? This was the point. Nature never could solve this question. But we may rest assured that God never gives a command without, at the same time, communicating the power to obey. The real condition of the heart may be tested by the command; but the soul that is, by grace, disposed to obey, receives power from above to do so. When Christ commanded the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth, the man might naturally have said, "How can I stretch forth an arm which hangs dead by my side?" But he did not raise any question whatever, for with the command, and from the same source, came the power to obey.

Thus, too, in Israel's case, we see that with the command to go forward came the provision of grace. "But lift thou up thy rod, and

stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." Here was the path of faith. The hand of God opens the way for us to take the first step, and this is all that faith ever God never gives guidance for two steps at a time. I must take one step, and then I get light for the next. This keeps the heart in abiding dependence upon God. "By faith they Passed through the Red Sea as by dry Land." It is evident that the sea was not divided throughout, at once. Had it been so, it would have been "sight" and not "faith." It does not require faith to begin a journey when I can see all the way through; but to begin when I can merely see the first step, this is faith. The sea opened as Israel moved forward, so that for every fresh step, they needed to be cast upon God. Such was the path along which the redeemed of the Lord moved, under His own conducting hand. They passed through the dark waters of death, and found these very waters to be "a wall unto them, on their right hand and on their left."

The Egyptians could not move in such a path as this. They moved on because they saw the way open before them: with them it was sight, and not faith — "Which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." When people *assay* to do what faith alone can accomplish, they only encounter defeat and confusion. The path along which God calls His people to walk is one which nature can never tread — "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 15: 50) Neither can it walk in the ways of God. Faith is the great characteristic principle of God's kingdom, and faith alone can enable us to walk in God's ways. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11) It glorifies God exceedingly when we move on with Him, as it were, blindfold. It proves that we have more confidence in His eyesight than in our own. If I know that God is looking out for me, I may well close my eyes, and move on in holy calmness and stability. In human affairs we know that when there is a sentinel or watchman at his post, others can sleep quietly. How much more may we rest in perfect security, when we know that He who neither slumbers nor sleeps has His eye upon us, and His everlasting arms around us!

"And the angel of God which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went

from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the night." (Ver. 19, 20) Jehovah placed Himself right between Israel and the enemy — this was protection indeed. Before ever Pharaoh could touch a hair of Israel's head, he should make his way through the very pavilion of the Almighty — yea, through the Almighty Himself. Thus it is that God ever places Himself between His people and every enemy, so that "no weapon formed against them can prosper." He has placed Himself between us and our sins; and it is our happy privilege to find Him between us and every one and every thing that could be against us. This is the true way in which to find both peace of heart and peace of conscience. The believer may institute a diligent and anxious search for his sins, but he cannot find them. Why? Because God is between him and them. He has cast all our sins behind His back; while, at, the same time, He sheds forth upon us the light of His reconciled countenance.

In the same manner, the believer may look for his difficulties, and not find them, because God is between him and them. If, therefore, the eye, instead of resting on our sins and sorrows, could rest only upon Christ, it would sweeten many a bitter cup, and enlighten many a gloomy hour. But one finds constantly that nine-tenths of our trials and sorrows are made up of anticipated or imaginary evils, which only exist in our own disordered, because unbelieving, minds. May my reader know the solid peace both of heart and conscience which results from having Christ, in all His fullness, between him and all his sins, and all his sorrows.

It is, at once, most solemn and interesting to note the double aspect of the "pillar," in this chapter. "It was a cloud and darkness" to the Egyptians, but "it gave light by night" to Israel. How like the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Truly that cross has a double aspect, likewise. It forms the foundation of the believer's peace; and, at the same time, seals the condemnation of a guilty world. The self-same blood which purges the believer's conscience and gives him perfect peace, stains this earth and consummates its guilt. The very mission of the Son of God which strips the world of its cloak, and leaves it

wholly without excuse, clothes the Church with a fair mantle of righteousness, and fills her month with ceaseless praise. The very same Lamb who will terrify, by His unmitigated wrath, all tribes and classes of earth, will lead, by His gentle hand, His blood-bought flock, through the green pastures, and beside the still waters for ever. (Compare Rev. 6: 15-17, with Rev. 7: 13-17)

The close of our chapter shows us Israel triumphant on the shore of the Red Sea, and Pharaoh's hosts submerged beneath its waves. The fears of the former and the boastings of the latter had both alike been proved utterly groundless. Jehovah's glorious work had annihilated both the one and the other. The same waters which formed a wall for God's redeemed, formed a grave for Pharaoh. Thus it is ever: those who walk by faith, find a path to walk in, while all who assay to do so find a grave. This is a solemn truth which is not, in any wise, weakened by the fact that Pharaoh was acting in avowed and positive hostility to God, when he "assayed" to pass through the Red Sea. It will ever be found true that all who attempt to imitate faith's actings will be confounded. Happy are they who are enabled, however feebly, to walk by faith. They are moving along a path of unspeakable blessedness — a path which, though it may be marked by failure and infirmity, is, nevertheless, "begun, continued, and ended in God." Oh! that we may all enter more fully into the divine reality, the calm elevation, and the holy independence of this path.

We ought not to turn from this fruitful section of our book without a reference to 1 Cor. 10 in which we have an allusion to "the cloud and the sea." "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were *under the cloud*, and all passed *through the sea*; and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (Ver. 1, 2) There is much deep and precious instruction for the Christian in this passage. The apostle goes on to say, "now these things were our types," thus furnishing us with a divine warrant for interpreting Israel's baptism "in the sea and in the cloud," in a typical way; and, assuredly, nothing could be more deeply significant or practical. It was as a people thus baptised that they entered upon their wilderness journey, for which provision was made in "the spiritual meat" and "spiritual drink," provided by the

hand of love. In other words, they were, typically, a people dead to Egypt and all pertaining thereto. The cloud and the sea were to them what the cross and grave of Christ are to us. The cloud secured them from their enemies; the sea separated them from Egypt: the cross, in like manner, shields us from all that could be against us, and we stand at heaven's side of the empty tomb of Jesus. Here we commence our wilderness journey. Here we begin to taste the heavenly manna and to drink of the streams which emanate from "that spiritual Rock," while, as a pilgrim people, we make our way onward to that land of rest of the which God has spoken to us.

I would further add here, that my reader should seek to understand the difference between the Red Sea and Jordan. They both have their antitype in the death of Christ. But, in the former, we see separation from Egypt; in the latter, introduction into the land of Canaan. The believer is not merely separated from this present evil world, by the cross of Christ; but he is quickened out of the grave of Christ, "raised up together, and made to sit together with Christ, in the heavenlies." (Eph. 2: 5, 6) Hence, though surrounded by the things of Egypt, he is, as to his actual experience, in the wilderness; while, at the same time, he is borne upward, by the energy of faith, to that place where Jesus sits, at the right hand of God. Thus, the believer is not merely "forgiven all trespasses;" but actually associated with a risen Christ in heaven. He is not merely saved by Christ, but linked with Him, for ever. Nothing short of this could either satisfy God's affections or actualise His purposes, in reference to the Church.

Reader, do we understand these things? Do we believe them? Are we realising them? Do we manifest the power of them? Blessed be the grace that has made them unalterably true with respect to every member of the body of Christ, whether it be an eye or an eyelash, a hand or a foot. Their truth, therefore, does not depend upon our manifestation, our realisation, or our understanding, but upon "THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST," which has cancelled all our guilt and laid the foundation of all God's counsels respecting us. Here is true rest for every broken heart and every burdened conscience.

Exodus 15

This chapter opens with Israel's magnificent song of triumph on the shore of the Red Sea, when they had seen "that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians." They had seen God's salvation, and they, therefore, sing His praise and recount His mighty acts. "*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.*" Up to this moment, we have not heard so much as a single note of praise. We have heard their cry of deep sorrow, as they toiled amid the brick-kilns of Egypt; we have hearkened to their cry of unbelief, when surrounded by what they deemed insuperable difficulties; but, until now, we have heard no song of praise. It was not until, as a saved people, they found themselves surrounded by the fruits of God's salvation, that the triumphal hymn burst forth from the whole redeemed assembly. It was when they emerged from their significant baptism "in the cloud and in the sea," and were able to gaze upon the rich spoils of victory, which lay scattered around them, that six hundred thousand voices were heard chanting the song of victory. The waters of the Red Sea rolled between them and Egypt, and they stood on the shore as a fully delivered people, and, therefore, they were able to praise Jehovah.

In this, as in everything else, they were our types. We, too, must know ourselves as saved, in the power of death and resurrection, before ever we can present clear and intelligent worship. There will always be reserve and hesitancy in the soul, proceeding, no doubt, from positive inability to enter into the accomplished redemption which is in Christ Jesus. There may be the acknowledgement of the fact that there is salvation in Christ, and in none other; but this is a very different thing from apprehending, by faith, the true character and ground of that salvation, and realising it as ours. The Spirit of God reveals, with unmistakable clearness, in the Word, that the Church is united to Christ in death and resurrection; and, moreover, that a risen Christ, at God's right hand, is the measure and pledge of the Church's acceptance. When this is believed, it conducts the soul entirely beyond the region of doubt and uncertainty. How can the Christian doubt when he knows that he is continually represented before the throne of God by an Advocate, even "Jesus Christ the righteous?" It is the privilege of the

very feeblest member of the Church of God to know that he was represented by Christ on the cross; that *all* his sins were confessed, borne, judged, and atoned for there. This is a divine reality, and, when laid hold of by faith, must give peace. But nothing short of it ever can give peace. There may be earnest, anxious, and most sincere desires after God. There may be the most pious and devout attendance upon all the ordinances, offices, and forms of religion. But there is no other possible way in which to get the sense of sin entirely removed from the conscience, but seeing it judged in the Person of Christ, as a sin-offering on the cursed tree. If it was judged there, once for all, it is now by the believer to be regarded as a divinely and, therefore, eternally-settled question. And that it was so judged is proved by the resurrection of the Surety. "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before him." (Ecc. 3: 14)

However, while it is generally admitted that all this is, true in reference to the Church collectively, many find considerable difficulty in making a personal application thereof. They are ready to say, with the psalmist, "Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. *But as for me,*" &c. (Ps. 73: 1, 2) They are looking at themselves instead of at Christ, in death, and Christ, in resurrection. They are occupied rather with their appropriation of Christ than with Christ Himself. They are thinking of their capacity rather than their title. Thus they are kept in a state of the most distressing uncertainty; and, as a consequence, they are never able to take the place of happy, intelligent worshippers. They are praying for salvation instead of rejoicing in the conscious possession of it. They are looking at their imperfect fruits instead of Christ's perfect atonement.

Now, in looking through the various notes of this song, in Exodus 15, we do not find a single note about *self*, its doings, its sayings, its feelings, or its fruits. It is all about Jehovah from beginning to end. It begins with, "I will sing unto the Lord, for *he* hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath *he* thrown into the sea." This is a specimen of the entire song. It is a simple record of the attributes and actings of Jehovah. In Ex. 14 the hearts

of the people? had, as it were, been pent up, by the excessive pressure of their circumstances: but in Ex. 15 the pressure is removed, and their hearts find full vent in a sweet song of praise. Self is forgotten. Circumstances are lost sight of. One object, and but one, fills their vision, and that object is the Lord Himself in His character and ways. They were able to say, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands." (Ps. 92: 4) This is true worship. It is when poor worthless self, with all its belongings, is lost sight of, and Christ alone fills the heart, that we present proper worship. There is no need for the efforts of a fleshly pietism to awaken in the soul feelings of devotion. Nor is there any demand whatever for the adventitious appliances of religion, so called, to kindle in the soul the flame of acceptable worship. Oh! no; let but the heart be occupied with the Person of Christ, and "songs of praise" will be the natural result. It is impossible for the eye to rest on Him and the spirit not be bowed in holy worship. If we contemplate the worship of the hosts which surround the throne of God and the Lamb, we shall find that it is ever evoked by the presentation of some special feature of divine excellence or divine acting. Thus should it be with the Church on earth; and when it is not so, it is because we allow things to intrude upon us which have no place in the regions of unclouded light and unalloyed blessedness. In all true worship, God Himself is at once the object of worship, the subject of worship, and the power of worship.

Hence Exodus 15 is a fine specimen of a song of praise. It is the language of a redeemed people celebrating the worthy praise of Him who had redeemed them. "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my fathers God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name, . . . thy right hand, O Lord is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemywho is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? . . . Thou, in thy mercy, hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. . . . The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." How comprehensive is the range of this song. It begins with redemption

and ends with the glory. It begins with the cross, and ends with the kingdom. It is like a beautiful rainbow, of which one end dips in "the sufferings," and the other in "the glory which should follow." It is all about Jehovah. It is an outpouring of soul produced by a view of God and His gracious and glorious actings.

Moreover, it does not stop short of the actual accomplishment of the divine purpose; as we read, "Thou *hast guided* them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." The people were able to say this, though they had but just planted their foot on the margin of the desert. It was not the expression of a vague hope. It was not feeding upon poor blind chance. Oh! no; when the soul is wholly occupied with God, it is enabled to launch out into all the fullness of His grace, to bask in the sunshine of His countenance, and delight itself in the rich abundance of His mercy and loving-kindness. There is not a cloud upon the prospect, when the believing soul, taking its stand upon the eternal rock on which redeeming love has set it in association with a risen Christ, looks up into the spacious vault of God's infinite plans and purposes, and dwells upon the effulgence of that glory which God has prepared for all those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

This will account for the peculiarly brilliant, elevated, and unqualified character of all those bursts of praise which we find throughout sacred Scripture. The creature is set aside; God is the object. He fills the entire sphere of the soul's vision. There is nothing of man, his feelings, or his experiences, and, therefore, the stream of praise flows copiously and uninterruptedly forth. How different is this from some of the hymns which we so often hear sung in Christian assemblies, so full of our failings, our feebleness, our shortcomings. The fact is, we can never sing with real, spiritual intelligence and power when we are looking at ourselves. We shall ever be discovering something within which will act as a drawback to our worship. Indeed, with many, it seems to be accounted a Christian grace to be in a continual state of doubt and hesitation; and, as a consequence, their hymns are quite in character with their condition. Such persons, however sincere and pious, have never yet, in the actual experience of their souls, entered upon the proper ground of worship. They have not yet got done with themselves.

They have not passed through the sea; and, as a spiritually baptised people, taken their stand on the shore, in the power of resurrection. They are still, in some way or another, occupied with self. They do not regard self as a crucified thing, with which God is for ever done.

May the Holy Ghost lead all God's people into fuller, clearer, and worthier apprehensions of their place and privilege as those who, being washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, are presented before God in all that infinite and unclouded acceptance in which He stands, as the risen and glorified Head of His Church. Doubts and fears do not become them, for their divine Surety has not left a shadow of a foundation on which to build a doubt or a fear. Their place is within the veil. They "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. 10: 19) Are there any doubts or fears in the holiest? Is it not evident that a doubting spirit virtually calls in question the perfectness of Christ's work — a work which has been attested, in the view of all created intelligence, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead? That blessed one could not have left the tomb unless all ground of doubting and fearing had been perfectly removed on behalf of His people. Wherefore, it is the Christians sweet privilege ever to triumph in a full salvation. The Lord Himself has become his salvation; and he has only to enjoy the fruits of that which God has wrought for him, and to walk to His praise while waiting for that time, when "Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever."

But there is one note in this song, to which I shall just invite my reader's attention. "He is my God and I will prepare him an habitation." It is worthy of note that when the heart was full to overflowing with the joy of redemption, it gives expression to its devoted purpose in reference to "a habitation for God." Let the Christian reader ponder this. God dwelling with man is a grand thought pervading Scripture from Exodus 15 to Revelation. Harken to the following utterance of a devoted heart: "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, *an habitation* for the mighty God of Jacob." (Ps. 132: 3-5) Again, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (Ps. 49: 9; John 2: 17.) I do not attempt to pursue this subject here;

but I would fain awaken such an interest concerning it in the breast of my reader, as shall lead him to pursue it, prayerfully, for himself, from the earliest notice of it in the Word until he arrives at that soul-stirring announcement, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 21: 3, 4)

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; and they went out into the wilderness of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water." (ver. 22) It is when we get into wilderness experience, that we are put to the test as to the real measure of our acquaintance with God and with our own hearts. There is a freshness and an exuberance of joy connected with the opening of our Christian career, which very soon receives a check from the keen blast of the desert; and then, unless there is a deep sense of what God is to us, above and beyond everything else, we are apt to break down, and, "in our hearts, turn back again into Egypt." The discipline of the wilderness is needful, not to furnish us with a title to Canaan, but to make us acquainted with God and with our own hearts; to enable us to enter into the power of our relationship, and to enlarge our capacity for the enjoyment of Canaan when we actually get there. (See Deut. 8: 2-5.)

The greenness, freshness, and luxuriance of spring have peculiar charms, which will pass away before the scorching heat of summer; but then, with proper care, that very heat which removes the fair traces of spring, produces the mellowed and matured fruits of autumn. Thus it is also in the Christian life; for there is, as we know, a striking and deeply instructive analogy between the principles which obtain in the kingdom of nature and those which characterise the kingdom of grace, seeing it is the same God whose handiwork meets our view in both.

There are three distinct positions in which we may contemplate Israel, namely, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan. In all these, they are "our types;" but we are in all three together. This may seem paradoxical, but it is true. As a matter of actual fact, we are in Egypt, surrounded by natural things, which are entirely adapted to the natural heart. But, inasmuch as we have

been called by God's grace into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ, we, according to the affections and desires of the new nature, necessarily find our place outside of all that which belongs to Egypt,, (i.e., the world in its natural state),* and this causes us to taste of wilderness experience, or, in other words, it places us, as a matter of experience, in the wilderness. The divine nature earnestly breathes after a different order of things — after a purer atmosphere than that with which we find ourselves surrounded, and thus it causes us to feel Egypt to be a moral desert.

{*There is a wide moral difference between Egypt and Babylon, which it is important to understand. Egypt was that out of which Israel came; Babylon was that into which they were afterwards carried. (Comp. Amos 5: 25-27 with Acts 7: 42, 43) Egypt expresses what man has made of the world; Babylon expresses what Satan has made, is making, or will make, of the professing Church. Hence, we are not only surrounded with the *circumstances* of Egypt, but also by the moral *principles* of Babylon.

This renders our "days" what the Holy Ghost has termed "perilous." (*calepoi* — "difficult".) It demands a special energy of the Spirit of God, and complete subjection to the authority of the Word, to enable one to meet the combined influence of the realities of Egypt and the spirit and principles of Babylon. The former meet the natural desires of the heart; while the latter connect themselves with, and address themselves to, the *religiousness* of nature, which gives them a peculiar hold upon the heart. Man is a religious being, and peculiarly susceptible of the influences which arise from music, sculpture, painting, and pompous rites and ceremonies. When these things stand connected with the full supply of all his natural wants — yes, with all the ease and luxury of life, nothing but the mighty power of God's Word and Spirit can keep one true to Christ.

We should also remark that there is a vast difference between the destinies of Egypt and those of Babylon. Isaiah 19 sets before us the blessing that are in store for Egypt. It concludes thus: "And the Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even unto the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. . . . in that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt

and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."(ver. 22-25)

Very different is the close of Babylon's history, whether viewed as a literal city or a spiritual system. "I will also make it a possession for the bitter, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts." (Isaiah 14: 23) "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." (Isaiah 13: 20) So much for Babylon literally; and looking at it from a mystic or spiritual point of view, we read its destiny in Revelation 18. The entire chapter is a description of Babylon, and it concludes thus: " A strong angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, "Thus, with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." (Verse 21)

With what immense solemnity should those words fall upon the ears of all who are in any wise connected with Babylon — that is to say, with the false, professing church. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues!" (Rev. 18: 5) The "power" of the Holy Ghost will necessarily produce, or express itself in a certain " form, and the enemy's aim has ever been to rob the professing church of the power, while he leads her to cling to, and perpetuate the form — to stereotype the form when all the spirit and life has passed away. Thus he builds the spiritual Babylon. The stones of which this city is built are lifeless professors; and the slime or mortar which binds these stones together is a, form of godliness without the power."

Oh my beloved reader, let us see to it that we fully, clearly and influentially understand these things. }

But then, inasmuch as we are, in God's view, eternally associated with Him who is passed right through into the heavenlies, and taken His seat there in triumph and majesty, it is our happy privilege to know ourselves, by faith, as "sitting together with him" there. (Eph. 2) So that although we are, as to our bodies, in Egypt, we are, as to our experience, in the wilderness, while at the same

time, faith conducts us, in spirit, into Canaan, and enables us to feed upon "the old corn of the land," i.e., upon Christ, not as One come down to earth merely, but as One gone back to heaven and seated there in glory.

The concluding verses of this 15th chapter show us Israel in the wilderness. Up to this point it seemed to them to be all fair sailing. Heavy judgements poured upon Egypt, but Israel perfectly exempt — the army of Egypt dead upon the sea shore, but Israel in triumph. All this was well enough; but alas! the aspect of things speedily changed. The notes of praise were soon exchanged for the accents of discontent. "When they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" Again, "the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full! for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Here were the trials of the wilderness. "What shall we eat?" and "What shall we drink?" The waters of Marah tested the heart of Israel and developed their murmuring spirit; but the Lord showed them that there was no bitterness which He could not sweeten with the provision of His own grace. "And the Lord showed them a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet; there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them." Beautiful figure this of Him who was, in infinite grace, cast into the bitter waters of death, in order that those waters might yield nought but sweetness to us for ever. We can truly say, "the bitterness of death is past," and nothing remains for us but the eternal sweets of resurrection.

Verse 26 sets before us the momentous character of this first stage of Gods redeemed in the wilderness. We are in great danger, at this point, of falling into a fretful, impatient, murmuring spirit. The only remedy for this is to keep the eye steadily fixed on Jesus — "looking unto Jesus." He, blessed be His name, ever unfolds himself

according to the need of His people; and they, instead of complaining of their circumstances, should only make their circumstances an occasion of drawing afresh upon Him. Thus it is that the wilderness ministers to our experience of what God is. It is a school in which we learn His patient grace and ample resources. "Forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness." (Acts 13: 18) The spiritual mind will ever own that it is worth having bitter waters for God to sweeten. "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5: 3-5)

However, the wilderness has its Elims as well as its Marahs; its wells and palm trees, as well as its bitter waters. "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped thereby the waters." (Ver. 27) The Lord graciously and tenderly provides green spots in the desert for His journeying people; and though they are, at best, but oases, yet are they refreshing to the spirit and encouraging to the heart. The sojourn at Elim was eminently calculated to soothe the hearts of the people, and hush their murmurings. The grateful shade of its palm trees, and the refreshing of its wells, came in, sweetly and seasonably, after the trial of Marah, and significantly set forth, in our view, the precious virtues of that spiritual ministry which God provides for his people down here. "The twelve and "the seventy " are numbers intimately associated with ministry.

But Elim was not Canaan. Its wells and palm trees were but foretastes of that happy land which lay beyond the bounds of the sterile desert on which the redeemed had just entered. It furnished refreshment, no doubt, but it was wilderness refreshment. It was but for passing moment, designed, in grace, to encourage their depressed spirits, and nerve them for their onward march to Canaan. Thus it is as we know, with ministry in the Church. It is a gracious provision for our need, designed to refresh, strengthen, and encourage our hearts, "until we all come to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ." (Eph. 4)

Exodus 16

"And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure out of the land of Egypt." (Chap. 16: 1) Here we find Israel in a very marked and interesting position. It is still the wilderness, no doubt, but it is a most important and significant stage thereof, namely, "between Elim and Sinai." The former was the place where they had so recently experienced the refreshing springs of divine ministry; the latter was the place where they entirely got off the ground of free and sovereign grace, and placed themselves under a covenant of works. These facts render "the wilderness of Sin" a singularly interesting portion of Israel's journey. Its features and influences are as strongly marked as those of any point in their whole career. They are here seen as the subjects of the same grace which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and, therefore, all their murmurings are instantly met by divine supplies. When God acts in the display of His grace, there is no hindrance. The streams of blessing which emanate from Him, flow onward without interruption. It is only when man puts himself under law that he forfeits everything; for then God must allow him to prove how much he can claim on the ground of his own works.

When God visited and redeemed His people, and brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, it assuredly was not for the purpose of suffering them to die of hunger and thirst in the wilderness. They should have known this. They ought to have trusted Him, and walked in the confidence of that love which had so gloriously delivered them from the horrors of Egyptian bondage. They should have remembered that it was infinitely better to be in the desert with God, than in the brick-kilns with Pharaoh. But no; the human heart finds it immensely difficult to give God credit for pure and perfect love. It has far more confidence in Satan than God. Look, for a moment, at all the sorrow and suffering, the misery and degradation which man has endured by reason of his having hearkened to the voice of Satan, and yet he never gives utterance to a word of complaint of his service, or of desire to escape from under his hand. He is not discontented with Satan, or weary of serving him. Again

and again, he reaps bitter fruits in those fields which Satan has thrown open to him; and yet, again and again, he may be seen sowing the self-same seed, and undergoing the self-same labours.

How different it is in reference to God! When we have set out to walk in His ways, we are ready, at the earliest appearance of pressure or trial, to murmur and rebel. Indeed, there is nothing in which we so signally fail as in the cultivation of a confiding and thankful spirit. Ten thousand mercies are forgotten in the presence of one single trying privation. We have been frankly forgiven all our sins, "accepted in the Beloved," made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, the expectants of eternal glory; and, in addition to all, our path through the desert is strewn with countless mercies; and yet let but a cloud, the size of a man's hand, appear on the horizon, and we at once forget the rich mercies of the past in view of this single cloud, which, after all, may only "break in blessings on our head." The thought of this should humble us deeply in the presence of God. How unlike we are in this, as in every other respect, to our blessed Exemplar! Look at Him — the true Israel in the wilderness — surrounded by wild beasts, and fasting for forty days. How did He carry Himself? Did He murmur? Did He complain of His lot? Did He wish Himself in other circumstances? Ah! no. God was the portion of His cup and the lot of His inheritance. (Ps. 16) And, therefore, when the tempter approached and offered Him the necessaries, the glories, the distinctions, and the honours of this life, He refused them all, and tenaciously held fast the position of absolute dependence upon God and implicit obedience to His word. He would only take bread from God and glory from Him likewise.

Very different was it with Israel after the flesh ! No sooner did they feel the pressure of hunger than "they murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." They seemed to have actually lost the sense of having been delivered by the hand of Jehovah, for they said, "Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness." And, again, in Ex. 17, "the people murmured against Moses and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us, and our children, and our cattle with thirst?" Thus did they, on every occasion, evince a fretful, murmuring spirit, and prove how little

they realised the presence and the hand of their Almighty and infinitely gracious Deliverer.

Now, nothing is more dishonouring to God than the manifestation of a complaining spirit on the part of those that belong to Him. The apostle gives it as a special mark of Gentile corruption that, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful.*" Then follows the practical result of this unthankful spirit. "They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Rom. 1: 2) The heart that ceases to retain a thankful sense of God's goodness will speedily become "dark." Thus Israel lost the sense of being in God's hands; and this led, as might be expected, to still thicker darkness, for we find them, further on in their history, saying, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, *to fall by the sword*, that our wives and our children shall be a prey?" (Num. 14: 3) Such is the line along which a soul out of communion will travel. It first loses the sense of being in God's hands for good, and, finally, begins to deem itself in His hands for evil.

Melancholy progress this! However, the people being so far the subjects of grace, are provided for; and our chapter furnishes the marvellous account of this provision. "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." They, when enveloped in the chilling cloud of their unbelief, had said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full." But now the word is, "bread from heaven." Blessed contrast! How amazing the difference between the Flesh-pots, the leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt, and this heavenly manna — "angels' food!" The former belonged to earth, the latter to heaven.

But, then, this heavenly food was, of necessity, a test of Israel's condition, as we read, "That I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no." It needed a heart weaned from Egypt's influences, to be satisfied with, or enjoy "bread from heaven." In point of fact, we know that the people were not satisfied with it, but despised it, pronounced it "light food," and lusted for flesh. Thus they proved how little their hearts were delivered from Egypt, or disposed to walk in God's law. "In their hearts they turned back

again into Egypt." (Acts 7: 39) But, instead of getting back thither, they were, ultimately, carried away beyond Babylon. (Acts 7: 43) This is a solemn and salutary lesson for Christians. If those who are redeemed from this present world, do not walk with God in thankfulness of heart, satisfied with His provision for the redeemed in the wilderness, they are in danger of falling into the snare of Babylonish influence. This is a serious consideration. It demands a heavenly taste to feed on bread from heaven. Nature cannot relish such food. It will ever yearn after Egypt, and, therefore, it must be kept down. It is our privilege, as those who have been baptised into Christ's death, and "risen again through the faith of the operation of God," to feed upon Christ as "the bread of life which came down from heaven." This is our wilderness food — Christ as ministered by the Holy Ghost, through the written word; while, for our spiritual refreshment, the Holy Ghost has come down, as the precious fruit of the smitten Rock — Christ, as smitten for us. Such is our rare portion, in this desert world.

Now, it is obvious that, in order to enjoy such a portion as this, our hearts must be weaned from everything in this present evil world — from all that would address itself to us as natural men — as men alive in the flesh. A worldly heart — a carnal mind, would neither find Christ in the Word, nor enjoy Elim if found. The manna was so pure and delicate that it could not bear contact with earth. It fell upon the dew, (see Num. 11: 9) and had to be gathered ere the sun was up. Each one, therefore, had to rise early and seek his daily portion. So it is with the people of God now. The heavenly manna must be gathered fresh every morning. Yesterdays manna will not do for today, nor today's for tomorrow. We must feed upon Christ every day, with fresh energy of the Spirit, else we shall cease to grow. Moreover, we must make Christ our primary object. We must seek Him "*early*," before "other things" have had time to take possession of our poor susceptible hearts. Many of us, alas! fail in this. We give Christ a secondary place, and the consequence is, we are left feeble and barren. The enemy, ever watchful, takes advantage of our excessive spiritual indolence to rob us of the blessedness and strength which flow from feeding upon Christ. The new life in the believer can only be nourished and sustained by

Christ. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John 6: 57)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the One who came down from heaven, to be His people's food is ineffably precious to the renewed soul; but, in order to enjoy Him thus, we need to realise ourselves, as in the wilderness, separated to God, in the power of accomplished redemption. If I am walking with God through the desert, I shall be satisfied with the food which He provides, and that is, Christ as come down from heaven. "The old corn of the land of Canaan" has its antitype in *Christ ascended up* on high, and seated in the glory. As such, He is the proper food of those who by faith, know themselves as raised up together and seated together with Him in the heavenlies. But the manna, that is, *Christ as come down* from heaven, is for the people of God, in their wilderness life and experience. As a people journeying down here, we need a Christ who also journeyed down here; as a people seated in spirit up there, we have a Christ who is seated up there. This may help to explain the difference between the manna and the old corn of the land. It is not a question of redemption; that we have in the blood of the cross, and there alone. It is simply the provision which God has made for His people, according to their varied attitudes, whether as actually toiling in the desert, or in spirit taking possession of the heavenly inheritance.

What a striking picture is presented by Israel in the wilderness! Egypt was behind them, Canaan before them, and the sand of the desert around them; while they themselves were called to look up to heaven for their daily supply. The wilderness afforded not one blade of grass nor one drop of water for the Israel of God. In Jehovah alone was their portion. Most touching illustration of God's pilgrim people in this wilderness world! They have nothing here. Their life, being heavenly, can only be sustained by heavenly things. Though *in* the world, they are not *of* it, for Christ has chosen them out of it. As a heaven-born people, they are on their way to their birth-place, and sustained by food sent from thence. Theirs is an upward and an onward course. The glory leads *only* thus. It is utterly vain to cast the eye backward in the direction of Egypt; not a ray of the glory can there be discerned. "They looked *toward the*

wilderness, and behold the glory of the Lord appeared in the clouds." Jehovah's chariot was in the wilderness, and all who desired companionship with Him should be there likewise; and, if there, the heavenly manna should be their food, and that alone.

True, this manna was strange sustenance, such as an Egyptian could never understand, appreciate, or live upon; but those who had been "baptised in the cloud and in the sea," could, if walking in consistency with that significant baptism, enjoy and be nourished by it. Thus is it now in the case of the true believer. The worldling cannot understand how he lives. Both his life and that which sustains it lie entirely beyond the range of nature's keenest vision. Christ is his life, and on Christ he lives. He feeds, by faith, upon the powerful attractions of one who, though being "God over all, blessed for ever," "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2: 7) He traces Him from the bosom of the Father to the cross, and from the cross to the throne, and finds Him, in every stage of His journey, and in every attitude of His life, to be most precious food for his new man. All around, though, in fact, Egypt, is morally a waste howling wilderness, affording nothing for the renewed mind; and, just in proportion as the Christian finds any material to feed upon, must his spiritual man be hindered in his progress. The only provision which God has made is the heavenly manna, and on this the true believer should ever feed.

It is truly deplorable to find Christians seeking after the things of this world. It proves, very distinctly, that they are "loathing" the heavenly manna, and esteeming it "light food." They are ministering to that which they ought to mortify. The activities of the new life will ever show themselves in connection with the subjugation of "the old man with his deeds;" and the more that is accomplished, the more will we desire to feed upon the "bread which strengthens man's heart." As in nature, the more we exercise, the better the appetite, so in grace, the more our renewed faculties are called into play, the more we feel the need of feeding, each day, upon Christ. It is one thing to know that we have life in Christ, together with full forgiveness and acceptance before God, and it is quite another to be in habitual communion with Him — feeding upon Him by faith —

making Him the exclusive food of our souls. Very many profess to have found pardon and peace in Jesus, who, in reality, are feeding upon a variety of things which have no connection with Him. They feed their minds with the newspapers and the varied frivolous and vapid literature of the day. Will they find Christ there? Is it by such instrumentality that the Holy Ghost ministers Christ to the soul? Are these the pure dew-drops on which the heavenly manna descends for the sustenance of God's redeemed in the desert? Alas! no; they are the gross materials in which the carnal mind delights. How then can a true Christian live upon such? We know, by the teaching of God's word, that he carries about with him two natures; and it may be asked, Which of the two is it that feeds upon the world's news and the world's literature? Is it the old or the new? There can be but the one reply. Well, then, which of the two am I desirous of cherishing? Assuredly my conduct will afford the truest answer to this enquiry. If I sincerely desire to grow in the divine Life — if my one grand object is to be assimilated and devoted to Christ — if I am earnestly breathing after an extension of God's kingdom within, I shall, without doubt, seek continually that character of nourishment which is designed of God to promote my spiritual growth. This is plain. A man's acts are always the truest index of his desires and purposes. Hence, if I find a professing Christian neglecting his Bible, yet finding abundance of time — yea, some of his choicest hours — for the newspaper, I can be at no loss to decide as to the true condition of his soul. I am sure he cannot be spiritual — cannot be feeding upon, living for, or witnessing to, Christ.

If an Israelite neglected to gather, in the freshness of the morning hour, his daily portion of the divinely appointed food, he would speedily have become lacking in strength for his journey. Thus is it with us. We must make Christ the paramount object of our souls' pursuit, else our spiritual life will inevitably decline. We cannot even feed upon feelings and experiences connected with Christ, for they, inasmuch as they are fluctuating, cannot form our spiritual nourishment. It was Christ yesterday, and it must be Christ today, and Christ for ever. Moreover, it will not do to feed partly on Christ and partly on other things. As, in the matter of *life*, it is Christ *alone*; so, in the matter of living, it must be Christ alone. As we

cannot mingle anything with that which *imparts* life; so neither can we mingle anything with that which *sustains* it.

It is quite true that, in spirit, and by faith, we can, even now, feed upon a risen and gloried Christ, ascended up to heaven in virtue of accomplished redemption, as prefigured by "the old corn of the land." (See Joshua 5) And not only so, but we know that when God's redeemed shall have entered upon those fields of glory, rest, and immortality, which lie beyond the Jordan, they shall, in actual fact, be done with wilderness food; but they will not be done with Christ. nor with the remembrance of that which constitutes the specific nourishment of their desert life.

Israel were never to forget, amid the milk and honey of the land of Canaan, that which had sustained them during their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness. "This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt..... As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept." (Ver. 32) Most precious memorial of the faithfulness of God! He did not suffer them to die of hunger, as their foolish hearts had unbelievably anticipated. He rained bread from heaven for them, fed them with angels' food, watched over them with all the tenderness of a nurse, bore with them, carried them on eagles' wings; and, had they only continued on the proper ground of grace, He would have put them in eternal possession of all the promises made to their fathers. The pot of manna, therefore, containing, as it did, a man's daily portion, and laid up before the Lord, furnishes a volume of truth. There was no worm therein nor ought of taint. It was the record of Jehovah's faithfulness, in providing for those whom He had redeemed out of the hand of the enemy.

Not so, however, when man hoarded it up for himself. Then the symptoms of corruptibility soon made their appearance. We cannot, if entering into the truth and reality of our position, hoard up. It is our privilege, day by day, to enter into the preciousness of Christ, as the One who came down from heaven to give life unto the world. But if any, in forgetfulness of this, should be found hoarding up for tomorrow, that is, laying up truth beyond his present need,

instead of turning it to profit in the way of renewing strength it will surely become corrupt. This is a salutary lesson for us. It is a deeply solemn thing to learn truth; for there is not a principle which we profess to have learnt which we shall not have to prove practically. God will not have us theorists. One often trembles to hear persons make high professions and use expressions of intense devotedness, whether, in prayer or otherwise, lest, when the hour of trial comes, there may not be the needed spiritual power to carry out what the lips have uttered.

There is a great danger of the intellect's outstripping the conscience and the affections. Hence it is that so many seem, at first, to make such rapid progress up to a certain point; but there they stop short and appear to retrograde. Like an Israelite gathering up more manna than he required for one day's food. He might appear to be accumulating the heavenly food far more diligently than others; yet every particle beyond the day's supply was not only useless, but far worse than useless, inasmuch as it "bred worms." Thus is it with the Christian. He must use what he gets. He must feed upon Christ as a matter of actual need, and the need is brought out in actual service. The character and ways of God, the preciousness and beauty of Christ, and the living depths of the Word are only unfolded to faith and need. It is as we use what we receive that more will be given. The path of the believer is to be a practical one; and here it is that so many of us come short. It will often be found that those who get on most rapidly in theory are the slowest in the practical and experimental elements, because it is word a work of intellect than of heart and conscience. We should ever remember that Christianity is not a set of opinions, a system of dogmas, or a number of views. It is pre-eminently a living reality — a personal, practical, powerful thing, telling itself out in all the scenes and circumstances of daily life, shedding its hallowed influence over the entire character and course, and imparting its heavenly tone to every relationship which one may be called of God to fill. In a word, it is that which flows from being associated and occupied with Christ. This is Christianity. There may be clear views, correct notions. sound principles, without any fellowship with Jesus; but an orthodox creed without Christ will prove a cold, barren, dead thing.

Christian reader, see carefully to it that you are not only saved by Christ, but also living on Him. Make Him the daily portion of your soul. Seek Him "early," seek Him "only." When anything solicits your attention, ask the question, "Will this bring Christ to my heart! Will it unfold Him to my affections or draw me near to His Person?" If not, reject it at once: yes, reject it, though it present itself under the most specious appearance and with the most commanding authority. If your honest purpose be to get on in the divine life, to progress in spirituality, to cultivate personal acquaintance with Christ, then challenge your heart solemnly and faithfully as to this. Make Christ your habitual food. Go, gather the manna that falls on the dew-drops, and feed upon it with an appetite sharpened by a diligent walk with God through the desert. May the rich grace of God the Holy Ghost abundantly Strengthen you in all this!* {*My reader will find it profitable to turn to John 6, and prayerfully meditate upon it, in connection with the subject of the manna. The Passover being near, Jesus feeds the multitude, and then takes His departure to a mountain, there to be alone. From thence He comes to the relief of His distressed people, tossed upon the troubled waters. After this He unfolds the doctrine of His Person and work, God declares how He was to give His flesh for the life of the world, and that none could have life save by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Finally, He speaks of Himself as ascending up where He was before and of the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. It is, indeed, a rich and copious chapter, in which the spiritual reader will find a vast fund of truth for the comfort and edification of his soul. }

There is one point more in our chapter which we shall notice, namely the instigation of the Sabbath, in its connection with the manna and Israel's position, as here set forth. From Genesis 2 down to the chapter now before us, we find no mention made of this institution. This is remarkable. Abel's sacrifice, Enoch's walk with God, Noah's preaching, Abraham's call, together with the detailed history of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, are all presented; but there is no allusion to the Sabbath until we find Israel recognised as a people in relationship and consequent responsibility to Jehovah. The Sabbath was interrupted in Eden; and here we find it again instituted for Israel in the wilderness. But alas! man has no heart for Gods rest. And it came to pass that " There went out some of the people on the

seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." (Ver. 27-29) God would have His people enjoying sweet repose with Himself. He would give them rest, food, and refreshment, even in the wilderness. But man's heart is not disposed to rest with God. The people could remember and speak of the time when they "*sat* by the flesh pots" in Egypt; but they could not appreciate the blessedness of sitting in their tents, enjoying with God "the rest of the holy Sabbath," feeding upon the heavenly manna.

And, be it remarked, that the Sabbath is here presented as a matter of gift. "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath." Further on, in this book, we shall find it put in the form of a law, with a curse and a judgement attached to it, in the case of disobedience; but whether fallen man gets a privilege or a law, a blessing or a curse, it is all alike. His *nature* is bad. He can neither rest with, nor work for, God, If God works and makes a rest for him, he will not keep it; and if God tells him to work, he will not do it. Such is man. He has no heart for God. He can make use of the name of the Sabbath as a something to exalt himself, or as the badge of his own religiousness; but when we turn to Exodus 16 we find that he cannot prize *God's* Sabbath as a *gift*; and when we turn to Numbers 15: 32-38, we find he cannot keep it as a *Law*.

Now, we know that the Sabbath, as well as the manna, was a type. In itself, it was a real blessing—a sweet mercy from the hand of a loving and gracious God, who would relieve the toil and travail of a sin stricken earth by the refreshment of one day of rest out of the seven. Whatever way we look at the institution of the Sabbath, we must see it to be pregnant with richest mercy, whether we view it in reference to man or to the animal creation. And, albeit, that Christians observe the first day of the week — the Lord's day, and attach to it its proper principles, yet is the gracious providence equally observable, nor would any mind at all governed by right feelings, seek, for a moment, to interfere with such a signal mercy. "The Sabbath was made for man;" and although man never has kept

it, according to the divine thought about it, that does not detract from the grace which shines in the appointment of it, nor divest it of its deep significancy as a type of that eternal rest which remains for the people of God, or as a shadow of that substance which faith now enjoys in the Person and work of a risen Christ.

Let not the reader, therefore, suppose that in anything which has been, or may be, stated, in these pages, the object is to touch, in the slightest degree, the merciful provision of one day's rest for man and the animal creation, much less to interfere with the distinct place which the Lord's day occupies in the New Testament. Nothing is further from the writer's thoughts. As a man he values the former, and as a Christian he rejoices in the latter, far too deeply to admit of his penning or uttering a single syllable which would interfere with either the one or the other. He would only ask the reader to weigh, with a dispassionate mind, in the balance of Holy Scripture, every line and every statement, and not form any harsh judgement beforehand.

This subject will come before us again, in our further meditations, if the Lord will. May we learn to value more the rest which our God has provided for us in Christ, and while enjoying Him as our rest, may we feed upon Him as the "hidden manna," laid up, in the power of resurrection, in the inner sanctuary — the record of what God has accomplished, on our behalf, by coming down into this world, in His infinite grace, in order that we might be before Him, according to the perfectness of Christ, and feed on His unsearchable riches for ever.

Exodus 17

And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?"(Ex. 17: 1, 2) Did we not know something of the humiliating evil of our own hearts, we should be quite at a loss to account for Israel's marvellous insensibility to all the Lord's goodness, faithfulness, and mighty acts. They had just seen bread descending from heaven to feed six hundred thousand people in the wilderness: and now they are "ready to stone" Moses for bringing them out into the wilderness to kill them with thirst. Nothing can exceed the desperate unbelief and wickedness of the human heart, save the superabounding grace of God. In that grace alone can any one find relief under the growing sense of his evil nature which circumstances tend to make manifest. Had Israel been transported directly from Egypt to Canaan, they would not have made such sad exhibitions of what the human heart is; and, as a consequence, they would not have proved such admirable ensamples or types for us; but their forty years' wandering in the desert furnishes us with a volume of warning, admonition, and instruction, fruitful beyond conception. From it we learn, amongst many other things, the unvarying tendency of the heart to distrust God. Anything, in short, for it but God. It would rather lean upon a cobweb of human resources than upon the arm of an Omnipotent, all-wise, and infinitely gracious God; and the smallest cloud is more than sufficient to hide from its view the light of His blessed countenance. Well, therefore, may it be termed "An evil heart of unbelief" which will ever show itself ready to "depart from the living God."

It is interesting to note the two great questions raised by unbelief, in this and the preceding chapter. They are precisely similar to those which spring up, within and around us, every day, namely, "what shall we eat? and what shall we drink?" We do not find the people raising the third question in the category, "wherewithal shall we be clothed?" But here are the questions of the

wilderness, "*What!*" "*Where!*" "*How?*" Faith has a brief but comprehensive answer to all the three, namely, GOD! Precious, perfect, answer! Oh! that the writer and the reader were more thoroughly acquainted with its force and fullness! We assuredly need to remember, when placed in a position of trial, that "there hath no temptation taken us but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, (or an "issue" *ekbasin*,) that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10: 13) Whenever we get into trial, we may feel confident that, with the trial, there is an issue, and all we need is a broken will and a single eye to see it.

"And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying; What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." (Ver. 4-6.) Thus all is met by the most perfect grace. Every murmur brings out a fresh display. Here we have the refreshing stream gushing from the smitten rock — beauteous type of the Spirit given as the fruit of Christ's accomplished sacrifice. In Ex. 16 we have a type of Christ coming down from heaven to give life to the world. In Ex. 17 we have a type of the Holy Ghost "shed forth," in virtue of Christ's finished work. "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that, Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. 10: 4) But who could drink till the Rock was smitten? Israel might have gazed on that rock and died of thirst while gazing; but, until smitten by the rod of God, it could yield no refreshment. This is plain enough. The Lord Jesus Christ was the centre and foundation of all God's counsels of love and mercy. Through Him all blessing was to flow to man. The streams of grace were designed to gush forth from "the Lamb of God;" but then it was needful that the Lamb should be slain — that the work of the cross should be an accomplished fact, ere any of these things could be actualised. It was when the Rock of ages was cleft by the hand of Jehovah, that the flood-gates of eternal love were thrown wide open,

and perishing sinners invited by the testimony of the Holy Ghost to "drink abundantly," drink deeply, drink freely. "The gift of the Holy Ghost" is the result of the Son's accomplished work upon the cross. "The promise of the Father" could not be fulfilled until Christ had taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, having wrought out perfect righteousness, answered all the claims of holiness, magnified the law and made it honourable, borne the unmitigated wrath of God against sin, exhausted the power of death, and deprived the grave of its victory. He, having done all this, "ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." (Eph. 4: 8-10.)

This is the true foundation of the Church's peace, blessedness, and glory, for ever. Until the rock was smitten, the stream was pent up, and man could do nothing. What human hand could bring forth water from a flinty rock? And so, we may ask, what human righteousness could afford a warrant for opening the flood-gates of divine love? This is the true way in which to test man's competency. He could not, by his doings, his sayings, or his feelings, furnish a ground for the mission of the Holy Ghost. Let him be or do what he may, he could not do this. But thank God, it is done; Christ has finished the work; the true Rock has been smitten, and the refreshing stream has issued forth, so that thirsty souls may drink. "The water that I shall give him," says Christ, "shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." (John 4: 14) Again; "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7: 37-39; compare, also, Acts 19: 2)

Thus, as in the manna, we have a type of Christ, so in the stream gushing from the rock we have a type of the Holy Ghost. "If thou knewest the gift of God, (i.e., Christ) . . . thou wouldst have

asked of him, and he would have given thee living water," — i.e., the Spirit.

Such, then, is the teaching conveyed to the spiritual mind by the smitten rock; but the name of the place in which this significant type was presented is a standing memorial of man's unbelief. "He called the name of the place Massah (i.e., temptation,) and Meribah, (i.e., chiding,) because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?" (Ver. 7) After such repeated assurances and evidences of Jehovah's presence, to raise such an enquiry proves the deep-seated unbelief of the human heart. It was? in point of fact, tempting Him. Thus did the Jews, in the day of Christ's presence amongst them, seek of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. Faith never acts thus; it believes in, and enjoys, the divine presence, not by a sign, but by the knowledge of Himself. It knows He is there to be enjoyed, and it enjoys Him. Lord, grant us a more artless spirit of confidence.

The next point suggested by our chapter is one of special interest to us. "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand." (Ver. 8, 9) The gift of the Holy Ghost leads to conflict. The light rebukes and conflicts with the darkness. Where all is dark there is no struggle; but the very feeblest struggle bespeaks the presence of light. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye should not do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5: 17) Thus it is in the chapter before us; we have the rock smitten and the water flowing forth, and immediately we read, "then came Amalek and fought with Israel."

This is the first time that Israel are seen in conflict with an external foe. Up to this point, the Lord had fought for them, as we read in Ex. 14. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." But now the word is, "choose us out *men*." True, God must now fight in Israel, as, before, He had fought *for* them. This marks the difference, as to the type; and as to the antitype, we know that there is an immense difference between Christ's battles *for* us, and

the Holy Ghost's battles *in* us. The former, blessed be God, are all over, the victory gained, and a glorious and an everlasting peace secured. The latter, on the contrary, are still going on.

Pharaoh and Amalek represent two different powers or influences; Pharaoh represents the hindrance to Israel's deliverance from Egypt; Amalek represents the hindrance to their walk with God through the wilderness. Pharaoh used the things of Egypt to keep Israel from serving the Lord; he, therefore, prefigures Satan, who uses "this present evil world" against the people of God. Amalek, on the other hand, stands before us as the type of the flesh. He was the grandson of Esau, who preferred a mess of pottage to the birthright. (See Gen. 36: 12) He was the first who opposed Israel, after their baptism "in the cloud and in the sea." These facts serve to fix his character with great distinctness; and, in addition to these, we know that Saul was set aside from the kingdom of Israel, in consequence of his failing to destroy Amalek. (1 Sam. 15) And, further, we find that Haman is the last of the Amalekites of whom we find any notice in scripture. He was hanged on a gallows, in consequence of his wicked attempt against the seed of Israel. (See Esther) No Amalekite could obtain entrance into the congregation of the Lord. And, finally, in the chapter now before us, the Lord declares perpetual war with Amalek.

All these circumstances may be regarded as furnishing conclusive evidence of the fact that Amalek is a type of the flesh. The connection between his conflict with Israel and the water flowing out of the rock is most marked and instructive, and in full keeping with the believer's conflict with his evil nature, which conflict is, as we know, consequent upon his having the new nature, and the Holy Ghost dwelling therein. Israel's conflict began when they stood in the full power of redemption, and had tasted "that spiritual meat and drunk of that spiritual Rock." Until they met Amalek, they had nothing to do. They did not cope with Pharaoh. They did not break the power of Egypt nor snap asunder the chains of its thralldom. They did not divide the sea or submerge Pharaoh's hosts beneath its waves. They did not bring down bread from heaven, or draw forth water out of the flinty rock. They neither had done, nor could they do, any of these things ; but now they are

called to fight with Amalek. All the previous conflict had been between Jehovah and the enemy. They had but to "stand still" and gaze upon the mighty triumphs of Jehovah's outstretched arm and enjoy the fruits of victory. The Lord had fought *for* them; but now He fights *in* or *by* them.

Thus is it also with the Church of God. The victories on which her eternal peace and blessedness are founded were gained, single-handed, by Christ *for* her. He was alone on the cross, alone in the tomb. The Church had to stand aside, for how could she be there? How could she vanquish Satan, endure the wrath of God, or rob death of its sting? Impossible. These things lay far beyond the reach of sinners, but not beyond the reach of Him who came to save them, and who alone was able to bear upon his shoulder the ponderous weight of all their sins, and roll the burden away for ever, by His infinite sacrifice, so that God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from God the Father, in virtue of the perfect atonement of God the Son, can take up His abode in the Church collectively, and in each member thereof individually.

Now it is when the Holy Ghost thus takes up His abode in us, consequent upon Christ's death and resurrection, that our conflict begins. Christ has fought *for* us; the Holy Ghost fights *in* us. The very fact of our enjoying this first rich spoil of victory, puts us into direct conflict with the foe. But the comfort is that we are victors ere we enter upon the field of conflict at all. The believer approaches to the battle singing, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15: 57) We do not, therefore, fight uncertainly or as those that beat the air, while we seek to keep under the body and bring it into subjection. (1 Cor. 9: 26, 27) "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. (Rom. 8: 37) The grace in which we stand renders the flesh utterly void of power to lord it over us. (See Rom. 6 passim.) If the law is "the strength of sin," grace is the weakness thereof. The former gives sin power over us; the latter gives us power over sin.

"And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said unto him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up

to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." (Verses 9-13)

We have, here, two distinct things, namely, conflict and intercession. Christ is on high *for* us, while the Holy Ghost carries on the mighty struggle *in* us. The two things go together. It is as we enter, by faith, into the prevalency of Christ's intercession on our behalf, that we make head against our evil nature. Some there are who seek to overlook the fact of the Christian's conflict with the flesh. They look upon regeneration as a total change or renewal of the old nature. Upon this principle, it would, necessarily, follow that the believer has nothing to struggle with. If my nature is renewed, what have I to contend with? Nothing. There is nothing within, inasmuch as my old nature is made new; and nothing without can affect me, inasmuch as there is no response from within. The world has no charms for one whose flesh is entirely changed; and Satan has nothing by or on which to act. To all who maintain such a theory, it may be said that they seem to forget the place which Amalek occupies in the history of the people of God. Had Israel conceived the idea that, when Pharaoh's hosts were gone, their conflict was at an end, they would have been sadly put about when Amalek came upon them. The fact is, *theirs* only then began. Thus it is with the believer, for "all these things happened unto Israel for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition," (1 Cor. 10: 11) But there could be no "type," no "ensample," no admonition" in "these things," for one whose old nature is made new. Indeed, such an one can have but little need of any of those gracious provisions which God has made in His kingdom for those who are the subjects thereof.

We are distinctly taught in the Word that the believer carries about with him that which answers to Amalek, that is, "the flesh" — "the old man" — "the carnal mind." (Rom. 6: 6; Rom. 8: 7; Gal. 5:

17) Now, if the Christian, upon perceiving the stirrings of his evil nature, begins to doubt his being a Christian, he will not only render himself exceedingly unhappy, but also deprive himself of his vantage ground against the enemy. The flesh exists in the believer and will be there to the end of the chapter. The Holy Ghost fully recognises it as existing, as we may easily see, from various parts of the New Testament. In Romans 6 we read, "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal bodies." Such a precept would be entirely uncalled for if the flesh were not existing in the believer. It would be out of character to tell us not to let sin reign, if it were not actually dwelling in us. There is a great difference between dwelling and reigning. It dwells in a believer, but it reigns in an unbeliever.

However, though it dwells in us, we have, thank God, a principle of power over it. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." The grace which, by the blood of the cross, has put away sin, insures us the victory, and gives us present power over its indwelling principle.

We have died to sin, and hence it has no claim over us. "He that has died is justified from sin." "Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified together, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. 6: 6) "And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." All was victory; and Jehovah's banner floated over the triumphant host, bearing the sweet and heart-sustaining inscription, "Jehovah-nissi" (the Lord my banner). The assurance of victory should be as complete as the sense of forgiveness, seeing both alike are founded upon the great fact that Jesus died and rose again. It is in the power of this that the believer enjoys a purged conscience and subdues indwelling sin. The death of Christ having answered all the claims of God in reference to our sins, His resurrection becomes the spring of power, in all the details of conflict, afterwards. He died *for* us, and now He lives *in* us. The former gives us peace, the latter gives us power.

It is edifying to remark the contrast between Moses on the hill and Christ on the throne. The hands of our great Intercessor can never hang down. His intercession never fluctuates. "He *ever* liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. 7) His intercession is never-

ceasing and all-prevailing. Having taken His place on high, in the power of divine righteousness, He acts for us, according to what He is, and according to the infinite perfectness of what He has done. His hands can never hang down, nor can He need any one to hold them up. His perfect advocacy is founded upon His perfect sacrifice. He presents us before God, clothed in His own perfections, so that though we may ever have to keep our faces in the dust in the sense of what we are, yet the Spirit can only testify to us of what He is before God for us, and of what we are in Elim." "We are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." (Rom. 8) We are in *the body*, as to the fact of our condition; but we are not in *the flesh*, as to the principle of our standing. Moreover, the flesh is in us, though we are dead to it; but we are not in the flesh, because we are alive with Christ.

We may further remark, on this chapter, that Moses had the rod of God with him on the hill — the rod with which he had smitten the rock. This rod was the expression or symbol of the power of God, which is seen alike in atonement and intercession. When the work of atonement was accomplished, Christ took His seat in heaven, and sent down the Holy Ghost to take up His abode in the Church; so that there is an inseparable connection between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit. There is the application of the power of God in each.

Exodus 18

We here arrive at the close of a very marked division of the book of Exodus. We have seen God, in the exercise of His perfect grace, visiting and redeeming His people; bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt; delivering them, first, from the hand of Pharaoh and then from the hand of Amalek. Furthermore, we have seen, in the manna, a type of Christ come down from heaven; in the rock, a type of Christ smitten for His people; and in the gushing stream, a type of the Spirit given. Then follows, in striking and beautiful order, a picture of the future glory, divided into its three grand departments, namely, the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God.

"During the period of Moses' rejection by his brethren he was taken apart and presented with a bride — the companion of his rejection. We were led to see, at the opening of this book, the character of Moses' relationship with this bride. He was "a husband by blood" to her. This is precisely what Christ is to the Church Her connection with Him is founded upon death and resurrection; and she is called to fellowship with His sufferings. It is, as we know, during the period of Israel's unbelief, and of Christ's rejection, that the Church is called out; and when the Church is complete, according to the divine counsels, when the "fullness of the Gentiles is come in," Israel shall again be brought into notice.

Thus it was with Zipporah and Israel of old. Moses had sent her back, during the period of his mission to Israel; and when the latter were brought forth as a fully delivered people, we read that "Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, and her two sons, of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land; and the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my fathers, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God. And he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law, Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife and her two sons with her. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.

And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered from the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. And Jethro Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." (Ex. 18: 2-12)

This is a deeply interesting scene. The whole congregation assembled, in triumph before the Lord — the Gentile presenting sacrifice — and in addition, to complete the picture, the bride of the deliverer, together with the children whom God had given him, are all introduced. It is, in short, a singularly striking foreshadowing of the coming kingdom. "The Lord will give grace and glory." We have already seen, in what we have travelled over of this book, very much of the actings of "grace;" and here we have, From the pencil of the Holy Ghost, a beautiful picture of "glory," — a picture which must be regarded as peculiarly important, as exhibiting the varied fields in which that glory shall be manifested.

"The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God" are scriptural distinctions which can never be overlooked without marring that perfect range of truth which God has revealed in His holy Word. They have existed ever since the mystery of the Church was fully developed by the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and they shall exist throughout the millennial age. Hence, every spiritual student of Scripture will give them their due place in his mind.

The apostle expressly teaches us, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that the mystery of the Church had not been made known, in other ages, to the sons of men, as it was revealed to him. But, though not directly revealed, it had been shadowed forth in one way or another; as, for example, in Joseph's marriage with an Egyptian, and in Moses' marriage with an Ethiopian. The type or

shadow of a truth is a very different thing from a direct and positive revelation of it. The great mystery of the Church was not revealed until Christ, in heavenly glory, revealed it to Saul of Tarsus. Hence, all who look for the full unfolding of this mystery in the law, the prophets, or the psalms, will find themselves engaged in unintelligent labour. When, however, they find it distinctly revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, they will be able, with interest and profit, to trace its foreshadowing in Old Testament Scripture.

Thus we have, in the opening of our chapter, a millennial scene. All the fields of glory lie open in vision before us. "*The Jew*" stands forth as the great earthly witness of Jehovah's faithfulness, His mercy, and His power. This is what the Jew has been in bygone ages, it is what he is now, and what he will be, world without end. "The Gentile" reads, in the book of God's dealings with the Jew, his deepest lessons. He traces the marvellous history of that peculiar and elect people — "a people terrible from their beginning hitherto." He sees thrones and empires overturned — nations shaken to their centre—every one and everything compelled to give way, in order to establish the supremacy of that people on whom Jehovah has set His love. "Now I know," he says, "that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them." (Ver. 11) Such is the confession of "the Gentile," when the wondrous page of Jewish history lies open before him.

Lastly, "*The Church of God*" collectively, as prefigured by Zipporah, and the members thereof individually, as seen in Zipporah's sons, are presented as occupying the most intimate relationship with the deliverer. All this is perfect in its way. We may be asked for our proofs. The answer is, "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." We can never build a doctrine upon a type; but when a doctrine is revealed a type thereof may be discerned with accuracy and studied with profit. In every case, a spiritual mind is essentially necessary, either to understand the doctrine or discern the type. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2: 14)

From verse 13 to the end of our chapter, we have the appointment of rulers, who were to assist Moses in the management

of the affairs of the congregation. This was the suggestion of Jethro, who feared that Moses would "wear away" in consequence of his labours. In connection with this, it may be profitable to look at the appointment of the seventy elders in Numbers 11. Here we find the spirit of Moses crushed beneath the ponderous responsibility which devolved upon him, and he gives utterance to the anguish of his heart in the following accents. "And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers. . . . I am not able to bear all this people alone because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness." (Num. 11: 11-15)

In all this we see Moses evidently retiring from a post of honour. If God were pleased to make him the sole instrument in managing the assembly, it was only so much the more dignity and privilege conferred upon him. True, the responsibility was immense; but faith would own that God was amply sufficient for that. Here, however, the heart of Moses failed him (blessed servant as he was), and he says, "I am not able to bear all this people *alone*, because it is too heavy for *me*." But he was not asked to bear them alone; for God was with him. They were not too heavy for God. It was He that was bearing them; Moses was but the instrument. He might just as well have spoken of his rod as bearing the people; for what was he but a mere instrument in God's hand, as the rod was in his? It is here the servants of Christ constantly fail; and the failure is all the more dangerous because it wears the appearance of humility. It seems like distrust of ones self and deep lowliness of spirit, to shrink from heavy responsibility; but all we need to inquire is, has God imposed that responsibility? If so, He will assuredly be with me in sustaining it; and having Him with me, I can sustain anything. With Him, the weight of a mountain is nothing; without Him, the weight of a feather is overwhelming. It is a totally different thing if a man, in the vanity of his mind, thrust himself forward and take a burden upon his shoulder which God never intended him to bear, and, therefore,

never fitted him to bear it; we may then, surely, expect to see him crushed beneath the weight; but if God lays it upon him, He will qualify and strengthen him to carry it.

It is never the fruit of humility to depart from a divinely-appointed post. On the contrary, the deepest humility will express itself by remaining there in simple dependence upon God. It is a sure evidence of being occupied about *self* when we shrink from service on the ground of inability. God does not call us unto service on the ground of our ability, but of His own; hence, unless I am filled with thoughts about myself, or with positive distrust of Him, I need not relinquish any position of service or testimony because of the heavy responsibilities attaching thereto. all power belongs to God, and it is quite the same whether that power acts through one agent or through seventy; the power is still the same: but if one agent refuse the dignity, it is only so much the worse for him. God will not force people to abide in a place of honour, if they cannot trust Him to sustain them there. The way lies always open to them to step down from their dignity, and sink into the place where base unbelief is sure to put us.

Thus it was with Moses. He complained of the burden, and the burden was speedily removed; but with it the high honour of being allowed to carry it. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." (Num. 11: 16, 17) There was no fresh power introduced. It was the same Spirit, whether in one or in seventy. There was no more value or virtue in the flesh of seventy men than in the flesh of one man. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." (John 6: 63) There was nothing, in the way of power, gained; but a great deal, in the way of dignity, lost by this movement on the part of Moses.

In the after part of Numbers 11 we find Moses giving utterance to accents of unbelief, which called forth from the Lord a

sharp rebuke. "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." If my reader will compare Num. 11-15 with Num. 21, 22, he will see a marked and solemn connection. The man who shrinks from responsibility, on the ground of his own feebleness, is in great danger of calling in question the fullness and sufficiency of God's resources. This entire scene teaches a most valuable lesson to every servant of Christ who may be tempted to feel himself alone or overburdened in his work. Let such an one bear in mind that, where the Holy Ghost is working, one instrument is as good and as efficient as seventy; and where He is not working seventy are of no more value than one. It all depends upon the energy of the Holy Ghost. With Him, one man can do all, endure all, sustain all. Without Him, seventy men can do nothing. Let the lonely servant remember, for the comfort and encouragement of his sinking heart, that, provided he has the presence and power of the Holy Ghost with him, he need not complain of his burden, nor sigh for a division of labour. If God honour a man by giving him a great deal of work to do, let him rejoice therein and not murmur; for if he murmur, he can very speedily lose his honour. God is at no loss for instruments. He could, from the stones, raise up children unto Abraham; and He can raise up, from the same, the needed agents to carry on His glorious work.

Oh! for a heart to serve Him! A patient, humble, self-emptied, devoted heart! A heart ready to serve in company, ready to serve alone, a heart so filled with love to Christ that it will find its joy — its chief joy — in serving Him, let the sphere or character of service be what it may. This assuredly is the special need of the day in which our lot is cast. May the Holy Ghost stir up our hearts to a deeper sense of the exceeding preciousness of the name of Jesus, and enable us to yield a fuller, clearer, more unequivocal response to the changeless love of His heart!

Exodus 19

We have now arrived at a most momentous point in Israel's history. We are called to behold them standing at the foot of "the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire." The fair millennial scene which opened before us in the preceding chapter has passed away. It was but a brief moment of sunshine in which a very vivid picture of the kingdom was afforded; but the sunshine was speedily followed by the heavy clouds which gathered around that "palpable mount," where Israel, in a spirit of dark and senseless legality, abandoned Jehovah's covenant of pure grace for man's covenant of works. Disastrous movement! A movement fraught with the most dismal results. Hitherto, as we have seen, no enemy could stand before Israel — no obstacle was suffered to interrupt their onward and victorious march. Pharaoh's hosts were overthrown — Amalek and his people were discomfited with the edge of the sword — all was victory, because God was acting on behalf of His people, in pursuance of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the opening verses of the chapter now before us, the Lord recapitulates His actings toward Israel in the following touching and beautiful language: " Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." (Ver. 3-6) Observe, it is "*my voice*" and "*my covenant*." What was the utterance of that "voice?" and what did that "covenant" involve? Had Jehovah's voice made itself heard for the purpose of laying down the rules and regulations of a severe and unbending law-giver? By no means. It had spoken to demand freedom for the captivity provide a refuge from the sword of the destroyer — to make a way for the ransomed to pass over — to bring down bread from heaven, to draw forth water out of the flinty rock. Such had been the gracious and intelligible utterances of Jehovah's "voice," up to the moment at which " Israel camped before the mount."

And as to His "covenant," it was one of unmingled grace. It proposed no condition — it made no demands — it put no yoke on the neck — no burden on the shoulder. When "the God of glory appeared unto Abraham," in Ur of the Chaldees, He certainly did not address him in such words as, "thou Shalt do this," and "thou shalt not do that." Ah! no; such language was not according to the heart of God. It suits Him far better to place "a fair mitre" upon a sinner's head, than to "put a yoke upon his neck." His word to Abraham was, "I WILL GIVE." The land of Canaan was not to be purchased by man's doings, but to be given by God's grace. Thus it stood; and, in the opening of the book of Exodus, we see God coming down in grace to make good His promise to Abraham's seed. The condition in which He found that seed made no difference, inasmuch as the blood of the lamb furnished Him with a perfectly righteous ground on which to make good His promise. He evidently had not promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed on the ground of ought that He foresaw in them, for this would have totally destroyed the real nature of a promise. It would have made it a compact and not a promise; "but God gave it to Abraham by promise," and not by compact. (Read Gal. 3)

Hence, in the opening of this 19th chapter, the people are reminded of the grace in which Jehovah had hitherto dealt with them; and they are also assured of what they should yet be, provided they continued to hearken to mercy's heavenly "voice," and to abide in the "covenant" of free and absolute grace. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." How could they be this? Was it by stumbling up the ladder of self-righteousness and legalism? Would they be "a peculiar treasure" when blasted by the curses of a broken law — a law which they had broken before ever they received it? Surely not. How then were they to be this "peculiar treasure?" By standing in that position in which Jehovah surveyed them when He compelled the covetous prophet to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out

of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn." (Num. 24: 5-8)

However, Israel was not disposed to occupy this blessed position. Instead of rejoicing in God's "holy promise," they undertook to make the most presumptuous vow that mortal lips could utter. "All the people answered together, and said, *"All that the Lord hath, spoken we will do."* (Ex. 19: 8) This was bold language. They did not even say, "we hope to do" or "we will endeavour to do." This would have expressed a measure of self-distrust. But no; they took the most absolute ground. "We will do." Nor was this the language of a few vain, self-confident spirits who presumed to single themselves out from the whole congregation. No; "*all the people answered together.*" They were unanimous in the abandonment of the holy promise" — the "holy covenant."

And now, observe the result. The moment Israel uttered their "singular vow," the moment they undertook to "do," there was a total alteration in the aspect of things. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee *in a thick cloud.* And thou shalt set bounds unto the people, round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount, shall be surely put to death." This was a very marked change; the One who had just said, "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself," now envelopes Himself "in a thick cloud," and says, "set bounds unto the people round about." The sweet accents of grace and mercy are exchanged for the "thunderings and lightnings" of the fiery mount. Man had presumed to talk of his miserable doings in the presence of God's magnificent grace. Israel had said, "we will do," and they must be put at a distance in order that it may be fully seen what they are able to do. God takes the place of moral distance; and the people are but too well disposed to have it so, for they are filled with fear and trembling; and no marvel, for the sight was "terrible," — "so terrible that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." Who could endure the sight of that "devouring fire," which was the apt expression of divine holiness? "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them."

(Deut. 33: 2) The term "fiery," as applied to the law, is expressive of its holiness: "Our God is a consuming fire," — perfectly intolerant of evil, in thought, word, and deed.

Thus, then, Israel made a fatal mistake in saying, "we will do." It was taking upon themselves a vow which they were not able, even were they willing, to pay; and we know who has said, "better that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." It is of the very essence of a vow that it assumes the competency to fulfil; and where is man's competency? As well might a bankrupt draw a cheque on the bank, as a helpless sinner make a vow. A man who makes a vow, denies the truth, as to his nature and condition. He is ruined, what can he do? He is utterly without strength, and can neither will nor do anything good. Did Israel keep their vow Did they do "all that the Lord commanded?" Witness the golden calf, the broken tables, the desecrated Sabbath, the despised and neglected ordinances, the stoned messengers, the rejected and crucified Christ, the resisted Spirit. Such are the overwhelming evidences of mans dishonoured vows. Thus must it ever be when fallen humanity undertakes to vow.

Christian reader, do you not rejoice in the fact that your eternal salvation rests not an your poor shadowy vows and resolutions, but on "the one offering of Jesus Christ once?" Oh, yes, "this is our joy, which never can fail." Christ has taken all our vows upon Himself, and gloriously discharged them for ever. His resurrection-life flows through His members and produces in them results which legal vows and legal claims never could effect. He is our life, and He is our righteousness. May his name be precious to our hearts. May His cause ever command our energies. May it be our meat and our drink to spend and be spent in His dear service.

I cannot close this chapter without noticing, in connection, a passage in the Book of Deuteronomy, which may present a difficulty to some minds. It has direct reference to the subject on which we have been dwelling. "And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: *they have well said all that they have spoken.* (Deut. 5: 28) From this passage it might seem as though the Lord approved of their making

a vow; but if my reader will take the trouble of reading the entire context, from ver. 24-27, he will see at once that it has nothing whatever to say to the vow, but that it contains the expression of their terror at the consequences of their vow. They were not able to endure that which was commanded. "If," said they, "we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived! Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it." It was the confession of their own inability to encounter Jehovah in that awful aspect which their proud legality had led Him to assume. It is impossible that the Lord could ever commend an abandonment of free and changeless grace for a sandy foundation of "works of law."

Exodus 20

It is of the utmost importance to understand the true character and object of the moral law, as set forth in this chapter. There is a tendency in the mind to confound the principles of law and grace, so that neither the one nor the other can be rightly understood. Law is shorn of its stern and unbending majesty; and grace is robbed of all its divine attractions. God's holy claims remain unanswered, and the sinner's deep and manifold necessities remain unreached by the anomalous system framed by those who attempt to mingle law and grace. In point of fact, they can never be made to coalesce, for they are as distinct as any two things can be. Law sets forth what man ought to be; grace exhibits what God is. How can these ever be wrought up into one system? How can the sinner ever be saved by a system made up of half law, half grace? Impossible. It must be either the one or the other.

The law has sometimes been termed "the transcript of the mind of God." This definition is entirely defective. Were we to term it a transcript of the mind of God as to what man ought to be, we should be nearer the truth. If I am to regard the ten commandments as the transcript of the mind of God, then, I ask, is there nothing in the mind of God save "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not?" Is there no grace? No mercy? No loving kindness? Is God not to manifest what He is? Is He not to tell out the deep secrets of that love which dwells in His bosom? Is there nought in the divine character but stern requirement and prohibition? Were this so, we should have to say, "God is law" instead of "God is love." But, blessed be His name, there is more in His heart than could ever be wrapped up in the "ten words" uttered on the fiery mount. If I want to see what God is, I must look at Christ; "for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily." (Col. 2: 9) "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1: 17) Assuredly there was a measure of truth in the law. It contained the truth as to what man ought to be. Like everything else emanating from God, it was perfect so far as it went — perfect for the object for which it was administered; but that object was not, by any means, to unfold, in the view of guilty sinners, the nature and character of God. There was no grace — no mercy. "He that despised Moses' law died

without mercy." (Heb. 10:28.) "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." (Lev. 18: 5; Rom. 10: 5) "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." (Deut. 27: 26; Gal 3: 10) This was not grace. Indeed, mount Sinai was not the place to look for any such thing. There Jehovah revealed Himself in awful majesty, amid blackness, darkness, tempest, thunderings, and lightnings. These were not the attendant circumstances of an economy of grace and mercy; but they were well suited to one of truth and righteousness; and the law was that and nothing else.

In the law God sets forth what a man ought to be, and pronounces a curse upon him if he is not that. But then a man finds, when he looks at himself in the light of the law, that he actually is the very thing which the law condemns. How then is he to get life by it? It proposes life and righteousness as the ends to be attained, by keeping it ; but it proves, at the very outset, that we are in a state of death and unrighteousness. We want the very things at the beginning which the law proposes to be gained at the end. How, therefore, are we to gain them? In order to do what the law requires, I must have life; and in order to be what the law requires, I must have righteousness; and if I have not both the one and the other, I am "cursed." But the fact is, I have neither. What am I to do? This is the question. Let those who "desire to be teachers of the law" furnish an answer. Let them furnish a satisfactory reply to an upright conscience, bowed down under the double sense of the spirituality and inflexibility of the law and its own hopeless carnality.

The truth is, as the apostle teaches us, "the law entered that the offence might abound." (Rom. 5: 20) This shows us, very distinctly, the real object of the law. It came in by the way in order to set forth the exceeding sinfulness of sin. (1 Cor. 7: 13) It was, in a certain sense, like a perfect mirror let down from heaven to reveal to man his moral derangement. If I present myself, with deranged hair, before a mirror, it shows me the derangement, but does not set it right. If I measure a crooked wall, with a perfect plumb-line, it reveals the crookedness, but does not remove it. If I take out a lamp on a dark night, it reveals to me all the hindrances and disagreeables in the way, but it does not remove them. Moreover, the mirror, the

plumb-line, and the lamp, do not *create* the evils which they severally point out; they neither *create* nor *remove*, but simply *reveal*. Thus is it with the law; it does not create the evil in man's heart, neither does it remove it; but, with unerring accuracy, it reveals it.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Yea, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7: 7) He does not say that he would not have had "lust." No; but merely that "he had not known it." The "lust" was there; but he was in the dark about it until the law, as "the candle of the Almighty," shone in upon the dark chambers of his heart and revealed the evil that was there. Like a man in a dark room, who may be surrounded with dust and confusion, but he cannot see ought thereof by reason of the darkness. Let the beams of the sun dart in upon him, and he quickly perceives all. Do the sunbeams create the dust? Surely not. The dust is there, and they only detect and reveal it. This is a simple illustration of the effect of the law. It judges man's character and condition. It proves him to be a sinner and shuts him up under the curse. It comes to judge what he is, and curses him if he is not what it tells him he ought to be.

It is, therefore, a manifest impossibility that any one can get life and righteousness by that which can only curse him; and unless the condition of the sinner, and the character of the law are totally changed, it can do nought else but curse him. It makes no allowance for infirmities, and knows nothing of sincere, though imperfect, obedience. Were it to do so, it would not be what it is, "holy, just, and good." It is just because the law is what it is, that the sinner cannot get life by it. If he could get life by it, it would not be perfect, or else he would not be a sinner. It is impossible that a sinner can get life by a perfect law, for inasmuch as it is perfect, it must needs condemn him. Its absolute perfectness makes manifest and seals man's absolute ruin and condemnation. "Therefore by deeds of law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3: 20) He does not say, "by the law is sin," but only "the knowledge of sin." "For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Rom. 5: 13)

Sin was there, and it only needed law to develop it in the form of "transgression." It is as if I say to my child, "you must not touch that knife." My very prohibition reveals the tendency in his heart to do his own will. It does not create the tendency, but only reveals it.

The apostle John says that "sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4) The word "transgression" does not develop the true idea of the Spirit in this passage. In order to have "transgression" I must have a definite rule or line laid down. Transgression means a passing across a prohibited line; such a line I have in the law. I take any one of its prohibitions, such as, "thou shalt not kill," "thou shalt not commit adultery," "thou shalt not steal." Here, I have a rule or line set before me; but I find I have within me the very principles against which these prohibitions are expressly directed. Yea, the very fact of my being told not to commit murder, shows that I have murder in my nature. There would be no necessity to tell me not to do a thing which I had no tendency to do; but the exhibition of God's will, as to what I ought to be, makes manifest the tendency of my will to be what I ought not. This is plain enough, and is in full keeping with the whole of the apostolic reasoning on the point.

Many, however, will admit that we cannot get life by the law; but they maintain, at the same time, that the law is our rule of life. Now, the apostle declares that "as many as are of works of law are under the curse." (Gal 3: 10) It matters not who they are, if they occupy the ground of law, they are, of necessity, under the curse. A man may say, "I am regenerate, and, therefore, not exposed to the curse." This will not do. If regeneration does not take one off the ground of law, it cannot take him beyond the range of the curse of the law. If the Christian be under the former, he is, of necessity, exposed to the latter. But what has the law to do with regeneration? Where do we find anything about it in Exodus 20: 8 The law has but one question to put to a man — a brief, solemn, pointed question, namely, "Are you what you ought to be?" If he answer in the negative, it can but hurl its terrible anathema at him and slay him. And who will so readily and emphatically admit that, in himself, he is anything but what he ought to be, as the really regenerate man? Wherefore, if he is under the law, he must, inevitably, be under the curse. The law cannot possibly lower its standard: nor yet

amalgamate with grace. Men do constantly seek to lower its standard; they feel that they cannot get up to it, and they, therefore, seek to bring it down to them; but the effort is in vain: it stands forth in all its purity, majesty, and stern inflexibility, and will not accept a single hair's breadth short of perfect obedience; and where is the man, regenerate or unregenerate, that can undertake to produce that? It will be said, "We have perfection in Christ." True; but that is not by the law, but by grace; and we cannot possibly confound the two economies. Scripture largely and distinctly teaches that we are not justified by the law; nor is the law our rule of life. That which can only curse can never justify; and that which can only kill can never be a rule of life. As well might a man attempt to make a fortune by a deed of bankruptcy filed against him.

If my reader will turn to Acts 15, he will see how the attempt to put Gentile believers under the law, as a rule of life, was met by the Holy Ghost. "There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." This was nothing else than the hiss of the old serpent, making itself heard in the dark and depressing suggestion of those early legalists. But let us see how it was met by the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost, and the unanimous voice of the twelve apostles and the whole Church. "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear," — what? Was it the requirements and the curses of the law of Moses? No: blessed be God, these are not what He would have falling on the ears of helpless sinners. Hear what then? "SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL, AND BELIEVE." This was what suited the nature and character of God. He never would have troubled men with the dismal accents of requirement and prohibition. These Pharisees were not His messengers; far from it. They were not the bearers of glad tidings, nor the publishers of peace, and therefore, their "feet" were ought but "beautiful" in the eyes of One who only delights in mercy.

"Now, therefore," continues the apostle, "why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our

fathers nor we were able to bear?" This was strong, earnest language. God did not want "to put a yoke upon the neck" of those whose hearts had been set free by the gospel of peace. He would rather exhort them to stand fast in the liberty of Christ, and not be "entangled again with the yoke of bondage." He would not send those whom He had received to His bosom of love, to be terrified by the "blackness, and darkness, and tempest," of "the mount that might be touched." How could we ever admit the thought that those whom God had received in grace He would rule by law? Impossible. "We believe," says Peter, "that through the GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST we shall be saved even as they." Both the Jews, who had received the law, and the Gentiles, who never had, were now to be "saved through grace." And not only were they to be "saved" by grace, but they were to "stand" in grace, (Rom 5: 2) and to "grow in grace." (2 Peter 3: 18.) To teach anything else was to "tempt God." Those Pharisees were subverting the very foundations of the Christian faith; and so are all those who seek to put believers under the law. There is no evil or error more abominable in the sight of the Lord than legalism. Harken to the strong language — the accents of righteous indignation — which fell from the Holy Ghost, in reference to those teachers of the law: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." (Gal, 5: 12)

And, let me ask, are the thoughts of the Holy Ghost changed, in reference to this question? Has it ceased to be a tempting of God to place the yoke of legality upon a sinner's neck? Is it now in accordance with His gracious will that the law should be read out in the ears of sinners? Let my reader reply to these enquiries in the light of the fifteenth of Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians. These scriptures, were there no other, are amply sufficient to prove that God never intended that the "Gentiles should hear the word" of the law. Had He so intended, He would, assuredly, have "made choice" of some one to proclaim it in their ears. But no; when He sent forth His "fiery law," He spoke only in *one* tongue; but when He proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, through the blood of the Lamb, He spoke in the language "of *every nation under heaven.*" He spoke in such a way as that "*every man in his own tongue wherein he was Born,*" might hear the sweet story of grace. (Acts 2: 1-11)

Further, when He was giving forth, from mount Sinai, the stern requirements of the covenant of works, He addressed Himself exclusively to *one* people. His voice was only heard within the narrow enclosures of the Jewish nation; but when, on the plains of Bethlehem, "the angel of the Lord" declared "good tidings of great joy," he added those characteristic words, "which shall be to *all people*." And, again, when the risen Christ was sending forth His heralds of salvation, His commission ran thus, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the gospel to *every creature*." (Mark 16: 15; Luke 2: 10) The mighty tide of grace which had its source in the bosom of God, and its channel in the blood of the Lamb, was designed to rise, in the resistless energy of the Holy Ghost, far above the narrow enclosures of Israel, and roll through the length and breadth of a sin-stained world. "Every creature" must hear, "in his own tongue," the message of peace, the word of the gospel, the record of salvation, through the blood of the cross.

Finally, that nothing might be lacking to prove to our poor legal hearts that mount Sinai was not, by any means, the spot where the deep secrets of the bosom of God were told out, the Holy Ghost has said, both by the mouth of a prophet and an apostle, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Isa. 3: 7; Rom. 10: 15) But of those who sought to be teachers of the law the same Holy Ghost has said, "I would they were even cut off that trouble you."

Thus, then, it is obvious that the law is neither the ground of life to the sinner nor the rule of life to the Christian. Christ is both the one and the other. He is our life and He is our rule of life. The law can only curse and slay. Christ is our life and righteousness. He became a curse for us by hanging on a tree. He went down into the place where the sinner lay — into the place of death and judgement — and having, by His death, entirely discharged all that was or could be against us, He became, in resurrection, the source of life and the ground of righteousness to all who believe in His name. Having thus life and righteousness in Him, we are called to walk, not merely as the law directs, but to "walk even as he walked." It will hardly be deemed needful to assert that it is directly contrary to Christian ethics to kill, commit adultery, or steal. But were a

Christian to shape his way according to these commands, or according to the entire decalogue, would he yield the rare and delicate fruits which the Epistle to the Ephesians sets forth? Would the ten commandment ever cause a thief to give up, stealing, and go to work that he might have to give? Would they ever transform a thief into a laborious and liberal man? Assuredly not. The law says, "thou shalt not steal;" but does it say, "go and give to him that needeth" — go feed, clothe, and bless your enemy" — "go gladden by your benevolent feelings and your beneficent acts the heart of him who only and always seeks your hurt?" By no means; and yet, were I under the law, as a rule, it could only curse me and slay me. How is this, when the standard in the New Testament is so much higher? Because am weak, and the law gives me no strength and shows me no mercy. The law *demand*s strength from one that has none, and *curses* him if he cannot display it. The gospel *gives* strength to one that has none, and *blesses* him in the exhibition of it. The law proposes life as the *end* of obedience. The gospel gives life as the only proper *ground* of obedience.

But that I may not weary the reader with arguments, let me ask if the law be, indeed, the rule of a believer's life, where are we to find it so presented in the New Testament? The inspired apostle evidently had no thought of its being the rule when he penned the following words: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to *this rule*, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. 6: 15, 16) What "rule?" The law? No, but the "new creation." Where shall we find this in Exodus 20? It speaks not a word about "new creation." On the contrary, it addresses itself to man as he is, in his natural or old-creation state, and puts him to the test as to what he is really able to do. Now if the law were the rule by which believers are to walk, why does the apostle pronounce his benediction on those who walk by another rule altogether? Why does he not say, "as many as walk according to the rule of the ten commandments?" Is it not evident, from this one passage, that the Church of God has a higher rule by which to walk? Unquestionably. The ten commandments, though forming, as all true Christians admit, a part of the canon of inspiration, could never be the rule of

life to one who has, through infinite grace, been introduced into the new creation — one who has received new life, in Christ.

But some may ask, "Is not the law perfect? And, if perfect, what more would you have?" The law is divinely perfect. Yea, it is the very perfection of the law which causes it to curse and slay those who are not perfect -if they attempt to stand before it. "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal.' It is utterly impossible to form an adequate idea of the infinite perfectness and spirituality of the law. But then this perfect law coming in contact with fallen humanity — this spiritual law coming in contact with "the carnal mind," could only "work wrath" and "enmity." (Rom. 4: 15; Rom. 8: 7) Why? Is it because the law is not perfect? No, but because it is, and man is a sinner. If man were perfect, he would carry out the law in all its spiritual perfectness; and even in the case of true believers, though they still carry about with them an evil nature, the apostle teaches us "that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8: 4) "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" — "love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom, 13: 8-10) If I love a man, I shall not steal his property — nay, I shall seek to do him all the good I can. All this is plain and easily understood by the spiritual mind; but it leaves entirely untouched the question of the law, whether as the ground of life to a sinner or the rule of life to the believer.

If we look at the law, in its two grand divisions, it tells a man to love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind; and to love his neighbour as himself. This is the sum of the law. This, and not a tittle less, is what the law demands. But where has this demand ever been responded to by any member of Adam's fallen posterity? Where is the man who could say he loves God after such a fashion? "The carnal mind (i.e., the mind which we have by nature) is enmity against God." Man hates God and His ways. God came, in the Person of Christ, and showed Himself to man — showed Himself, not in the overwhelming brightness of His majesty, but in all the charm and sweetness of perfect grace and condescension. What was the result? Man hated God. "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John 15: 24.)

But, it must be said, " Man ought to love God." No doubt, and he deserves death and eternal perdition if he does not. But can the law produce this love in man's heart? Was that its design? By no means, "for the law worketh wrath." The law finds man in a state of enmity against God; and without ever altering that state — for that was not its province — it commands him to love God with all his heart, and curses him if he does not. It was not the province of the law to alter or improve man's nature; nor yet could it impart any power to carry out its righteous demands. It said "This do, and thou shalt live." It commanded man to love God. It did not reveal what God was to man, even in his guilt and ruin; but it told man what he ought to be toward God. This was dismal work. It was not the unfolding of the powerful attractions of the divine character, producing in man true repentance toward God, melting his icy heart, and elevating his soul in genuine affection and worship. No: it was an inflexible command to love God; and, instead of producing love, it "worked wrath;" not because God ought not to be loved, but because man was a sinner.

Again, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Can "the natural man" do this? Does he love his neighbour as himself? Is this the principle which obtains in the chambers of commerce, the exchanges, the banks, the marts, the fairs, and the markets of this world? Alas! no. Man does not love his neighbour as he loves himself. No doubt he ought: and if he were right, he would. But, then, he is all wrong — totally wrong — and unless he is "born again" of the word and the Spirit of God, he cannot "see nor enter the kingdom of God." The law cannot produce this new birth. It kills "the old man," but does not, and cannot, create "the new." As an actual fact we know that the Lord Jesus Christ embodied, in His glorious Person, both God and our neighbour, inasmuch as He was, according to the foundation-truth of the Christian religion, "God manifest in the flesh." How did man treat Him? Did he love Him with all his heart, or as himself? The very reverse. He crucified Him between two thieves, having previously preferred a murderer and a robber to that blessed One who had gone about doing good — who had come forth from the eternal dwelling-place of light and love — Himself the very living personification of that light and love — whose bosom had ever heaved with purest sympathy with human need — whose hand had ever been ready to dry the sinner's tears and

alleviate his sorrows. Thus we stand and gaze upon the cross of Christ, and behold in it an unanswerable demonstration of the fact that it is not within the range of man's nature or capacity to keep the law.*

{*For further exposition of the law, and also of the doctrine of the Sabbath, the reader is referred to a tract, entitled "A Scriptural Inquiry into the True Nature of the Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry.}

It is peculiarly interesting to the spiritual mind, after all that has passed before us, to observe the relative position of God and the sinner at the close of this memorable chapter. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel . . . an altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name, I WILL COME UNTO THEE, and I WILL BLESS THEE. And if thou wilt make an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon. " (Ver. 22, 26)

Here we find man not in the position of a *doer*, but of a *worshipper*; and this, too, at the close of Exodus 20. How plainly this teaches us that the atmosphere of Mount Sinai is not that which God would have the sinner breathing; that it is not the proper meeting place between God and man. "In all places where I record *my name*, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." How unlike the terrors of the fiery mount is that spot where Jehovah records *His name*, whither He "comes" to "bless" His worshipping people!

But, further, God will meet the sinner at an altar without a hewn stone or a step — a place of worship which requires no human workmanship to erect, or human effort to approach. The former could only pollute, and the latter could only display human "nakedness." Admirable type of the meeting-place where God meets the sinner now, even the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ, where all the claims of law, of justice, and of conscience, are perfectly answered! Man has, in every age, and in every clime, been

prone, in one way or another, to "lift up his tool in the erection of his altar, or to approach thereto by steps of his own making. But the issue of all such attempts has been "pollution" and "nakedness." "We all do fade as a leaf, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags?" Who will presume to approach God clad in a garment of "filthy rags?" or who will stand to worship with a revealed "nakedness?" What can be more preposterous than to think of approaching God in a way which necessarily involves either pollution or nakedness? And yet thus it is in every case in which human effort is put forth to open the sinner's way to God. Not only is there no need of such effort, but defilement and nakedness are stamped upon it. God has come down so very near to the sinner, even in the very depths of his ruin, that there is no need for his lifting up the tool of legality, or ascending the steps of self-righteousness yea, to do so, is but to expose his uncleanness and his nakedness.

Such are the principles with which the Holy Ghost closes this most remarkable section of inspiration. May they be indelibly written upon our hearts, that so we may more clearly and fully understand the essential difference between LAW and GRACE.

Exodus 21-23

The study of this section of our book is eminently calculated to impress the heart with a sense of God's unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness. It enables one to form some idea of the character of a kingdom governed by laws of divine appointment. Here, too, we may see the amazing condescension of Him who, though He is the great God of heaven and earth, can, nevertheless, stoop to adjudicate between man and man in reference to the death of an ox, the loan of a garment, or the loss of a servant's tooth. "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and on earth?" He governs the universe, and yet He can occupy Himself with the provision of a covering for one of His creatures. He guides the angel's flight and takes notice of a crawling worm. He humbles Himself to regulate the movements of those countless orbs that roll through infinite space and to record the fall of a sparrow.

As to the character of the judgement set forth in the chapters before us, we may learn a double lesson. These judgements and ordinances bear a twofold witness: they convey to the ear a twofold message, and present to the eye two sides of a picture. They tell of God and they tell of man.

In the first place, on God's part, we find Him enacting laws which exhibit strict, even-handed, perfect justice. "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Such was the character of the laws, the statutes, and the judgements by which God governed His earthly kingdom of Israel. Everything was provided for, every interest was maintained, and every claim was met. There was no partiality — no distinction made between the rich and the poor. The balance in which each man's claim was weighed was adjusted with divine accuracy, so that no one could justly complain of a decision. The pure robe of justice was not to be tarnished with the foul stains of bribery, corruption and partiality. The eye and the hand of a divine Legislator provided for everything; and a divine Executive inflexibly dealt with every defaulter. The stroke of justice fell only

on the head of the guilty, while every obedient soul was protected in the enjoyment of all his rights and privileges.

Then, as regards man, it is impossible to read over these laws and not be struck with the disclosure which they indirectly, but really, make of his desperate depravity. The fact of Jehovah's having to enact laws against certain crimes, proves the capability, on man's part, of committing those crimes. Were the capability and the tendency not there, there would be no need of the enactments. Now, there are many who, if the gross Abominations forbidden in these chapters were named to them, might feel disposed to adopt the language of Hazael and say, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" Such persons have not yet travelled down into the deep abyss of their own hearts. For albeit there are crimes here forbidden which would seem to place man, as regards his habits and tendencies, below the level of a "dog," yet do those very statutes prove, beyond all question, that the most refined and cultivated member of the human family carries above, in his bosom, the seeds of the very darkest and most horrifying abominations. For whom were those statutes enacted? For man. Were they needful? Unquestionably. But they would have been quite superfluous if man were incapable of committing the sins referred to. But man is capable; and hence we see that man is sunk to the very lowest possible level — that his nature is wholly corrupt — that, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, there is not so much as a speck of moral soundness.

How can such a being ever stand, without an emotion of fear, in the full blaze of the throne of God? How can he stand within the holiest? How can he stand on the sea of glass? How can he enter in by the pearly gates and tread the golden streets? The reply to these inquiries unfolds the amazing depths of redeeming love and the eternal efficacy of the blood of the Lamb. Deep as is man's ruin, the love of God is deeper still. Black as is his guilt, the blood of Jesus can wash it all away. Wide as is the chasm separating man from God, the cross has bridged it. God has come down to the very lowest point of the sinner's condition, in order that He might lift him up into a position of infinite favour, in eternal association with His own Son. Well may we exclaim, "Behold what manner of love the Father

hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John 3: 1) Nothing could fathom man's ruin but God's love, and nothing could equal man's guilt but the blood of Christ. But now the very depth of the ruin only magnifies the love that has fathomed it, and the intensity of the guilt only celebrates the efficacy of the blood that can cleanse it. The very vilest sinner who believes in Jesus can rejoice in the assurance that God sees him and pronounces him *"clean every whit."*

Such, then, is the double character of instruction to be gleaned from the laws and ordinances in this section, looked at as a whole; and the more minutely we look at them, in detail, the more impressed we shall be with a sense of their fullness and beauty. Take, for instance, the very first ordinance that presents itself, namely, that of the Hebrew Servant.

"Now these are the judgements which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him unto the judges: he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." (Ex. 21: 1-6) The servant was perfectly free to go out, so far as he was personally concerned. He had discharged every claim, and could, therefore, walk abroad in unquestioned freedom; but because of his love to his master, his wife, and his children, he voluntarily bound himself to perpetual servitude; and not only so, but he was also willing to bear, in his own person, the marks of that servitude.

The application of this to the Lord Jesus Christ will be obvious to the intelligent reader. In Him we behold the One who dwelt in the bosom of the Father before all worlds — the object of His eternal delight — who might have occupied, throughout eternity, this His personal and entirely peculiar place, inasmuch as there lay upon Him no obligation (save that which ineffable love created and

ineffable love incurred) to abandon that place. Such, however, was His love to the Father whose counsels were involved, and for the Church collectively, and each individual member thereof, whose salvation was involved, that He, voluntarily, came down to earth, emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant and the marks of perpetual service. To these marks we probably have a striking allusion in the Psalms. "Mine ears hast thou digged." (Ps. 40: 6, marg.) This psalm is the expression of Christ's devotedness to God. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart." He came to do the will of God, whatever that will might be. He never once did His own will, not even in the reception and salvation of sinners, though surely His loving heart, with all its affections, was most fully in that glorious work. Still He receives and saves only as the servant of the Father's counsels. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John 6: 37-39)

Here we have a most interesting view of the servant character of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, in perfect grace, holds Himself responsible to receive all who come within the range of the divine counsels; and not only to receive them, but to preserve them through all the difficulties and trials of their devious path down here, yea, in the article of death itself, should it come, and to raise them all up in the last day. Oh! how secure is the very feeblest member of the Church of God! He is the subject of God's eternal counsels, which counsels the Lord Jesus Christ is pledged to carry out. Jesus loves the Father, and, in proportion to the intensity of that love, is the security of each member of the redeemed family. The salvation of any sinner who believes on the name of the Son of God is, in one aspect of it, but the expression of Christ's love to the Father. If one such could perish, through any cause whatsoever, it would argue that the Lord Jesus Christ was unable to carry out the will of God, which were nothing short of positive blasphemy against His sacred

name, to whom be all honour and majesty throughout the everlasting ages.

Thus we have, in the Hebrew servant, a type of Christ in His pure devotedness to the Father. But there is more than this: "I love my wife and my children." "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 25-27) There are various other passages of Scripture presenting Christ as the antitype of the Hebrew servant, both in His love for the Church, as a body, and for all believers personally. In Matthew 13, John 10 and 13, and Hebrews 2, my reader will find special teaching on the point.

The apprehension of this love of the heart of Jesus cannot fail to produce a spirit of fervent devotedness to the One who could exhibit such pure, such perfect, such disinterested love. How could the wife and children of the Hebrew servant fail to love one who had voluntarily surrendered his liberty in order that he and they might be together? And what is the love presented in the type, when compared with that which shines in the antitype? It is as nothing. "The love of Christ passeth knowledge." It led Him to think of us before all worlds — to visit us in the fullness of time — to walk deliberately to the door post — to suffer for us on the cross, in order that He might raise us to companionship with himself, in His everlasting kingdom and glory.

Were I to enter into a full exposition of the remaining statutes and judgements of this portion of the Book of Exodus, it would carry me much further than I feel, at present, led to go.* I will merely observe, in conclusion, that it is impossible to read the section and not have the heart drawn out in adoration of the profound wisdom, well-balanced justice, and yet tender considerateness which breathe throughout the whole. We rise up from the study of it with this conviction deeply wrought into the soul, that the One who speaks here is "the only true," "the only wise," and the infinitely gracious God.

{*I would here observe, once for all, that the feasts referred to in Ex. 23: 14-19 and the offerings in Ex. 29 being brought out in all their fullness and detail, in the book of Leviticus, I shall reserve them until we come to dwell upon the contents of that singularly rich and interesting book.}

May all our meditations on His eternal word have the effect of prostrating our souls in worship before Him whose perfect ways and glorious attributes shine there, in all their blessedness and brightness, for the refreshment, the delight, and the edification of His blood-bought people.

Exodus 24

This chapter opens with an expression remarkably characteristic of the entire Mosaic economy. "And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye *afar off* . . . *they shall not come nigh*, neither shall the people go up with him." We may search from end to end of the legal ritual, and not find those two precious words, "*draw nigh*." Ah! no; such words could never be heard from the top of Sinai, nor from amid the shadows of the law. They could only be uttered at heaven's side of the empty tomb of Jesus, where the blood of the cross has opened a perfectly cloudless prospect to the vision of faith. The words, "afar off," are as characteristic of the law, as "draw nigh" are of the gospel. Under the law, the work was never done, which could entitle a sinner to draw nigh. Man had not fulfilled his promised obedience; and the "blood of calves and goats" could not atone for the failure, or give his guilty conscience peace. Hence, therefore, he had to stand "afar off." Man's vows were broken and his sin unpurged; how, then, could he draw nigh The blood of ten thousand bullocks could not wipe away one stain from the conscience, or give the peaceful sense of nearness to God.

However, the "first covenant" is here dedicated with blood. An altar is erected at the foot of the hill, with "twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel." "And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words although, as the apostle teaches us, it was "impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin," yet did it "sanctify to the purifying of the flesh," and, as "a shadow of good things to come," it availed to maintain the people in relationship with Jehovah.

"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone,

and as it were the body of heaven in clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God and did eat and drink." This was the manifestation of "the God of Israel," in light and purity, majesty and holiness. It was not the unfolding of the affections of a Father's bosom, or the sweet accents of a Father's voice, breathing peace and inspiring confidence into the heart. No; the "paved work of a sapphire stone " told out that unapproachable purity and light which could only tell a sinner to keep off Still, "they saw God and did eat and drink." Touching proof of divine forbearance and mercy, as also of the power of the blood!

Looking at this entire scene as a mere illustration, there is much to interest the heart. There is the defiled camp *below* and the sapphire pavement *above*; but the altar, at the foot of the hill, tells us of that way by which the sinner can make his escape from the defilement of his own condition, and mount up to the presence of God, there to feast and worship in perfect peace. The blood which flowed around the altar furnished man's only title to stand in the presence of that glory which "was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."

"And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights." This was truly a high and holy position for Moses. He was called away from earth and earthly things. abstracted from natural influences, he is shut in with God, to hear from his mouth the deep mysteries of the Person and work of Christ; for such, in point of fact, we have unfolded in the tabernacle and all its significant furniture! the patterns of things in the heavens." The blessed One knew full well what was about to be the end of man's covenant of works; but He unfolds to Moses, in types and shadows, His own precious thoughts of love and counsels of grace, manifested in, and secured by, Christ.

Blessed, for evermore, be the grace which has not left us under a covenant of works. Blessed be He who has "hushed the law's loud thunders and quenched mount Sinai's flame" by "the blood of the everlasting covenant," and given us a peace which no power of earth or hell can shake. " Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God

and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.
Amen.

Exodus 25

This chapter forms the commencement of one of the richest veins in Inspiration's exhaustless mine — a vein in which every stroke of the mattock brings to light untold wealth. We know the mattock with which alone we can work in such a mine, namely, the distinct ministry of the Holy Ghost. Nature can do nothing here. Reason is blind — imagination utterly vain — the most gigantic intellect, instead of being able to interpret the sacred symbols, appears like a bat in the sunshine, blindly dashing itself against the objects which it is utterly unable to discern. We must compel reason and imagination to stand without, while, with a chastened heart, a single eye, and a spiritual mind, we enter the hallowed precincts and gaze upon the deeply significant furniture. God the Holy Ghost is the only One who can conduct us through the courts of the Lord's house, and expound to our souls the true meaning of all that there meets our view. To attempt the exposition, by the aid of intellect's unsanctified powers, would be infinitely more absurd than to set about the repairs of a watch with a blacksmith's tongs and hammer. "The patterns of things in the heavens" cannot be interpreted by the natural mind, in its most cultivated form. They must all be read in the light of heaven. Earth has no light which could at all develop their beauties. The One who furnished the patterns can alone explain what the patterns mean. The One who furnished the beauteous symbols can alone interpret them.

To the human eye there would seem to be a desultoriness in the mode in which the Holy Ghost has presented the furniture of the tabernacle; but, in reality, as might be expected, there is the most perfect order, the most remarkable precision, the most studious accuracy. From Ex. 25 to Ex. 30, inclusive, we have a distinct section of the Book of Exodus. This section is divided into two parts, the first terminating at Ex. 27: 19, and the second as the close of Ex. 30. The former begins with the ark of the covenant, inside the veil, and ends with the brazen altar and the court in which that altar stood. That is, it gives us, in the first place, Jehovah's throne of judgement, whereon He sat as Lord of all the earth; and it conducts us to that place where He met the sinner, in the credit and virtue of accomplished atonement. Then, in the latter, We have the mode of

man's approach to God — the privileges, dignities, and responsibilities of those who, as priests, were permitted to draw nigh to the Divine Presence and enjoy worship and communion there. Thus the arrangement is perfect and beautiful. How could it be otherwise, seeing that it is divine? The ark and the brazen altar present, as it were, two extremes. The former was the throne of God established in "justice and judgement." (Ps. 89: 19) The latter was the place of approach for the sinner where "mercy and truth" went before Jehovah's face. Man, in himself, dared not to approach the ark to meet God, for "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." (Heb. 9: 8) But God could approach the altar of brass, to meet man as a sinner. "Justice and judgement" could not admit the sinner in; but "mercy and truth" could bring God out; not, indeed, in that overwhelming brightness and majesty in which He was wont to shine forth from between those mystic supporters of His throne — "the cherubim of glory" — but in that gracious ministry which is symbolically presented to us in the furniture and ordinances of the tabernacle.

All this may well remind us of the path trodden by that blessed One, who is the antitype of all these types — the substance of all these shadows. He travelled from the eternal throne of God in heaven, down to the depths of Calvary's cross. He came from all the glory of the former down into all the shame of the latter, in order that He might conduct His redeemed, forgiven, and accepted people back with Himself, and present them faultless before that very throne which He had left on their account. The Lord Jesus fills up, in His own person and work, every point between the throne of God and the dust of death, and every point between the dust of death and the throne of God. In Him God has come down, in perfect grace, to the sinner; in Him the sinner is brought up, in perfect righteousness, to God. All the way, from the ark to the brazen altar, was marked with the footprints of love; and all the way from the brazen altar to the ark of God was sprinkled with the blood of atonement; and as the ransomed worshipper passes along that wondrous path, he beholds the name of Jesus stamped on all that meets his view. May that name be dearer to our hearts! Let us now proceed to examine the chapters consecutively.

It is most interesting to note here, that the first thing which the Lord communicated to Moses is His gracious purpose to have a sanctuary or holy dwelling place in the midst of His people — a sanctuary composed of materials, which directly point to Christ, His Person, His work, and the precious fruit of that work, as seen in the light, the power, and the varied graces of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, these materials were the fragrant fruit of the grace of God — the voluntary offerings of devoted hearts. Jehovah, whose majesty, "the heaven of heavens could not contain," was graciously pleased to dwell in a boarded and curtained tent, erected for Him by those who cherished the fond desire to hail His presence amongst them. This tabernacle may be viewed in two ways: first, as furnishing "a pattern of things in the heavens;" and, secondly, as presenting a deeply significant type of the body of Christ. The various materials of which the tabernacle was composed will come before us, as we pass along; we shall, therefore, consider the three comprehensive subjects put before us in this chapter, namely, the ark; the table; and the candlestick.

The ark of the covenant occupies the leading place in the divine communications to Moses. Its position, too, in the tabernacle was most marked. Shut in within the veil, in the holiest of all, it formed the base of Jehovah's throne. Its very name conveys to the mind its import. An ark, so far as the word instructs us, is designed to preserve *intact* whatever is put therein. An ark carried Noah and his family, together with all the orders of creation, in safety over the billows of judgement which covered the earth. An ark, at the opening of this book, was faith's vessel for preserving "a proper child" from the waters of death. When, therefore, we read of "the ark of the covenant," we are led to believe that it was designed of God to preserve His covenant unbroken, in the midst of an erring people. In it, as we know, the second set of tables were deposited. As to the first set, they were broken in pieces, beneath the mount, showing that man's covenant was wholly abolished — that his work could never, by any possibility, form the basis of Jehovah's throne of government. "Justice and judgement are the habitation of that throne," whether in its earthly or heavenly aspect. The ark could not contain within its hallowed enclosure, broken tables. Man might fail to fulfil his self-chosen vow; but God's law must be preserved in its

divine integrity and perfectness. If God was to set up His throne in the midst of His people, He could only do so in a way worthy of Himself. His standard of judgement and government must be perfect.

"And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. and thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them." The ark of the covenant was to accompany the people in all their wanderings. It never rested while they were a travelling or a conflicting host. It moved from place to place in the wilderness. It went before them into the midst of Jordan; it was their grand rallying Point in all the wars of Canaan; it was the sure and certain earnest of power wherever it went. No power of the enemy could stand before that which was the well-known expression of the divine presence and power. The ark was to be Israel's companion in travel, in the desert; and "the staves" and "the rings" were the apt expression of its travelling character.

However, it was not always to be a traveller. "The afflictions of David," as well as the wars of Israel, were to have an end. The prayer was yet to be breathed and answered, "Arise, O Lord, into *thy rest*: thou and *the Ark of thy strength*." (Ps. 132: 8) This most sublime petition had its partial accomplishment in the palmy days of Solomon, when "the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark, and the staves thereof above. *And they drew out the staves*, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day." (1 Kings 8:6-8) The sand of the desert was to be exchanged for the golden floor of the temple. (1 Kings 6: 30) The wanderings of the ark were to have an end; there was "neither enemy nor evil occurrent," and therefore, "the staves were drawn out."

Nor was this the only difference between the ark in the tabernacle and in the temple. The apostle, speaking of the ark in its wilderness habitation, describes it as "the ark of the covenant,

overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." (Heb. 9: 4) Such were the contents of the ark in its wilderness journeyings — the pot of manna, the record of Jehovah's faithfulness, in providing for His redeemed in the desert, and Aaron's rod, "a token against the rebels," to "take away their murmurings." (Compare Ex. 16: 32-39; and Num. 17: 10) But when the moment arrived in which "the staves" were to be "drawn out," when the wanderings and wars of Israel were over, the "exceeding magnificent" house was completed, when the sun of Israel's glory had reached, in type, its meridian, as marked by the wealth and splendour of Solomon's reign, then the records of wilderness need and wilderness failure were unnoticed, and nothing remained save that which constituted the eternal foundation of the throne of the God of Israel, and of all the earth. *"There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb."* (1 Kings 8: 9)

But all this brightness was soon to be overcast by the heavy clouds of human failure and divine displeasure. The rude foot of the uncircumcised was yet to walk across the ruins of that beautiful house, and as faded light and departed glory were yet to elicit the contemptuous "hiss" of the stranger. This would not be the place to follow out these things in detail; I shall only refer my reader to the last notice which the Word of God affords us of "the ark of the covenant," — a notice which carries us forward to a time when human folly and sin shall no more disturb the resting-place of that ark, and when neither a curtained tent, nor yet a temple made with hands, shall contain it. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou has taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and

shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple *the ark of His covenant*: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." (Rev. 11: 15-19)

The mercy-seat comes next in order. "And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold; two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark shalt thou put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

Here Jehovah gives utterance to His gracious intention of coming down from the fiery mount to take His place upon the mercy seat. This He could do, inasmuch as the tables of testimony were preserved unbroken beneath, and the symbols of his power, whether in creation or providence, rose on the right hand and on the left — the inseparable adjuncts of that throne on which Jehovah had seated himself — a throne of grace founded upon divine righteousness and supported by justice and judgement. Here the glory of the God of Israel shone forth. From hence He issued His commands, softened and sweetened by the gracious source from whence they emanated, and the medium through which they came — like the beams of the mid-day sun, passing through a cloud, we can enjoy their genial and enlivening influence without being dazzled by their brightness. "His commandments are not grievous," when received from off the mercy-seat, because they come in connection with grace, which gives the ears to hear and the power to obey.

Looking at the ark and mercy-seat together, we may see in them a striking figure of Christ, in His Person and work. He having, in His life, magnified the law and made it honourable, became, through death, a propitiation or mercy-seat. for every one that believeth. God's mercy could only repose on a pedestal of perfect righteousness. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 5: 21) The only proper meeting place between God and man is the point where grace and righteousness meet and perfectly harmonise. Nothing but perfect righteousness could suit God; and nothing but perfect grace could suit the sinner. But where could these attributes meet in one point? Only in the cross. There it is that "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Ps. 85: 10) Thus it is that the soul of the believing sinner finds peace. He sees that God's righteousness and his justification rest upon precisely the same basis, namely, Christ's accomplished work. When man, under the powerful action of the truth of God, takes his place as a sinner, God can, in the exercise of Grace, take His place as a Saviour, and then every question is settled, for the cross having answered all the claims of divine justice, mercy's copious streams can flow unhindered. When a righteous God and a ruined sinner meet, on a blood-sprinkled platform, all is settled for ever — settled in such a way as perfectly glorifies God, and eternally saves the sinner. God must be true, though every man he proved a liar; and when man is so thoroughly brought down to the lowest point of his own moral condition before God as to be willing to take the place which God's truth assigns him, he then learns that God has revealed Himself as the righteous Justifier of such an one. This must give settled peace to the conscience; and not only so, but impart a capacity to commune with God, and hearken to His holy precepts in the intelligence of that relationship into which divine grace has introduced us.

Hence, therefore, "the holiest of all" unfolds a truly wondrous scene. The ark, the mercy seat, the cherubim, the glory! What a sight for the high-priest of Israel to behold as, once a year, he went in within the veil! May the Spirit of God open the eyes of our understandings, that we may understand more fully the deep meaning of those precious types.

Moses is next instructed about "the table of showbread," or bread of presentation. On this table stood the food of the priests of God. For seven days those twelve loaves of "fine flour with frankincense" were presented before the Lord, after which, being replaced by others, they became the food of the priests who fed upon them in the holy place. (See Lev. 24: 5-9) It is needless to say that those twelve loaves typify "the man Christ Jesus." The "fine flour," of which they were composed, mark His perfect manhood, while the "frankincense" points out the entire devotion of that manhood to God. If God has His priests ministering in the holy place, He will assuredly have a table for them, and a well-furnished table too. Christ is the table and Christ is the bread thereon. The pure table and the twelve loaves shadow forth Christ, as presented before God unceasingly, in all the excellency of His spotless humanity, and administered as food to the priestly family. The "seven days" set forth the perfection of the divine enjoyment of Christ ; and the "twelve loaves" the administration of that enjoyment in and by man. There is also, I should venture to suggest, the idea, of Christ's connection with the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The candlestick of pure gold comes next in order, for God's priests need *light* as well as *food*: and they have both the one and the other in Christ. In this candlestick there is no mention of anything but pure gold. "All of it shall be one *beaten* work of pure gold." "The seven lamps" which "gave light over against the candlestick," express the perfection of the light and energy of the Spirit, founded upon and connected with the perfect efficacy of the work of Christ. The work of the Holy Ghost can never be separated from the work of Christ. This is set forth, in a double way, in this beautiful figure of the golden candle stick. "The seven lamps" being connected with "the shaft" of "beaten gold," points us to Christ's finished work as the sole basis of the manifestation of the Spirit in the Church. The Holy Ghost was not given until Jesus was glorified. (Comp. John 7: 39 with Acts 19: 2-6) In Revelation 3, Christ is presented to the Church of Sardis as "having the seven spirits." It was as "exalted to the right hand of God" that the Lord Jesus "shed forth" the Holy Ghost upon His church, in order that she might shine according to

the power and perfection of her position, in the holy place, her proper sphere of being, of action, and of worship.

Then, again, we find it was one of Aaron's specific functions to light and trim those seven lamps. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel that they bring unto thee pure oil olive, beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it, from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually." (Lev. 24: 1-4) Thus we may see how the work of the Holy Ghost in the Church is linked with Christ's work on earth and His work in heaven. "The seven lamps" were there, no doubt; but priestly energy and diligence were needed in order to keep them trimmed and lighted. The priest would continually need "the tongs and snuff-dishes" for the purpose of removing ought that would not be a fit vehicle for the "pure beaten oil." Those tongs and snuff-dishes were of "beaten gold" likewise, for the whole matter was the direct result of divine operation. If the Church shine, it is only by the energy of the Spirit, and that energy is founded upon Christ, who, in pursuance of God's eternal counsel, became in His sacrifice and Priesthood, the spring and power of everything to His Church. All is of God. Whether we look within that mysterious veil, and behold the ark with its cover, and the two significant figures attached thereto; or if we gaze on that which lay without the veil, the pure table and the pure candlestick, with their distinctive vessels and instruments — all speak to us of God, whether as revealed to us in connection with the Son or the Holy Ghost.

Christian reader, your high calling places you in the very midst of all these precious realities. Your place is not merely amid "the patterns of things in the heavens," but amid "the heavenly things themselves." You have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." You are a Priest unto God. "The showbread" is yours. Your place is at "the pure table," to feed on the priestly food, in the light of the Holy Ghost. Nothing can ever deprive you of those divine privileges. They are yours for ever. Let it be your care

to watch against everything that might rob you of the *enjoyment* of them. Beware of all unhallowed tempers, lusts, feelings, and imaginations. Keep nature down — keep the world out keep Satan off. May the Holy Ghost fill your whole soul with Christ. Then you will be practically holy and abidingly happy. You will bear fruit, and the Father will be glorified, and your joy shall be full.

Exodus 26

The section of our book which now opens before us contains the instructive description of the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle, wherein the spiritual eye discerns the shadows of the various features and phases of Christ's manifested character. "Moreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet : with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them." Here we have the different aspects of "the man Christ Jesus." The "fine twined linen" prefigures the spotless purity of His walk and character; while the "blue, the purple, and the scarlet" present Him to us as "the Lord from heaven," who is to *reign* according to the divine counsels, but whose royalty is to be the result of His *sufferings*. Thus we have a spotless man, a heavenly man, a royal man, a suffering man. These materials were not confined to the "curtains" of the tabernacle, but were also used in making "the veil," (ver. 31,) "the hanging for the door of the tent," (ver. 36,) "the hanging for the gate of the court," (Ex. 27: 16,) "the cloths of service and the holy garments of Aaron." (Ex. 39: 1.) In a word, it was Christ everywhere, Christ in all, Christ alone.*

{*The expression, "white and clean," gives peculiar force and beauty to the type which the Holy Ghost has presented in the "fine twined linen." Indeed, there could not be a more appropriate emblem of spotless manhood.}

"The fine twined linen," as expressive of Christ's spotless manhood, opens a most precious and copious spring of thought to the spiritual mind; it furnishes a theme on which we cannot meditate too profoundly. The truth respecting Christ's humanity must be received with scriptural accuracy, held with spiritual energy, guarded with holy jealousy, and confessed with heavenly power. If we are wrong as to this, we cannot be right as to anything. It is a grand, vital, fundamental truth, and if it be not received, held, guarded, and confessed, as God has revealed it in His holy word, the entire superstructure must be unsound. Nothing can be more deplorable than the looseness of thought and expression which seems to prevail in reference to this all-important doctrine. Were there more reverence for the word of God, there would be more

accurate acquaintance with it; and, in this way, we should happily avoid all those erroneous and unguarded statements which surely must grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whose province it is to testify of Jesus.

When the angel had announced to Mary the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth, she said unto him, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Her feeble mind was utterly incompetent to enter into, much less to fathom, the stupendous mystery of "God manifest in the flesh." But mark carefully the angelic reply — a reply, not to a sceptic mind, but to a pious, though ignorant, heart. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1: 39, 35) Mary, doubtless, imagined that this birth was to be according to the principles of ordinary generation. But the angel corrects her mistake, and, in correcting it, enunciates one of the grandest truths of revelation. He declares to her that divine power was about to form A REAL MAN — "the second man the Lord from heaven" — one whose nature was divinely pure, utterly incapable of receiving or communicating any taint. This Holy One was made "*in, the likeness* of sinful flesh," without sin in the flesh. He partook of real *bona fide* flesh and blood without a particle or shadow of the evil thereto attaching.

This is a cardinal truth which cannot be too accurately laid hold of or too tenaciously held. The incarnation of the Son — His mysterious entrance into pure and spotless flesh, formed, by the power of the Highest, in the virgin's womb, is the foundation of the "great mystery of godliness" of which the topstone is a glorified God-man in heaven, the Head, Representative, and Model of the redeemed Church of God. The essential purity of His manhood perfectly met the claims of God; the reality thereof met the necessities of man. He was a man, for none else would do to meet man's ruin. But He was such a man as could satisfy all the claims of the throne of God. He was a spotless, real man, in whom God could perfectly delight, and on whom man could unreservedly lean.

I need not remind the enlightened reader that all this, if taken apart from death and resurrection, is perfectly unavailable to us. He

needed not only an incarnate, but a crucified and risen Christ. True, He should be incarnate to be crucified; but it is death and resurrection which render incarnation available to us. It is nothing short of a deadly error to suppose that, in incarnation, Christ was taking man into union with Himself. This could not be. He Himself expressly teaches the contrary. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth *alone*: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12: 24) There could be no union between sinful and holy flesh, pure and impure, corruptible and incorruptible, mortal and immortal. Accomplished death is the only base of a unity between Christ and His elect members. It is in beautiful connection with the words, "Rise, let us go hence," that He says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "We have been planted together in the likeness of his death." "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." "In whom also are ye circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." I would refer my reader to Romans 6 and Colossians 2 as a full and comprehensive statement of the truth on this important subject. It was only as dead and risen that Christ and His people could become one. The true corn of wheat had to fall into the ground and die ere a full ear could spring up and be gathered into the heavenly garner.

But while this is a plainly revealed truth of Scripture, it is equally plain that incarnation formed, as it were, the first layer of the glorious superstructure; and the curtains of "fine twined Linen" prefigure the moral purity of "the man Christ Jesus." We have already seen the manner of His conception; and, as we pass along the current of His life here below, we meet with instance after instance of the same spotless purity. He was forty days in the wilderness, tempted of the devil, but there was no response in His pure nature to the tempter's foul suggestions. He could touch the leper and receive no taint. He could touch the bier and not contract the smell of death. He could pass unscathed through the most polluted atmosphere. He was, as to His manhood, like a sunbeam emanating from the fountain of light, which can pass, without a soil,

through the most defiling medium. He was perfectly unique in nature, constitution, and character. None but He could say, "Thou wilt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption." This was in reference to His humanity, which, as being perfectly holy and perfectly pure, was capable of being a sin-bearer. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Not *to* the tree, as some would teach us; but "*on* the tree." It was on the cross that Christ was our sin-bearer, and only there. "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5: 21)

"*Blue*" is the ethereal colour, and marks the heavenly character of Christ, who, though He had come down into all the circumstances of actual and true humanity — sin excepted — yet was He "the Lord from heaven." Though He was "very man," yet He ever walked in the uninterrupted consciousness of His proper dignity, as a heavenly stranger. He never once forgot whence He had come, where He was, or whither He was going. The spring of all His joys was on high. Earth could neither make Him richer nor poorer. He found this world to be "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;" and, hence, His spirit could only find its refreshment above. It was entirely heavenly. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man *who is in heaven.*" (John 3: 13)

"*Purple*" denotes royalty, and points us to Him who "Was born King of the Jews;" who offered Himself as such to the Jewish nation, and was rejected; who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, avowing Himself a king, when, to mortal vision, there was not so much as a single trace of royalty. "Thou sayest that I am a king." And "hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And, finally, the inscription upon His cross, "in letters of Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" — the language of religion, of science, and of government declared Him, to the whole known world, to be "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Earth disowned His claims — so much the worse for it but not so heaven; there His claim was fully recognised. He was received as a conqueror into the eternal mansions of light, crowned with glory and honour, and seated, amid

the acclamations of angelic hosts, on the throne of the majesty in the heavens, there to wait until His enemies be made His footstool. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set *my king* upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM." (Ps. 2)

"*Scarlet*," when genuine, is produced by death; and this makes its application to a suffering Christ safe and appropriate. "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh." Without death, all would have been unavailing. We can admire "the blue" and "the purple" but without "the scarlet" the tabernacle would have lacked an all-important feature. It was by death that Christ destroyed him that had the power of death. The Holy Ghost, in setting before us a striking figure of Christ — the true tabernacle—could not possibly omit that phase of His character which constituted the groundwork of His connection with His body the Church, of His claim to the throne of David, and the headship of all creation. In a word, He not only unfolds the Lord Jesus to our view, in these significant curtains, as a spotless man, a royal man, but also a suffering man; one who, by death, should make good His claims to all that to which, as man, He was entitled, in the divine counsels.

But we have much more in the curtains of the tabernacle than the varied and perfect phases of the character of Christ. We have also the unity and consistency of that character. Each phase is

displayed in its own proper perfectness; and one never interferes with, or mars the exquisite beauty of, another. All was in perfect harmony beneath the eye of God, and was so displayed in "the pattern which was showed to Moses on the mount," and in the copy which was exhibited below. "Every one of the curtains shall have one measure. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another." Such was the fair proportion and consistency in all the ways of Christ, as a perfect man, walking on the earth, in whatever aspect or relationship we view Him. When acting in one character, we never find ought that is, in the very least degree, inconsistent with the divine integrity of another. He was, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, the perfect man. There was nothing out of that fair and lovely proportion which belonged to Him, in all His ways. "Every one of the curtains shall have one measure."

The two sets of five curtains each may symbolise the two grand aspects of Christ's character, as acting toward God and toward man. We have the same two aspects in the law, namely, what was due to God, and what was due to man; so that, as to Christ, if we look in, we find "thy law is within my heart;" and if we look at His outward character and walk, we see those two elements adjusted with perfect accuracy, and not only adjusted, but inseparably linked together by the heavenly grace and divine energy which dwelt in His most glorious Person.

"And thou shalt make *loops of blue* upon the edge of the one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise. shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second.... And thou shalt make fifty *taches of gold*, and couple the curtains together with the taches; and *it shall be one tabernacle.*" We have here displayed to us, in the "loops of *blue*," and "taches of *gold*," that *heavenly* grace and *divine* energy in Christ which enabled Him to combine and perfectly adjust the claims of God and man; so that in responding to both the one and the other, He never, for a moment, marred the unity of His character. When crafty and hypocritical men tempted Him with the enquiry, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" His wise reply was, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Nor was it merely Caesar, but man in every relation that had all his claims perfectly met in Christ. As He united in His perfect Person the nature of God and man, so He met in His, perfect ways the claims of God and man. Most interesting would it be to trace, through the gospel narrative, the exemplification of the principle suggested by the "loops of blue," and "taches of gold;" but I must leave my reader to pursue this study under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, who delights to expatiate upon every feature and every phase of that perfect One whom it is His unvarying purpose and undivided object to exalt.

The curtains on which we have been dwelling were covered with other "curtains of goats' hair;" (Ver. 7-14) Their beauty was hidden from those without by that which bespoke roughness and severity. This latter did not meet the view of those within. To all who were privileged to enter the hallowed enclosure nothing was visible save "the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and fine twined linen," the varied yet combined exhibition of the virtues and excellencies of that divine Tabernacle in which God dwelt within the veil — that is, of Christ, through whose flesh, the antitype of all these, the beams of the divine nature shone so delicately, that the sinner could behold without being overwhelmed by their dazzling brightness.

As the Lord Jesus passed along this earth, how few really knew Him! How few had eyes anointed with heavenly eyesalve to penetrate and appreciate the deep mystery of His character! How few saw "the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and the twined linen!" It was only when faith brought man into His presence that He ever allowed the brightness of what He was to shine forth — ever allowed the glory to break through the cloud. To nature's eye there would seem to have been a reserve and a severity about Him which were aptly prefigured by the "covering of goats' hair." All this was the result of His profound separation and estrangement, not from sinners personally, but from the thoughts and maxims of men. He had nothing in common with man as such, nor was it within the compass of mere nature to comprehend or enjoy Him. "No man," said He, "can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" and when one of those "drawn" ones confessed His name, He declared that "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto

thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Comp. John 6: 44; Matt. 6: 17) He was "a root out of a dry ground," having neither "form nor comeliness" to attract the eye or gratify the heart of man. The popular current could never flow in the direction of One who, as he passed rapidly across the stage of this vain world, wrapped Himself up in a "covering of goats' hair." Jesus was not popular. The multitude might follow Him for a moment, because His ministry stood connected, in their judgement, with "the loaves and fishes" which met their need; but they were just as ready to cry, "Away with him!" as "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Oh! let Christians remember this! Let the servants of Christ remember it! Let all preachers of the gospel remember it! Let one and all of us ever seek to bear in mind the "*covering of goats' hair!*"

But if the goats' skins expressed the severity of Christ's separation from earth, "the rams' skins *dyed red*" exhibit His intense consecration and devotedness to God, which was carried out even unto *death*. He was the only perfect Servant that ever stood in God's vineyard. He had one object which He pursued, with an undeviating course, from the manger to the cross, and that was to glorify the Father and finish His work. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" was the language of His youth, and the accomplishment of that "business" was the design of His life. "His meat was to do the will of him that sent him and to finish his work." "The rams' skins dyed red" formed as distinct a part of His ordinary habit as the "goats' hair." His perfect devotion to God separated Him from the habits of men.

"The badgers' skins" may exhibit to us the holy vigilance with which the Lord Jesus guarded against the approach of everything hostile to the purpose which engrossed His whole soul. He took up His position for God, and held it with a tenacity which no influence of men or devils, earth or hell, could overcome. The covering of badgers' skins was "above," (ver. 14,) teaching us that the most prominent feature in the character of "the man Christ Jesus" was an invincible determination to stand as a witness for God on the earth. He was the true Naboth, who gave up His life rather than surrender the truth of God, or give up that for which He had taken His place in this world.

The goat, the ram, and the badger, must be regarded as exhibiting certain natural features, and also as symbolising certain moral qualities; and we must take both into account in our application of these figures to the character of Christ. The human eye could only discern the former. It could see none of the moral grace, beauty, and dignity, which lay beneath the outward form of the despised and humble Jesus of Nazareth. When the treasures of heavenly wisdom flowed from His lips, the inquiry was, "Is not this the carpenter?" or "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" When He asserted His eternal Sonship and Godhead, the word was, "Thou art not yet fifty years old," or "They took up stones to cast at him." In short, the acknowledgement of the Pharisees, in John 9, was true in reference to men in general. "as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

It would be utterly impossible, in the compass of a volume like this, to trace the unfoldings of those precious features of Christ's character through the gospel narratives. Sufficient has been said to open up springs of spiritual thought to my reader, and to furnish some faint idea of the rich treasures which are wrapped up in the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle. Christ's hidden being, secret springs and inherent excellencies — His outward and unattractive form — what He was in Himself, what He was to Godward, and what He was to manward — what he was in the judgement of faith, and what in the judgement of nature — all is sweetly and impressively told out to the circumcised ear, in the "curtains of blue, purple, scarlet, and the twined 'linen:' and the "coverings of skins."

"The boards for the tabernacle" were made of the same wood as was used in constructing "the ark of the covenant." Moreover, they were upheld by the sockets of silver formed out of the atonement; their hooks and chapters being of the same. (Compare attentively Ex. 30: 11-16, with Ex. 38: 25-28) The whole framework of the tent of the tabernacle was based on that which spoke of atonement or ransom, while the "hooks and chapters" at the top set forth the same. The sockets were buried in the sand, and the hooks and chapters were above. It matters not how deep you penetrate, or how high you rise, that glorious and eternal truth is emblazoned

before you, "I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM." Blessed be God, "we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,.....But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The tabernacle was divided into three distinct parts, namely, "the holy of holies," "the holy place," and the court of the tabernacle. The entrance into each of these was of the same materials, "blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen." (Compare Ex. 24: 31, 36; Ex. 27: 16.) The interpretation of which is simply this: Christ forms the only doorway into the varied fields of glory which are yet to be displayed, whether on earth, in heaven, or in the heaven of heavens. "Every family, in heaven and earth," will be ranged under His headship, as all will be brought into everlasting felicity and glory, on the ground of His accomplished atonement. This is plain enough, and needs, no stretch of the imagination to grasp it. We know it to be true: and when we know the truth which is shadowed forth, the shadow is easily understood. If only our hearts be filled with Christ, we shall not go far astray in our interpretations of the tabernacle and its furniture. It is not a head full of learned criticism that will avail us much here, but a heart full of affection for Jesus, and a conscience at rest in the blood of His cross.

May the Spirit of God enable us to study these things with more interest and intelligence! May He "open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of his law."

Exodus 27

We have now arrived at the brazen altar which stood at the door of the tabernacle; and I would call my reader's most particular attention to the order of the Holy Ghost in this portion of our book. We have already remarked that from Ex. 25 to Ex. 27: 19, forms a distinct division, in which we are furnished with a description of the ark and mercy-seat, the table and candlestick, the curtains and the veil; and, lastly, the brazen altar and the court in which that altar stood. If my reader will turn to Ex. 35: 15; Ex. 37: 25; Ex. 40: 26, he will remark that the golden altar of incense is noticed, in each of the three instances, between the candlestick and the brazen altar. Whereas, when Jehovah is giving directions to Moses, the brazen altar is introduced immediately after the candlestick and the curtains of the tabernacle. Now, inasmuch as there must be a divine reason for this difference, it is the privilege of every diligent and intelligent student of the word to inquire what that reason is.

Why, then, does the Lord, when giving directions about the furniture of the "holy place," omit the altar of incense and pass out to the brazen altar which stood at the door of the tabernacle? The reason, I believe, is simply this. He first describes the mode in which He would manifest Himself to man : and then He describes the mode of man's approach to Him. He took His seat upon the throne, as " the Lord of all the earth." The beams of His glory were hidden behind the veil — type of Christ's flesh (Heb. 10: 20); but there was the manifestation of Himself, in connection with man, as in "the pure table," and by the light and power of the Holy Ghost, as in the candlestick. Then we have the manifested character of Christ as a man down here on this earth, as seen in the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle. And, finally, we have the brazen altar as the grand exhibition of the meeting-place between a holy God and a sinner. This conducts us, as it were, to the extreme point, from which we return, in company with Aaron and his sons, back to the holy place, the ordinary priestly position, where stood the golden altar of incense. Thus the order is strikingly beautiful. The golden altar is not spoken of until there is a priest to burn incense thereon, for Jehovah showed Moses the patterns of things in the heavens according to the order in which these things are to be apprehended

by faith. On the other hand, when Moses gives directions to the congregations (Ex. 35), when he records the labours of "Bezaleel and Aholiab," (Ex. 37 and Ex. 38), and when he sets up the tabernacle (Ex. 40), he follows the simple order in which the furniture was placed.

The prayerful investigation of this interesting subject, and a comparison of the passages above referred to, will amply repay my reader. We shall now examine the brazen altar.

This altar was the place where the sinner approached God, in the power and efficacy of the blood of atonement. It stood "at the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation," and on it all the blood was shed. It was composed of "shittim wood and brass." The wood was the same as that of the golden altar of incense; but the metal was different, and the reason of this difference is obvious. The altar of brass was the place where sin was dealt with according to the divine judgement concerning it. The altar of gold was the place from whence the precious fragrance of Christ's acceptableness ascended to the throne of God. The shittim Wood" as the figure of Christ's humanity, must be the same in each case; but in the brazen altar we see Christ meeting the fire of divine justice; in the golden altar, we behold Him feeding the divine affections. At the former, the fire of divine wrath was quenched, at the latter, the fire of priestly worship, is kindled. The soul delights to find Christ in both; but the altar of brass is what meets the need of a guilty conscience. It is the very first thing for a poor, helpless, needy, convicted sinner. There cannot be settled peace, in reference to the question of sin, until the eye of faith rests on Christ as the antitype of the brazen altar. I must see my sin reduced to ashes in the pan of the altar, ere I can enjoy rest of conscience in the presence of God. It is when I know, by faith in the record of God, that He Himself has dealt with my sin in the Person of Christ, at the brazen altar — that He has satisfied all His own righteous claims — that He has put away my sin out of His holy presence, so that it can never come back again — it is then, but not until then, that I can enjoy divine and everlasting peace.

I would here offer a remark as to the real meaning of the "gold" and "brass" in the furniture of the tabernacle. "Gold" is the

symbol of divine righteousness, or the divine nature in "the man Christ Jesus." "Brass" is the symbol of righteousness, demanding judgement of sin, as in the brazen altar; or the judgement of uncleanness, as in the brazen laver. This will account for the fact that *inside* the tent of the tabernacle, all was gold — the ark, the mercy-seat, the table, the candlestick, the altar of incense. All these were the symbols of the divine nature — the inherent personal excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ, On the other hand, *outside* the tent of the tabernacle, — all was brass — the brazen altar and its vessels, the laver and its foot.

The claims of righteousness, as to sin and uncleanness, must be divinely met ere there can be any enjoyment of the precious mysteries of Christ's Person, as unfolded in the inner sanctuary of God. It is when I see all sin and all uncleanness perfectly judged and washed away, that I can, as a priest, draw nigh and worship in the holy place, and enjoy the full display of all the beauty and excellency of the God-man, Christ Jesus.

The reader can, with much profit, follow out the application of this thought in detail, not merely in the study of the tabernacle and the temple, but also in various passages of the word; for example, in the first chapter of Revelation, Christ is seen "girt about the paps with a *golden* girdle," and having "his feet like unto fine *brass*, as if they burned in a furnace." "The golden girdle" is the symbol of His intrinsic righteousness. The "feet like unto the brass," express the unmitigated judgement of evil — He cannot tolerate evil, but must crush it beneath His feet.

Such is the Christ with whom we have to do. He judges sin, but He saves the sinner. Faith sees sin reduced to ashes at the brazen altar; it sees all uncleanness washed away at the brazen laver: and, finally, it enjoys Christ, as He is unfolded, in the secret of the divine presence, by the light and power of the Holy Ghost. It finds Him at the golden altar, in all the value of His intercession. It feeds on Him at the pure table. It recognises Him in the ark and mercy-seat as the One who answers all the claims of justice, and, at the same time, meets all human need. It beholds Him in the veil, with all its mystic figures. It reads His precious name on everything. Oh! for a heart to prize and praise this matchless, glorious Christ!

Nothing can be of more vital importance than a clear understanding of the doctrine of the brazen altar; that is to say, of the doctrine taught there. It is from the want of clearness as to this, that so many souls go mourning all their days. They have never had a clean, thorough settlement of the whole matter of their guilt at the brazen altar. They have never really beheld, by faith, God Himself settling on the cross, the entire question of their sins. They are seeking peace for their uneasy consciences in regeneration and its evidences, — the fruits of the Spirit, frames, feelings, experiences, — things quite right and most valuable in themselves, but they are not the ground of peace. What fills the soul with perfect peace is the knowledge of what God hath wrought at the brazen altar. The ashes in yonder pan tell me the peace-giving story that ALL IS DONE The believer's sins were all put away by God's own hand of redeeming love. "He hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5) All sin must be judged: but the believer's sins have been already judged in the cross ; hence, he is perfectly justified. To suppose that there could be anything against the very feeblest believer, is to deny the entire work of the cross. His sins and iniquities have been all put away by God Himself, and therefore they must needs be perfectly put away. They all went with the outpoured life of the Lamb of God.

Dear Christian reader, see that your heart is thoroughly established in the peace which Jesus has made "by the blood of His cross."

The priesthood being instituted, as in the two preceding chapters, we are here introduced to the position of true priestly worship and communion. The order is marked and instructive; and, moreover, precisely corresponds with the order of the believer's experience At the brazen altar, he sees the ashes of his sins; he then sees himself linked with One who, though personally pure and spotless, so that He could be anointed without blood, has, nevertheless, associated us with Himself in life, righteousness, and favour; and, finally, he beholds, in the golden altar, the preciousness of Christ, as the material on which the divine affections feed.

Thus it is ever; there must be a brazen altar and a priest before there can be a golden altar and incense. Very many of the children of

God have never passed the brazen altar. They have never yet, in spirit, entered into the power and reality of true priestly worship. They do not rejoice in a full, clear, divine sense of pardon and righteousness; they have never reached the golden altar. They hope to reach it when they die; but it is their privilege to be at it now. The work of the cross has removed out of the way everything which could act as a barrier to their free and intelligent worship. The present position of all true believers is at the golden altar of incense.

This altar typifies a position of wondrous blessedness. There we enjoy the reality and efficacy of Christ's intercession. For ever done with self and all pertaining thereto, so far as any expectation of good is concerned, we are to be occupied with what He is before God. We shall find nothing in self but defilement. Every exhibition of it is defiling; it has been condemned and set aside in the judgement of God, and not a shred or particle thereof is to be found in the pure incense and pure fire, on the altar of pure gold: it could not be. We have been introduced, "by the blood of Jesus," into the sanctuary — a sanctuary of priestly service and worship, in which there is not so much as a trace of sin. We see the pure table, the pure candlestick, and the pure altar; but there is nothing to remind us of self and its wretchedness. Were it possible for ought of that to meet our view, it could but prove the death knell of our worship, mar our priestly food, and dim our light. Nature can have no place in the sanctuary of God. It, together with all its belongings, has been consumed to ashes; and we are now to have before our souls the fragrant odour of Christ, ascending in grateful incense to God: this is what God delights in. Everything that presents Christ in His own proper excellence, is sweet and acceptable to God. Even the feeblest expression or exhibition of Him, in the life or worship of a saint, is an odour of a sweet smell, in which God is well pleased.

Too often, alas! we have to be occupied with our failures and infirmities. If ever the workings of indwelling sin be suffered to rise to the surface, we must deal with our God about them, for He cannot go on with sin. He can forgive it, and cleanse us from it; He can restore our souls by the gracious ministry of our great High Priest; but He cannot go on in company with a single sinful thought. a light or foolish thought as well as an unclean or covetous one, is amply

sufficient to mar a Christian's communion, and interrupt his worship. Should any such thought spring up, it must be judged and confessed, ere the elevated joys of the sanctuary can be known afresh. A heart in which lust is working, is not enjoying the proper occupations of the sanctuary. When we are in our proper priestly condition, nature is as though it had no existence; then we can feed upon Christ. We can taste the divine luxury of being wholly at leisure from ourselves, and wholly engrossed with Christ.

All this can only be produced by the power of the Spirit. There is no need of seeking to work up nature's devotional feelings, by the various appliances of systematic religion. There must be pure fire as well as pure incense. (Compare Lev. 10: 1, with Lev. 16: 12) All efforts at worshipping God, by the unhallowed powers of nature, come under the head of "strange fire." God is the object of worship; Christ the ground and the material of worship; and the Holy Ghost the power of worship.

Properly speaking, then, as in the brazen altar, we have Christ in the value of His sacrifice, so in the golden altar, we have Christ in the value of His intercession. This will furnish my reader with a still clearer sense of the reason why the priestly office is introduced between the two altars. There is, as might be expected, an intimate connection between the two, for Christ's intercession is founded upon His sacrifice. "And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it, once in a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord." All rests upon the immovable foundation of SHED BLOOD. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9: 22-24)

From verse 11-16 we have the atonement money for the congregation. All were to pay alike. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an

offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." In the matter of atonement, all must stand on one common platform. There may be a vast difference in knowledge, in experience, in capacity, in attainment, in zeal, in devotedness, but the ground of atonement is alike to all. The great apostle of the Gentiles, and the feeblest lamb in all the flock of Christ, stand on the same level, as regards atonement. This is a very simple and a very blessed truth. All may not be alike devoted and fruitful; but "the precious blood of Christ," and not devotedness or fruitfulness, is the solid and everlasting ground of the believer's rest. The more we enter into the truth and power of this, the more fruitful shall we be.

In Leviticus 27, we find another kind of valuation. When any one made "a singular vow," Moses valued him according to his age. In other words, when any one ventured to assume the ground of capacity, Moses, as the representative of *the claims* of God, estimated him "after the shekel of the sanctuary" If he were "poorer" than Moses' estimation, then he was to "present himself before the priest," the representative of *the grace* of God, who was to value him "according to his ability that vowed."

Blessed be God, we know that all His claims have been answered, and all our vows discharged by One who was at once the Representative of His claims and the Exponent of His grace, who finished the work of atonement upon the cross, and is now at the right hand of God. Here is sweet rest for the heart and conscience. Atonement is the first thing we get hold of, and we shall never lose sight of it. Let our range of intelligence be ever so wide, our fund of experience ever so rich, our tone of devotion ever so elevated, we shall always have to fall back upon the one simple, divine, unalterable, soul-sustaining doctrine of THE BLOOD. Thus it has ever been in the history of God's people, Thus it is, and thus it ever will be. The most deeply-taught and gifted servants of Christ have always rejoiced to come back to "that one well-spring of delight," at which their thirsty spirits drank when first they knew the Lord; and the eternal song of the Church in glory will be, "Unto Him that; loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." The courts of heaven will for ever resound with the glorious doctrine of the blood.

From ver. 17-21 we are presented with "the brazen laver and its foot" — the vessel of washing and the basis thereof. These two are always presented together. (See Ex. 30: 28; Ex. 38: 8; Ex. 40: 11) In this laver the priests washed their hands and feet, and thus maintained that purity which was essential to the proper discharge of their priestly functions. It was not, by any means, a question of a fresh presentation of blood; but simply that action by which they were preserved in fitness for priestly service and worship. "When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet that they die not."

There can be no true communion with God, save as personal holiness is diligently maintained. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (1 John 1: 6) This personal holiness can only flow from the action of the word of God on our works and ways. "By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Our constant failure in priestly ministry may be accounted for by our neglecting the due use of the laver. If our ways are not submitted to the purgative action of the word — if we continue in the pursuit or practice of that which, according to the testimony of our own consciences, the word distinctly condemns, the energy of our priestly character will, assuredly, be lacking. Deliberate continuance in evil and true priestly worship are wholly incompatible. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." If we have any uncleanness upon us, we cannot enjoy the presence of God. The effect of His presence would then be to convict us by its holy light. But when we are enabled, through grace, to cleanse our way, by taking heed thereto according to God's word, we are then morally capacitated for the enjoyment of His presence.

My reader will at once perceive what a vast field of practical truth is here laid open to him, and also how largely the doctrine of the brazen laver is brought out in the New Testament. Oh! that all those who are privileged to tread the courts of the sanctuary, in priestly robes, and to approach the altar of God, in priestly worship, may keep their hands and feet clean by the use of the true laver.

It may be interesting to note that the laver, with its foot, was made "of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (See Ex. 38: 8) This fact is full of meaning. We are ever prone to be "like a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Nature's looking-glass can never furnish a clear and permanent view of our true condition. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1: 23-25) The man who has constant recourse to the word of God, and who allows that word to tell upon his heart and conscience, will be maintained in the holy activities of the divine life.

Intimately connected with the searching and cleaning action of the word is the efficacy of the priestly ministry of Christ. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, (i.e., *living and energetic*.) and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Then the inspired apostle immediately adds, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4: 12-16)

The more keenly we feel the edge of the word, the more we shall prize the merciful and gracious ministry of our High Priest. The two things go together. They are the inseparable companions of the Christian's path. The High Priest sympathises with the infirmities which the word detects and exposes. He is "a faithful" as well as "a merciful High Priest." Hence, it is only as I am making use of the laver that I can approach the altar. Worship must ever be presented in the power of holiness. We must lose sight of nature, as reflected

in a looking-glass, and be wholly occupied with Christ, as presented in the word. In this way only shall the "hands and feet," the works and ways be cleansed, according to the purification of the sanctuary.

Prom ver. 22 - 23 we have the "holy anointing oil," with which the priests, together with all the furniture of the tabernacle, were anointed. In this we discern a type of the varied graces of the Holy Ghost, which were found, in all their divine fullness, in Christ. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." (Ps. 45: 8) "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts 10: 38) All the graces of the Spirit, in their perfect fragrance, centred in Christ; and it is from Him alone they can flow. He, as to His humanity, was conceived of the Holy Ghost; and, ere He entered upon His public ministry, He was anointed with the Holy Ghost; and, finally, when He had taken His seat on high, in token of an accomplished redemption, He shed forth upon His body, the Church, the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. (See Matt. 1: 20; Matt. 3: 16, 17; Luke 4: 18, 19; Acts 2: 33; Acts 10: 45, 46; Eph. 4: 8-13)

It is as those who are associated with this ever blessed and highly-exalted Christ that believers are partakers of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; and, moreover, it is as they walk in habitual nearness to Him, that they either enjoy or emit the fragrance thereof. The unrenewed man knows nothing of this. " [Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured." The graces of the Spirit can never be connected with man's flesh, for the Holy Ghost cannot own nature. Not one of the fruits of the Spirit was ever yet produced "in nature's barren soil." "We must, be born again." It is only as connected with the new man, as being part of "the new creation," that we can know anything of the fruits of the Holy Ghost. It is of no possible value to seek to imitate those fruits and grace's. The fairest fruits that ever grew in nature's fields, in their highest state of cultivation — the most amiable traits which nature can exhibit, must be utterly disowned in the sanctuary of God. "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured; neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people." There must be no

counterfeit of the Spirit's work; all must be of the Spirit — wholly, really of the Spirit. Moreover, that which is of the Spirit must not be attributed to man. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2: 14)

There is a very beautiful allusion to this "holy anointing oil" in one of the "songs of degrees." "Behold," says the Psalmist, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." (Ps. 133: 1, 2.) The head of the priestly house being anointed with the holy oil, the very "skirts of his garments" must exhibit the precious effects. May my reader experience the power of this anointing! May he know the value of having "an unction from the Holy One," and of being "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise!" Nothing is of any value, in the divine estimation, save that which connects itself immediately with Christ, and whatever is so connected can receive the holy anointing.

In the concluding paragraph of this most comprehensive chapter, we have the "sweet spices tempered together, pure and holy." This surpassingly precious perfume presents to us the unmeasured and Immeasurable perfections of Christ. There was no special quantity of each ingredient prescribed, because the graces that dwell in Christ, the beauties and excellencies that are concentrated in His adorable Person, are without limit. Nought save the infinite mind of Deity could scan the infinite perfections of Him in whom all the fullness of Deity dwelleth; and as eternity rolls along its course of everlasting ages, those glorious perfections will ever be unfolding themselves in the view of worshipping saints and angels. Ever and anon, as some fresh beams of light shall burst forth from that central Sun of divine glory, the courts of heaven above, and the wide fields of creation beneath, shall resound with thrilling Alleluias to Him who was, who is, and who ever shall be the object of praise to all the ranks of created intelligence.

But not only was there no prescribed quantity of the ingredients; we also read, "of each there shall be a like weight." Every feature of moral excellence found its due place and proper

proportion in Christ. No one quality ever displaced or interfered with another; all was "tempered together, pure and holy," and emitted an odour so fragrant that none but God could appreciate it.

"And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy." There is uncommon depth and power in the expression "very small" It teaches us that every little movement in the life of Christ, every minute circumstance, every act, every word, every look, every feature, every trait, every lineament, emits an odour produced by an equal proportion — "a like weight" of all the divine graces that compose His character. The smaller the perfume was beaten, the more its rare and exquisite temper was manifested.

"And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." This fragrant perfume was designed, exclusively, for Jehovah. Its place was "before the testimony." There is that in Jesus which only God could appreciate. True, every believing heart can draw nigh to His matchless Person, and more than satisfy its deepest and most intense longings; still, after all God's redeemed have drunk, to the utmost of their capacity; after angels have gazed on the peerless glories of the man Christ Jesus, as earnestly as their vision is capable of; after all, there will be that in Him which God alone can fathom and enjoy. No human or angelic eye could duly trace the exquisitely minute parts of that holy perfume "beaten very small." Nor could earth afford a proper sphere in which to emit its divine and heavenly odour.

Thus, then, we have, in our rapid sketch, reached the close of a clearly marked division of our book. We began at "the ark of the covenant," and travelled out to "the altar of brass;" we returned from "the altar of brass," and have come to the "holy perfume;" and, oh! what a journey is this, if only it be travelled, not in company with the false and flickering light of human imagination, but by the infallible lamp of the Holy Ghost! What a journey if only it be travelled, not amid the shadows of a bygone dispensation, but amid the personal glories and powerful attractions of the Son, which are

there portrayed! If my reader has so travelled it, he will find his affections more drawn to Christ than ever; he will have a loftier conception of His glory, His beauty, His preciousness, His excellency, His ability to heal a wounded conscience, and satisfy a longing heart; he will have his eyes more thoroughly closed to all earth's attractions, and his ears closed to all earth's pretensions and promises. In one word, he will be prepared to utter a deeper and more fervent amen to the words of the inspired apostle, when he says, "IF ANY MAN LOVE NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, LET HIM: BE ANATHEMA, MARANATHA."* (1 Cor. 16: 22)

{*It is interesting to note the position of this most Solemn and startling denunciation. It occurs at the close of a long epistle, in the progress of which the apostle had to rebuke some of the grossest practical evils and doctrinal errors. How solemn, therefore, how full of meaning the fact, that when he comes to pronounce his anathema, it is not hurled at those who had introduced those errors and evils, but at the man who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is this? Is it because the Spirit of God makes little of errors and evils? Surely not; the entire epistle unfolds His thoughts as to these. But the truth is, when the heart is filled with love to the Lord Jesus Christ, there is an effectual safeguard against all manner of false doctrine and malpractice. If a man does not love Christ, there is no accounting for the notions he may adopt, or the course he may pursue Hence the form and the position of the apostolic anathema. }

Exodus 31

The opening of this brief chapter records the divine call and the divine qualification of "Bezaleel and Aholiab" to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, *I have called* by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and *I have filled* him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship..... And I, behold, *I have given* with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted *I have put* wisdom, that they may make all that *I have commanded*." Whether for "the work of the tabernacle" of old, or "the work of the ministry" now, there should be the divine selection, the divine call, the divine qualification, the divine appointment; and all must be done according to the divine commandment. Man could not select, call, qualify, or appoint to do the work of the tabernacle; neither can he, to do the work of the ministry. Furthermore, no man could presume to appoint himself to do the work of the tabernacle; neither can he to do the work of the ministry. It was, it is, it must be, wholly and absolutely divine. Men may run as sent of their fellow, or men may run of themselves; but let it be remembered that all who run, without being sent of God, shall, one day or other, be covered with shame and confusion of face. Such is the plain and wholesome doctrine suggested by the words, "I have called" "I have filled," "I have given," "I have put," "I have commanded." The words of the Baptist must ever hold good, "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." (John 3: 27) He can, therefore, have but little room to boast of himself; and just as little to be jealous of his fellow.

There is a profitable lesson to be learnt from a comparison of this chapter with Genesis 6. "Tubal-cain was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." The descendants of Cain were endowed with unhallowed skill to make a cursed and groaning earth a delectable spot, without the presence of God. "Bezaleel and Aholiab," on the contrary, were endowed with divine skill to beautify a sanctuary which was to be hallowed and blessed by the presence and glory of the God of Israel.

Reader, let me ask you just to pause and put this solemn question to your conscience, "Whether am I devoting whatever of skill or energy I possess to the interests of the Church, which is God's dwelling place, or to beautify an ungodly, Christless world?" Say not, in thine heart, "I am not divinely called or divinely qualified for the work of the ministry." Remember that though all Israel were not Bezaleels or Aholiabs, yet all could serve the interests of the sanctuary. There was an open door for all to communicate. Thus it is now. Each one has a place to occupy, a ministry to fulfil, a responsibility to discharge; and you and I are, at this moment, either promoting the interests of the house of God — the body of Christ — the Church, or helping on the godless schemes of a world, yet stained with the blood of Christ and the blood of all His martyred saints. Oh! let us deeply ponder this, as in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, whom none can deceive — to whom all are known.

Our chapter closes with a special reference to the institution of the Sabbath. It was referred to in Ex. 16 in connection with the manna; it was distinctly enjoined in Ex. 20, when the people were formally put under law; and here we have it again in connection with the setting up of the tabernacle. Whenever the nation of Israel is presented in some special position, or recognised as a people in special responsibility, then the Sabbath is introduced. And let my reader carefully note both the day and the mode in which it was to be observed, and also the object for which it was instituted in Israel. "Ye shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto you: *every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death*: for whosoever doeth *any work* therein, that soul shall be cut *off* from among his people. Six days may work be done; but *in the seventh* is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, *he shall surely be put to death*." This is as explicit and absolute as anything can be. It fixes "the seventh day" and none other; and it positively forbids, on pain of death, all manner of work. There can be no avoiding the plain sense of this. And, be it remembered, that there is not so much as a single line of Scripture to prove that the Sabbath has been changed, or the strict principles of its observance, in the smallest degree, relaxed. If there be any Scripture proof, let my reader look it out for his own satisfaction.

Now, let us inquire if indeed professing Christians do keep God's Sabbath on the day and after the manner which He commanded. It were idle to lose time in proving that they do not. Well, what are the consequences of a single breach of the Sabbath? "*Cut off*" — "*Put to death.*"

But, it will be said, "we are not under law, but under grace." Blessed be God for the sweet assurance! Were we under law, there is not one throughout the wide range of Christendom who should not, long since, have fallen beneath the stone of judgement, even upon the one solitary point of the Sabbath. But, if we are under grace, what is the day which belongs to us? Assuredly, "the first day of the week," "the Lord's day." This is the Church's day, the resurrection day of Jesus, who, having spent the Sabbath in the tomb, rose triumphant over all the powers of darkness, thus leading His people out of the old creation, and all that pertains thereto, into the new creation, of which He is the Head, and of which the first day of the week is the apt expression.

This distinction is worthy of the serious attention of the reader. Let him examine it prayerfully in the light of Scripture. There may be nothing and there may be a great deal in a mere name. In the present instance, there is a great deal more involved in the distinction between "the Sabbath" and "the Lord's day" than many Christians seem to be aware of. It is very evident that the first day of the week gets a place, in the Word of God, which no other day gets. No other day is ever called by that majestic and elevated title, "the Lord's day." Some, I am aware, deny that Rev. 1: 10 refers to the first day of the week; but I feel most fully assured that sound criticism and sound exegesis do both warrant, yea, demand the application of that passage, not to the day of Christ's advent in glory, but to the day of his resurrection from the dead.

But, most assuredly, the Lord's day is never once called the Sabbath. So far from this, the two days are, again and again, spoken of in their proper distinctness. Hence, therefore, my reader will have to keep clear of two extremes. In the first place, he will have to avoid the legalism which one finds so much linked with the term "Sabbath;" and, in the second place, he will need to bear a very decided testimony against every attempt to dishonour the Lord's day,

or lower it to the level of an ordinary day. The believer is delivered, most completely, from the observance of "days and months, and times and years." Association with a risen Christ has taken him clean out of all such superstitious observances. But, while this is most blessedly true, we see that "the first day of the week " has a place assigned to it in the New Testament which no other has. Let the Christian give it that place. It is a sweet and happy privilege, not a grievous yoke.

Space forbids my further entrance upon this interesting subject. It has been gone into, elsewhere, as already intimated, in the earlier pages of this volume. I shall close these remarks by pointing out, in one or two particulars, the contrast between "the Sabbath" and "the Lord's day."

1. The Sabbath was the *seventh* day; the Lord's day is the *First*.

2. The Sabbath was a *test* of Israel's condition; the Lord's day is the *proof* of the Church's acceptance, on wholly unconditional grounds.

3. The Sabbath belonged to the old creation; the Lord's day belongs to the new.

4. The Sabbath was a day of *bodily* rest for the Jew; the Lord's day is a day of *spiritual* rest for the Christian.

5. If the Jew worked on the Sabbath, he was to be put to *death* : if the Christian does not work on the Lord's day, he gives little proof of *life*. That is to say, if he does not work for the benefit of the souls of men, the extension of Christ's glory, and the spread of His truth. In point of fact, the devoted Christian, who possesses any gift, is generally more fatigued on the evening of the Lord's day than on any other in the week, for how can he rest while souls are perishing around him ?

6. The Jew was *commanded* by the *law* to abide in his tent; the Christian is *led* by the spirit of the *gospel* to go forth, whether it be to attend the public assembly, or to minister to the souls of perishing

sinner. The Lord enable us, beloved reader, to rest more artlessly *in*, and labour more vigorously *for*, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! We should *rest* in the spirit of a *Child*; and *labour* with the energy of a *man*.

Exodus 32

We have now to contemplate something very different from that which has hitherto engaged our attention. "The pattern of things in the heavens," has been before us — Christ in His glorious Person, gracious offices, and perfect work, as set forth in the tabernacle and all its mystic furniture. We have been, in spirit, on the mount, hearkening to God's own words — the sweet utterances of Heaven's thoughts, affections, and counsels, of which Jesus is "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last."

Now, however, we are called down to earth, to behold the melancholy wreck which man makes of everything to which he puts his hand. "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." What degradation is here! *Make us gods!* They were abandoning Jehovah, and placing themselves under the conduct of manufactured gods — gods of man's making. Dark clouds and heavy mists had gathered round the mount. They grew weary of waiting for the absent one, and of hanging on an unseen but real arm. They imagined that a god formed by "graving tool" was better than Jehovah; that a calf which they could see was better than the invisible, yet everywhere present, God; a visible counterfeit, than an invisible reality.

Alas! alas! it has ever been thus in man's history. The human heart loves something that can be seen; it loves that which meets and gratifies the senses. It is only faith that can "endure, as seeing him who is invisible." Hence, in every age, men have been forward to set up and lean upon human imitations of divine realities. Thus it is we see the counterfeits of corrupt religion multiplied before our eyes. Those things which we know, upon the authority of God's Word, to be divine and heavenly realities, the professing Church has transformed into human and earthly imitations. Having become weary of hanging upon an invisible arm, of trusting in an invisible sacrifice, of having recourse to an invisible priest, of committing herself to the guidance of an invisible head, she has set about

"making" these things; and thus, from age to age, she has been busily at work, with "graving tool" in hand, graving and fashioning one thing after another, until we can, at length, recognise as little similarity between much that we see around us, and what we read in the word, as between " a molten calf" and the God of Israel.

"Make us gods!" What a thought! Man called upon to make gods, and people willing to put their trust in such! My reader, let us look within, and look around, and see if we cannot detect something of all this. We read, in 1 Cor. 10, in reference to Israel's history, that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples, (or types,) and they are written *for our admonition*, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (ver. 11) Let us, then, seek to profit by the "admonition." Let us remember that, although we may not just form and bow down before a molten calf" yet, that Israel's sin is a "type" of something into which we are in danger of falling. Whenever we turn away in heart from leaning exclusively upon God Himself, whether in the matter of salvation or the necessities of the path, we are, in principle, saying, "up, make us gods." It is needless to say we are not, in ourselves, a whit better than Aaron or the children of Israel; and if they acknowledge a calf instead of Jehovah, we are in danger of acting on the same principle, and manifesting the same spirit. Our only safeguard is to be much in the presence of God. Moses knew that the "molten calf was not Jehovah, and therefore he did not acknowledge it. But when we get out of the divine presence, there is no accounting for the gross errors and evils into which we may be betrayed.

We are called to live by faith; we can see nothing with the eye of sense. Jesus is gone up on high, and we are told to wait patiently for His appearing. God's word carried home to the heart, in the energy of the Holy Ghost, is the ground of confidence in all things, temporal and spiritual, present and future. He tells us of Christ's completed sacrifice; we, by grace, believe, and commit our souls to the efficacy thereof, and know we shall never be confounded. He tells us of a great High Priest, passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, whose intercession is all-prevailing; we, by grace, believe, and lean confidently upon His ability, and know we shall be saved to the uttermost. He tells us of the living Head to whom we

are linked, in the power of the Holy Ghost, and from whom we can never be severed by any influence, angelic, human, or diabolical; we, by grace, believe, and cling to that blessed Head, in simple faith, and know we shall never perish. He tells us of the glorious appearing of the Son from heaven; we, through grace, believe, and seek to prove the purifying and elevating power of "that blessed hope," and know we shall not be disappointed. He tells us of "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God," for entrance thereinto in due time; we, through grace, believe and know we shall never be confounded. He tells us the hairs of our head are all numbered, and that we shall never want any good thing; we, through grace, believe, and enjoy a sweetly tranquillised heart.

Thus it is, or, as least, thus our God would have it. But then the enemy is ever active in seeking to make us cast away these divine realities, take up the "graving tool" of unbelief, and "make gods" for ourselves. Let us watch against him, pray against him, believe against him, testify against him, act against him: thus he shall be confounded, God glorified, and we ourselves abundantly blessed.

As to Israel, in the chapter before us, their rejection of God was most complete. "And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me..... And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, *These be thy Gods*, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a *feast unto the Lord*." This was entirely setting aside God, and putting a calf in His stead. When they could say that a calf had brought them up out of Egypt, they had, evidently, abandoned all idea of the presence and character of the true God. How "*quickly*" they must "have turned aside out of the Way," to have made such a gross and terrible mistake! And Aaron, the brother and yoke-fellow of Moses, led them on in this; and, with a calf before him, he could say, "Tomorrow is a feast unto Jehovah!" How sad! how deeply humbling! God was displaced by an idol. A thing,

"graven by art and man's device," was set in the place of "the Lord of all the earth."

All this involved, on Israel's part, a deliberate abandonment of their connection with Jehovah. They had given Him up; and, accordingly, we find Him, as it were, taking them on their own ground. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for *thy people*, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them.... I have seen this people, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a greater nation." Here was an open door for Moses; and here he displays uncommon grace and similarity of spirit to that Prophet whom the Lord was to raise up like unto him. He refuses to be or to have anything without the people. He pleads with God on the ground of His own glory, and puts the people back upon Him in these touching words, "Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth. Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against *thy* people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever." This was powerful pleading. The glory of God, the vindication of His holy name. the accomplishment of His oath. These are the grounds on which Moses entreats the Lord to turn from His fierce wrath. He could not find, in Israel's conduct or character, any plea or ground to go upon. He found it all in God Himself.

The Lord had said unto Moses, "*Thy* people which *thou* broughtest up;" but Moses replies to the Lord, "*Thy* people which *thou* hast brought up." They were the Lord's people notwithstanding all; and His name, His glory, His oath were all involved in their destiny. The moment the Lord links Himself with a people, His character is involved, and faith will ever look at Him upon this solid

ground. Moses loses sight of himself entirely. His whole soul is engrossed with thoughts of the Lord's glory and the Lord's people. Blessed servant! How few like him! And yet when we contemplate him in all this scene, we perceive how infinitely he is below the blessed Master. He came down from the mount, and when he saw the calf and the dancing, "his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them beneath the mount." The covenant was broken and the memorials thereof shattered to pieces; and then, having executed judgement in righteous indignation, "he said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; *peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin."

How different is this from what we see in Christ! He came down from the bosom of the Father, not with the tables in His hands, but with the law in his heart. He came down, not to be made acquainted with the condition of the people, but with a perfect knowledge of what that condition was. Moreover, instead of destroying the memorials of the covenant and executing judgement, He magnified the law and made it honourable, and bore the judgement of His people, in His own blessed Person, on the cross; and, having done all, He went back to heaven, not with a "*peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin," but to lay upon the throne of the Majesty in the highest, the imperishable memorials of an atonement already accomplished. This makes a vast and truly glorious difference. Thank God, we need not anxiously gaze after our Mediator to know if haply He shall accomplish redemption for us, and reconcile offended Justice. No, He has done it all. His presence on high declares that the whole work is finished. He could stand upon the confines of this world, ready to take His departure, and, in all the calmness of a conscious victor — though He had yet to encounter the darkest scene of all — say, "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gravest me to do." (John 17) Blessed Saviour! we may well adore thee, and well exalt in the place of dignity and glory in which eternal justice has set thee. The highest place in heaven belongs to thee; and thy saints only wait for the time when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." May that time speedily arrive!

At the close of this chapter Jehovah asserts His rights, in moral government, in the following words: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore, now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless, in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." This is God *in government*, not God in *the gospel*. Here He speaks of blotting out the *sinner*; in the gospel He is seen blotting out *sin*. a wide difference!

The people are to be sent forward, under the mediatorship of Moses, by the hand of an angel. This was very unlike the condition of things which obtained from Egypt to Sinai. They had forfeited all claim on the ground of law, and hence it only remained for God to fallback upon His own sovereignty and say, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Exodus 33-34

Jehovah refuses to accompany Israel to the land of promise. "I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way." At the opening of this book, when the people were in the furnace of Egypt, the Lord could say, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." But now He has to say, "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people." An afflicted people is an object of grace; but a stiff-necked people must be humbled. The cry of oppressed Israel had been answered by the exhibition of grace ; but the song of idolatrous Israel must be answered by the voice of stern rebuke.

"Ye are a stiff-necked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee that I may know what to do unto thee," It is only when we are really stripped of all nature's ornaments that God can deal with us. A naked sinner can be clothed; but a sinner decked in ornaments must be stripped. This is always true. We must be stripped of all that pertains to self, ere we can be clothed with that which pertains to God.

"And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb." There they stood beneath that memorable mount, their feasting and singing changed into bitter lamentations, their ornaments gone, the tables of testimony in fragments. Such was their condition, and Moses as once proceeds to act according to it. He could no longer own the people in their corporate character. The assembly had become entirely defiled, having set up an idol of their own making, in the place of God — a calf instead of Jehovah. "And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it *without the camp*, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation." Thus the camp was disowned as the place of the divine presence. God was not — could not — be there. He had been displaced by a human invention. a new gathering point was, therefore, set up. "And it came to pass that every one which

sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp."

There is here a fine principle of truth, which the spiritual mind will readily apprehend. The place which Christ now occupies is "without the camp," and we are called upon to "go forth unto him." It demands much subjection to the word to be able, with accuracy, to know what "the camp" really is, and much spiritual power to be able to go forth from it; and still more to be able, while "far off from it," to act towards those in it, in the combined power of holiness and grace — holiness, which separates from the defilement of the camp; grace, which enables us to act toward those who are involved therein.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. Moses exhibits a higher degree of spiritual energy than his servant Joshua. It is much easier to assume a position of separation from the camp, than to act aright towards those within.

"And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me: yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight." Moses entreats the accompanying presence of Jehovah as a proof of their having found *grace* in His sight. Were it a question of mere *justice*, He could only consume them by coming in their midst, because they were "a stiff-necked people." But directly He speaks of grace, in connection with the mediator, the very stiff-neckedness of the people is made a plea for demanding His presence. "If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; *for it is a stiff-necked people*; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance." This is touchingly beautiful. a "stiff-necked people demanded the boundless grace and exhaustless patience of God. None but He could bear with them.

"And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Precious portion! Precious hope! The presence of God with us, all the desert through, and everlasting rest at the end! Grace

to meet our present need, and glory as our future portion! Well may our satisfied hearts exclaim, "It is enough, my precious Lord."

In Ex. 34 the second set of tables is given, not to be broken, like the first, but to be hidden in the ark, above which, as already noticed, Jehovah was to take His place, as the Lord of all the earth, in moral government. "And he hewed two tables of stone, like unto the first: and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with them there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third, and to the fourth generation." This, be it remembered, is God, as seen in His moral government of the world, and not as He is seen in the cross — not as He shines in the face of Jesus Christ — not as He is proclaimed in the gospel of His grace. The following is an exhibition of God in the gospel: "And all things are of God, *who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ*, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto Himself*; NOT IMPUTING their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the *word of reconciliation*." (2 Cor. 5: 18, 19) "Not clearing" and "not imputing" present two totally different ideas of God. "Visiting iniquities" and cancelling them are not the same thing. The former is God in government, the latter is God in the gospel. In 2 Cor. 3 the apostle contrasts the "ministration" recorded in Exodus 34 with "the ministration" of the gospel. My reader would do well to study that chapter with care. From it he will learn that any one who regards the view of God's character given to Moses, on Mount Horeb, as unfolding the gospel, must have a very defective apprehension, indeed, of what the gospel is. Neither in creation, nor yet in moral government, do I, or can I, read the deep secrets of the Father's bosom. Could the prodigal have found his place in the arms of the One revealed on Mount Sinai? Could John have leaned his head on the bosom of that One? Surely not. But God has revealed

Himself in the face of Jesus Christ. He has told out, in divine harmony, all His attributes in the work of the cross. There "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Sin is perfectly put away, and the believing sinner perfectly justified "BY THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS." When we get a view of God, as thus unfolded, we have only, like Moses, to bow our head toward the earth and worship," — suited attitude for a pardoned and accepted sinner in the presence of God!

Exodus 35-40

These chapters contain a recapitulation of the various parts of the tabernacle and its furniture; and inasmuch as, I have already given what I believe to be the import of the more prominent parts, it were needless to add more. There are, however, two things in this section from which we may deduce most profitable instruction, and these are, first, the *voluntary devotedness*; and, secondly, the *implicit obedience* of the people with respect to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. And first, as to their voluntary devotedness, we read, "And all the consecration of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one *whose heart stirred him up*, and every one whom *his spirit made willing*, and they brought *the Lord's offering* to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, *as many as were willing-hearted*, and brought bracelets and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold : and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass, brought the Lord's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim wood? for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women *whose heart stirred them up* in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate: and spice and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought *a willing offering unto the Lord* every man and woman, *whose heart made them willing to bring*, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses." (Ex. 35: 20-29.) And, again, we read, "And all the wise men that; wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring *much more than enough* for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make, . . . for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Ver. 4-7.)

A lovely picture this of devotedness to the work of the sanctuary! It needed no effort to move the hearts of the people to give, no earnest appeals, no impressive arguments. Oh! no; their "*hearts stirred them up.*" This was the true way. The streams of voluntary devotedness flowed from within. "Rulers," "men," "women" — all felt it to be their sweet privilege to give to the Lord, not with a narrow heart or niggard hand, but after such a princely fashion that they had "*enough and too much.*"

Then, as to their *implicit obedience*, we read, "*according to all that the Lord commanded Moses*, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, *they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.*" (Ex. 39: 42, 43) The Lord had given the most minute instructions concerning the entire work of the tabernacle. Every pin, every socket, every loop, every tach, was accurately set forth. There was no room left for man's expediency, his reason, or his common sense. Jehovah did not give a great outline and leave man to fill it up. He left no margin whatever in which man might enter his regulations. By no means. "See, saith he, that thou make *all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.*" (Ex. 25: 40; Ex. 26: 30; Heb. 8: 5) This left no room for human device. If man had been allowed to make a single pin, that pin would, most assuredly, have been out of place in the judgement of God. We can see what man's "graving tool" produces in Ex. 32. Thank God, it had no place in the tabernacle. They did, in this matter, just what they were told — nothing more — nothing less. Salutory lesson this for the professing church! There are many things in the history of Israel which we should earnestly seek to avoid — their impatient murmurings, their legal vows, and their idolatry; but in those two things may we imitate them. May our devotedness be more whole hearted, and our obedience more implicit. We may safely assert, that if all had not been done "according to the pattern showed in the mount," we should not have to read, "then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." (Ex. 40: 34, 35) The tabernacle was, in all respects, according to the *divine*

pattern, and, therefore, it could be filled with the *divine glory*. There is a volume of instruction in this. We are too prone to regard the Word of God as insufficient for the most minute details connected with His worship, and service. This is a great mistake, a mistake which has proved the fruitful source of evils and errors, in the professing Church. The word of God is amply sufficient for everything, whether as regards personal salvation and walk, or the order and rule of the assembly. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17) This settles the question. If the Word of God furnishes a man *thoroughly* unto "*all good works*," it follows, as a necessary consequence, that whatever I find not in its pages, cannot possibly be a good work. and, further, be it remembered, that the divine glory cannot connect itself with ought that is not according to the divine pattern.

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Beloved reader, we have now travelled together through this most precious book. We have, I fondly hope, reaped some profit from our study. I trust we have gathered up some refreshing thoughts of Jesus and His sacrifice as we passed along. Feeble, indeed, must be our most vigorous thoughts, and shallow our deepest apprehensions, as to the mind of God in all that this Book contains. It is happy to remember that through grace, we are on our way to that glory where we shall know, even as we are known; and where we shall bask in the sunshine of His countenance who is the beginning and ending of all the ways of God, whether in creation, in providence, or redemption. To Him I do most affectionately commend you, in body, soul, and spirit. May you know the deep blessedness of having your portion in Christ, and be kept in patient waiting for His glorious advent. Amen.

C. H. M.

NOTES
ON THE
BOOK OF
LEVITUCUS

Leviticus 1.

Ere entering upon the details of the chapter before us, there are two things which demand our careful consideration; namely, first, Jehovah's position; and, secondly, the order in which the offerings are presented.

"And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation." Such was the position from which Jehovah made the communications contained in this Book, He had been speaking from Mount Sinai, and his position, there, gave marked character to the communication. From the fiery mount "went a fiery law;" but, here, He speaks "out of the tabernacle of the congregation." This was an entirely different position. We have seen this tabernacle set up, at the close of the preceding book. "And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle For the glory of the Lord was upon the tabernacle, by day, and fire was on it, by night, in the sight of all the House of Israel, throughout all their journeys." (Ex. 40: 33-38)

Now, the tabernacle was God's dwelling place, in grace. He could take up His, abode there, because He was surrounded, on all sides, by that which vividly set forth the ground of His relationship with the people. Had He come into their midst, in the full display of the character revealed upon Mount Sinai, it could only have been to "consume them in a moment," as a "Stiff-necked people." But He retired within the veil — type of Christ's flesh, (Heb. 10: 20) — and took His place on the mercy seat where the blood of atonement, and not the "stiff-neckedness" of Israel, was that which met His view, and satisfied the claims of His nature. The blood which was brought into the sanctuary, by the high priest, was the type of that precious blood which cleanses from all sin; and, although Israel, after the flesh, saw nothing of this, it, nevertheless, justified God in abiding amongst them — it "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh." (Heb. 9: 13)

Thus much as to Jehovah's position in this Book, which must be taken into account, in order to a proper understanding of the communications made therein. In them we shall find inflexible holiness united with the purest grace. God is holy, no matter from whence He speaks. He was holy on Mount Sinai, and holy above the mercy-seat; but, in the former case, His holiness stood connected with "a devouring fire;" in the latter, it was connected with patient grace. Now, the connection of perfect holiness with perfect grace is that which characterises the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, which redemption is, in various ways, shadowed forth in the Book of Leviticus. God must be holy, even though it should be in the eternal condemnation of impenitent sinners; but the full display of His holiness, in the salvation of sinners, calls forth heaven's loudest and loftiest note of praise. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, Good-will toward men." (Luke 2: 14.) This doxology could not have been sung in connection with "the fiery law." No doubt, there was "glory to God in the highest," but there was no "Peace on earth" nor "good pleasure in men," inasmuch as it was the declaration of what men ought to be, ere God could take pleasure in them. But when "the Son" took His place, as a man, on the earth, the mind of Heaven could express its entire delight in Him as the One whose Person and work could combine, in the most perfect manner, divine glory with human blessedness.

And, now, one word, as to the order of the offerings, in the opening chapters of the Book of Leviticus. The Lord begins with the burnt offering, and ends with the trespass offering. That is to say, He leaves off where we begin. This order is marked and most instructive. When, first, the arrow of conviction enters the soul, there are deep searchings of conscience, in reference to sins actually committed. Memory casts back its enlightened eye over the page of one's past life, and sees it stained with numberless trespasses against God and man. At this point of the soul's history, it is not so occupied with the question of the root from whence those trespasses have sprung, as with the stern and palpable fact that such and such things have actually been committed; and, hence, it needs to know that God has provided a sacrifice through which "all trespasses" can be "frankly forgiven." This is presented to us in the trespass offering.

But, as one advances, in the divine life, he becomes conscious that those sins which he has committed are but branches from a root, streams from a fountain; and, moreover, that sin in his nature is that fountain — that root. This leads to far deeper exercise, which can only be met by a deeper insight into the work of the cross. In a word, the cross will need to be apprehended by that in which God Himself has "*condemned sin in the flesh,*" (Rom. 8: 3) My reader will observe, it does not say, "sins in the flesh," but the root from whence these have sprung, namely, "*sin in the flesh.*" this is a truth of immense importance. Christ not merely "died for our *sins,* according to the scriptures," but He was "*made sin for us.*" (2 Cor. 5: 21) This is the doctrine of the sin offering.

Now, it is when the heart and conscience are set at rest, through the knowledge of Christ's work, that we can feed upon Himself as the ground of our peace and joy, in the presence of God. There can be no such thing known as peace or joy, until we see all our trespasses forgiven and our sin judged. The trespass offering and the sin offering must be known, ere the Peace offering, joy offering, or thanksgiving offering can be appreciated. Hence, therefore, the order in which the peace offering stands, corresponds with the order of our spiritual apprehension of Christ.

The same perfect order is observable in reference to the meat offering. When the soul is led to taste the sweetness of spiritual communion with Christ — to feed upon Him, in peace and thankfulness, in the divine presence, it is drawn out in earnest desire to know more of the wondrous mysteries of His Person; and this desire is most blessedly met in the meat offering, which is the type of Christ's perfect manhood.

Then, in the burnt offering, we are conducted to a point beyond which it is impossible to go, and that is, the work of the cross, as accomplished under the immediate eye of God, and as the expression of the unswerving devotion of the heart of Christ. All these things will come before us, in beauteous detail, as we pass along; we are here only looking at the order of the offerings, which is truly marvellous, whichever way we travel, whether *outward* from God to us, or *inward* from us to God. In either case, we begin with the cross and end with the cross. If we begin with the burnt offering,

we see Christ, on the cross, doing the will of God — making atonement, according to the measure of His perfect surrender of Himself to God. If we begin with the trespass offering, we see Christ, on the cross, bearing our sins, and putting them away, according to the perfection of His atoning sacrifice; while, in each and all, we Behold the excellency, the beauty, and the perfection of His divine and adorable Person. Surely, all this is sufficient to awaken in our hearts the deepest interest in the study of those precious types which we shall now proceed to consider in detail. And may God the Holy Ghost, who penned the Book of Leviticus, expound its contents in living power to our hearts; that so, when we have reached the close, we may have abundant cause to bless His name for many thrilling and soul-stirring views of the Person and work of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

In the burnt offering, with which our book opens, we have a type of Christ "offering himself without spot to God." Hence the position which the Holy Ghost assigns to it. If the Lord Jesus Christ came forth to accomplish the glorious work of atonement, His highest and most fondly-cherished object, in so doing, was the glory of God. "Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God," was the grand motto in every scene and circumstance of His life, and in none more markedly than in the work of the cross. Let the will of God be what it might, He came to do it. Blessed be God, we know what our portion is in the accomplishment of this "Will" for by it "we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." (Heb. 10: 10) Still, the primary aspect of Christ's work was to Godward. It was an ineffable delight to Him to accomplish the will of God on this earth. No one had ever done this before. Some had, through grace, done "that which was right in the sight of the Lord;" but no one had ever, perfectly, invariably, from first to last, without hesitation, and without divergence, done the will of God. But this was, exactly, what the Lord Jesus did. He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2: 8) "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." And as He walked from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross of Calvary, the intense devotion of His

heart told itself forth in these accents: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Now, in all this self-emptied devotedness to God, there was truly a sweet savour. A perfect Man on the earth accomplishing the will of God, even in death, was an object of amazing interest to the mind of Heaven. Who could fathom the profound depths of that devoted heart, which displayed itself, under the eye of God, on the cross? Surely, none but God; for in this, as in everything else, it holds good that "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father;" and no one can know ought about Him, save as the Father reveals Him. The mind of man can, in some measure, grasp any subject of knowledge "under the sun." Human science can be laid hold of by the human intellect; but no man knoweth the Son, save as the Father reveals Him, by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the written word. The Holy Ghost delights to reveal the Son — to take of the things of Jesus, and show them unto us. These things we have, in all their fullness and beauty, in the word. There can be no new revelation, inasmuch as the Spirit brought "*all* things" to the apostles' memory, and led them into "*all* truth." There can be nothing beyond "*all* truth;" and, hence, all pretension to a new revelation, and the development of new truth, — meaning thereby truth not contained in the sacred canon of inspiration — is an effort, on man's part, to add to what God calls "*all* truth." No doubt, the Spirit may unfold and apply, with new and extraordinary power, truth contained in the word; but this is, obviously, a very different thing from our travelling outside the range of divine revelation, for the purpose of finding principles, ideas, or dogmas, which shall command the conscience. This latter can only be regarded in the light of impious presumption.

In the gospel narrative, we have Christ presented to us in the varied phases of His character, His Person, and His work. To those precious documents the people of God in all ages have rejoiced to betake themselves, and drink in their heavenly revelations of the object of their love and confidence — the One to whom they owed everything, for time and eternity. But very few, comparatively, have ever been led to regard the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical economy as fraught with the most minute instruction in reference to

the same commanding theme. The offerings of Leviticus, for example, have been too much regarded as so many antiquated records of Jewish customs, conveying no intelligible voice to our ears — no spiritual light to our understandings. However, it must be admitted that the apparently abstruse records of Leviticus, as well as the sublime strains of Isaiah, take their place amongst the "things which were written aforetime," and they are, therefore, "for Our learning." True, we shall need to study those records, as indeed all Scripture, with an humble, self-emptied spirit; with reverent dependence upon the teaching of Him who graciously penned them for us; with sedulous attention to the general scope, bearing, and analogy of the entire body of divine revelation; with an effectual curb on the imagination, that it may not take unhallowed flights; but if thus, through grace, we enter upon the study of the types of Leviticus, we shall find in them a vein of the richest and finest ore.

We shall now proceed to examine the burnt offering, which, as we have remarked, presents Christ, offering Himself, without spot, to God.

"If His offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male, without blemish." The essential glory and dignity of Christ's Person form the basis of Christianity. He imparts that dignity and glory to every thing He does, and to every office He sustains, No office could possibly add glory to Him who is "God over all, blessed for ever" — "God manifest in the flesh" — the glorious "Immanuel" — "God with us" — the eternal Word — the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. What office could add to the dignity of such an One? In point of fact, we know that all His offices are connected with His humanity; and in assuming that humanity, He stooped from the glory which He had with the Father, before the world was. He thus stooped, in order to glorify God perfectly, in the very midst of a scene where all was hostile to Him. He came to be "eaten up" by a holy, unquenchable zeal for the glory of God, and the effectual carrying out of His eternal counsels.

The unblemished male, of the first year, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ offering Himself for the perfect accomplishment of the will of God. There should be nothing expressive either of weakness or imperfection. "A male of the first year" was required. We shall

see, when we come to examine the other offerings, that "a female" was, in some cases, permitted; but that was only expressive of the imperfection which attached to the worshipper's apprehension, and in nowise of any defect in the offering, inasmuch as it was "unblemished" in the one case, as well as in the other. Here, however, it was an offering of the very highest order, because it was Christ offering Himself to God. Christ, in the burnt offering, was exclusively for the eye and heart of God. This point should be distinctly apprehended. God alone could duly estimate the Person and work of Christ. He alone could fully appreciate the cross as the expression of Christ's perfect devotedness. The cross, as foreshadowed by the burnt offering, had an element in it which only the divine mind could apprehend. It had depths so profound that neither mortal nor angel could fathom them. There was a voice in it which was intended exclusively for, and went directly to, the ear of the Father. There were communications between the cross of Calvary and the throne of God, which lay far beyond the highest range of created intelligence.

"He shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." The use of the word "*voluntary*," here, brings out, with great clearness, the grand idea in the burnt offerings. It leads us to contemplate the cross in an aspect which is not sufficiently apprehended. We are too apt to look upon the cross merely as the place where the great question of sin was gone into and settled, between eternal Justice and the spotless victim — as the place where our guilt was atoned for, and where Satan was gloriously vanquished. Eternal and universal praise to redeeming love! The cross was all this. But it was more than this. It was the place where Christ's love to the Father was told out in language which only the Father could hear and understand. It is in the latter aspect that we have it typified, in the burnt offering; and, therefore, it is that the word "*voluntary*" occurs. Were it merely a question of the imputation of sin, and of enduring the wrath of God on account of sin, such an expression would not be in moral order. The blessed Lord Jesus could not, with strict propriety, be represented as *willing* to be "made sin" — *willing* to endure the wrath of God, and the hiding of His countenance; And, in this one fact, we learn, in the clearest manner, that the *burnt offering does not foreshadow Christ*,

on the cross, bearing sin but Christ on the cross, accomplishing the will of God. that Christ Himself contemplated the cross in these two aspects of it, is evident from His own words. When he looked at the cross as the place of sin-bearing — when He anticipated the horrors with which, in this point of view, it stood invested, He exclaimed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me." (Luke 23: 42) He shrank from that which His work, as a sin-bearer, involved. His pure and holy mind shrank from the thought of contact with sin; and His loving heart shrank from the thought of losing, for a moment, the light of God's countenance.

But, then, the cross had another aspect. It stood before the eye of Christ as a scene, in which He could fully tell out all the deep secrets of His love to the Father — a place in which He could, "of his own voluntary will," take the cup which the Father had given Him, and drain it to the very dregs. True it is that the whole life of Christ emitted a fragrant odour, which ever ascended to the Father's throne — He did always those things which pleased the Father — He ever did the will of God; but the burnt offering does not typify Him in His life — precious, beyond all thought, as was every act of that life — but in His death, and in that, not as one "made a curse for us," but as one presenting to the heart of the Father an odour of incomparable fragrance.

This truth invests the cross with peculiar charms for the spiritual mind. It imparts to the sufferings of our blessed Lord an interest of the most intense character. The guilty sinner, no doubt, finds in the cross a divine answer to the deepest and most earnest cravings of heart and conscience. The true believer finds in the cross that which captivates every affection of his heart, and transfixes his whole moral being. The angels find in the cross a theme for ceaseless admiration. All this is true; but there is that, in the cross, which passes far beyond the loftiest conceptions of saints or angels; namely, the deep-toned devotion of the heart of the Son presented to, and appreciated by, the heart of the Father. This is the elevated aspect of the cross, which is so strikingly shadowed forth in the burnt offering.

And, here, let me remark that the distinctive beauty of the burnt offering must be entirely sacrificed, if we admit the idea that

Christ was a sin-bearer all His life. There would then be no force, no value, no meaning in the word "voluntary." There could be no room for voluntary action in the case of one who was compelled, by the very necessity of his position, to yield up his life. If Christ were a sin-bearer, in His life, then, assuredly, His death must have been a *necessary*, not a voluntary, act. Indeed, it may be safely asserted that there is not one of the offerings the beauty of which would not be marred, and its strict integrity sacrificed, by the theory of a *Life* of sin-bearing. In the burnt offering, this is especially the case, inasmuch as it is not, in it, a question of sin-bearing, or enduring the wrath of God, but entirely one of voluntary devotedness, manifested in the death of the cross. In the burnt offering we recognise a type of God the Son, accomplishing, by God the Spirit, the will of God the Father. This He did "of His own voluntary will." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." (John 10: 17) Here we have the burnt offering aspect of the death of Christ. On the other hand, the prophet, contemplating Him as the sin offering, says, "his life is *taken* from the earth." (Acts 8: 33, which is the LXX. version of Isaiah 53: 8) Again, Christ says, "No one (*ou deis*) taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." Was He a sin-bearer when He said this? Observe, it is "no one" man, angel, devil, or else. It was His own voluntary act, to lay down His life that He might take it again. "I delight to do thy will, O my God." Such was the language of the divine burnt offering — of Him who found His unutterable joy in offering Himself without spot to God.

Now, it is of the last importance to apprehend, with distinctness, the primary object of the heart of Christ, in the work of redemption. It tends to consolidate the believer's peace. The accomplishment of God's will, the establishment of God's counsels, and the display of God's glory, occupied the fullest, deepest, and largest place in that devoted heart which viewed and estimated everything in reference to God. The Lord Jesus never once stopped to inquire how any act or circumstance would affect Himself. "He humbled himself" — "He made himself of no reputation" — He surrendered all. And, hence, when He arrived at the close of His career, He could look back upon it all, and say, with His eyes lifted up to heaven, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17: 4) It is impossible to

contemplate the work of Christ, in this aspect of it, without having the heart filled with the sweetest affections toward His Person. It does not detract, in the smallest degree, from our sense of His love to us, to know that He made God His primary object, in the work of the cross. Quite the opposite. His love to us, and our salvation in Him, could only be founded upon God's established glory. That glory must form the solid base of everything. "As truly as I live, All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." (Num. 14: 21) But we know that God's eternal glory, and the creature's eternal blessedness, are, in the divine counsels, inseparably linked together, so that if the former be secured, the latter must needs be so likewise.

"And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." The act of laying on of hands was expressive of full identification. By that significant act, the offerer and the offering became one; and this oneness, in the case of the burnt offering, secured for the offerer all the acceptableness of his offering. The application of this to Christ and the believer sets forth a truth of the most precious nature, and one largely developed in the New Testament; namely, the believer's everlasting identification with, and acceptance in, Christ. "As he is, so are we, in this world." "We are in him that is true." (1 John 4: 17; 1 John 5: 20) Nothing, in any measure, short of this could avail. The man who is not in Christ is in his sins. There is no middle ground. You must be either in Christ or out of Him. There is no such thing as being *partly* in Christ. If there is a single hair's-breadth between you and Christ, you are in an actual state of wrath and condemnation. but, on the other hand, if you are in Him, then are you "as he is" before God, and so accounted in the presence of infinite holiness. Such is the plain teaching of the Word of God. "Ye are complete in him" — "accepted in the beloved" — "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." "He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit." (1 Cor. 6: 17; Eph. 1: 6; Eph. 5: 30; Col. 2: 1) Now, it is not possible that the Head can be in one degree of acceptance and the members in another. No; the Head and the members are one. God counts them one; and, therefore, they are one. This truth is, at once, the ground of the loftiest confidence, and of the most profound humility. It imparts the fullest assurance of "boldness in the day of judgement," inasmuch as it is not possible that ought can be laid to the charge of

Him with whom we are united. It imparts the deep sense of our own nothingness, inasmuch as our union with Christ is founded upon the death of nature and the utter abolition of all its claims and pretensions.

Since, therefore, the Head and the members are viewed in the same position of infinite favour and acceptance, before God, it is perfectly evident that all the members stand in one acceptance, in one salvation, in one life, in one righteousness. There are no degrees in justification. The babe in Christ stands in the same justification as the saint of fifty years' experience. The one is in Christ, and so is the other; and this, as it is the only ground of life, so it is the only ground of justification. There are not two kinds of life, neither are there two kinds of justification. No doubt, there are various measures of enjoyment of this justification — various degrees in the knowledge of its fullness and extent — various degrees in the ability to exhibit its power upon the heart and life; and these things are frequently confounded with the justification itself, which, as being divine, is, necessarily, eternal, absolute, unvarying, entirely unaffected by the fluctuation of human feeling and experience.

But, further, there is no such thing as progress in justification. The believer is not more justified today? than he was yesterday; nor will he be more justified tomorrow than he is today; yea, a soul who is "in Christ Jesus" is as completely justified as if he were before the throne. He is "*complete* in Christ." He is "*as*" Christ. He is, on Christ's own authority, "clean every whit." (John 13: 10) What more could he be, at this side of the glory? He may, and — if he walks in the Spirit-will, make progress in the sense and enjoyment of this glorious reality; but, as to the thing itself, the moment he, by the power of the Holy Ghost, believed the gospel, he passed from a positive state of unrighteousness and condemnation into a positive state of righteousness and acceptance. All this is based upon the divine perfectness of Christ's work; just as, in the case of the burnt offering, the worshipper's acceptance was based upon the acceptableness of his offering. It was not a question of what he was, but simply of what the sacrifice was. "*It shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him.*"

"And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." It is most needful, in studying the doctrine of the burnt offering, to bear in mind that the grand point set forth therein is not the meeting of the sinner's need, but the presentation to God of that which was infinitely acceptable to Him. Christ, as foreshadowed by the burnt offering, is not for the sinner's conscience, but for the heart of God. Further, the cross, in the burnt offering, is not the exhibition of the exceeding hatefulnes of sin, but of Christ's unshaken and unshakable devotedness to the Father. Neither is it the scene of God's out-poured wrath on Christ the sin-bearer; but of the Father's unmingled complacency in Christ, the voluntary and most fragrant sacrifice. Finally, "atonement," as seen in the burnt offering, is not merely commensurate with the claims of man's conscience, but with the intense desire of the heart of Christ, to carry out the will and establish the counsels of God — a desire which stopped not short of surrendering up His spotless, precious life, as "a voluntary offering' of "sweet savour" to God.

From the carrying out of this desire, no power of earth or hell, men or devils, could shake Him. When Peter ignorantly sought to dissuade Him, in words of false tenderness, from encountering the shame and degradation of the cross — "Pity thyself, Lord! this shall not be unto thee" — what was the reply? "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. 16: 22, 23) So also, on another occasion, He says to His disciples, "Hereafter, I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me: but that the world may know that *I love the Father*, and as the Father hath given me commandment, even so I do." (John 14: 30) These and numerous other kindred scriptures, bring out the burnt offering phase of Christ's work, in which, it is evident, the primary thought is His "Offering himself without spot to God."

In full keeping with all that has been stated, in reference to the special point in the burnt offering, is the place which Aaron's sons get, and the functions assigned them therein. They "sprinkle the blood" — they "put the fire upon the altar" — they "lay the wood in

order upon the fire" — they "lay the parts, the head and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar" These are very prominent actions, and they form a marked feature of the burnt offering, as contrasted with the sin offering, in which Aaron's sons are not mentioned at all. "The sons of Aaron" represent the church, not as "one body," but as a priestly house. This is easily apprehended. If Aaron was a type of Christ, then Aaron's house was a type of Christ's house, as we read, in Heb. 3, "But Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we." And, again, "Behold I and the children whom God hath given me." Now, it is the privilege of the Church, as led and taught by the Holy Ghost, to gaze upon, and delight in, that aspect of Christ, which is presented in this opening type of Leviticus. "Our fellowship is with the Father," who graciously calls us to participate, with Him, in His thoughts about Christ. True, we can never rise to the height of those thoughts; but we can have fellowship therein, by the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. It is not, here, a question of having the conscience tranquillised, by the blood of Christ, as the sin-bearer, but of communion with God in the matter of Christ's perfect surrender of Himself on the cross.

"The priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." Here, we have a type of the Church, bringing the memorial of an accomplished sacrifice, and presenting it in the place of individual approach to God. But, we must remember, it is the blood of the burnt offering, and not of the sin offering. It is the Church, in the power of the Holy Ghost, entering into the stupendous thought of Christ's accomplished devotedness to God, and not a convicted sinner, entering into the value of the blood of the sin-bearer. I need hardly say that the Church is composed of sinners, and convicted sinners, too; but "Aaron's sons" do not represent convicted sinners, but worshipping saints. It is as "priests" they have to do with the burnt offering. Many err as to this. They imagine that, because one takes the place of a worshipper — being invited by the grace of God, and fitted by the blood of Christ, so to do — he, thereby, refuses to acknowledge himself a poor worthless sinner. This is a great mistake. The believer is, in himself, "nothing at all." But in Christ, he is a purged worshipper. He does not stand, in the sanctuary, as a guilty sinner, but as a worshipping priest, clothed

in "garments of glory and beauty." To be occupied with my guilt, in the presence of God, is not humility, as regards myself, but unbelief, as regards the sacrifice.

However, it must be very evident to my reader, that the idea of sin-bearing — the imputation of sin — the wrath of God, does not appear in the burnt offering. True, we read, "it shall be accepted for him, to *make atonement* for him;" but, then, it is "atonement" not according to the depths and enormity of human guilt, but according to the perfection of Christ's surrender of Himself to God, and the intensity of God's delight in Christ. this gives us the very loftiest idea of atonement. If I contemplate Christ as the sin offering, I see atonement made according to the claims of divine justice, with respect to sin. But when I see atonement, in the burnt offering, it is according to the measure of Christ's willingness and ability to accomplish the will of God; and according to the measure of God's complacency in Christ and His work. What a perfect atonement must that be which is the fruit of Christ's devotion to God! Could there be anything beyond this? Assuredly not. The burnt offering aspect of atonement is that about which the priestly household may well be occupied in the courts of the Lord's house, for ever.

"And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces." The ceremonial act of "flaying" was peculiarly expressive. It was simply the removing of the outward covering, in order that what was within might be fully revealed. It was not sufficient that the offering should be, outwardly, "without blemish," "the hidden parts" should be all disclosed, in order that every sinew and every joint might be seen. It was only in the case of the burnt offering that this action was specially named. This is quite in character, and tends to set forth the depth of Christ's devotedness to the Father. It was no mere surface-work with Him. The more the secrets of His inner life were disclosed, the more the depths of His being were explored, the more clearly was it made manifest that pure devotion to the will of His Father, and earnest desire for His glory, were the springs of action in the great Antitype of the burnt offering. He was, most assuredly, a whole burnt offering.

"And cut it into his pieces." this action presents a somewhat similar truth to that taught in the "sweet incense *beaten small*," (Lev.

16) The Holy Ghost delights to dwell upon the sweetness and fragrance of the sacrifice of Christ, not only as a whole, but also in all its minute details. Look at the burnt offering, as a whole, and you see it without blemish. Look at it in all its parts, and you see it to be the same. Such was Christ; and as such He is shadowed forth in this important type.

"And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire. And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar." This was a high position for the priestly family. The burnt offering was wholly offered to God. It was all burnt upon the altar;* Man did not partake of it; but the sons of Aaron the priest, themselves being likewise priests, are here seen standing round the altar of God, to behold the flame of an acceptable sacrifice ascending to Him — an odour of sweet smell. this was a high position — high communion—a high order of priestly service — a striking type of the Church having fellowship with God, in reference to the perfect accomplishment of His will in the death of Christ. As convicted sinners, we gaze on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and behold therein that which meets all our need. The cross, in this aspect of it, gives perfect peace to the conscience. But, then, as priests, as purged worshippers, as members of the priestly family, we can look at the cross in another light, even as the grand consummation of Christ's holy purpose to carry out, even unto death, the will of the Father. As convicted sinners, we stand at the brazen altar, and find peace through the blood of atonement; but, as priests, we stand there, to behold and admire the completeness of that burnt offering — the perfect surrender and presentation of the spotless One to God.

{*It may be well, at this point, to inform the reader that the Hebrew word which is rendered "burn," in the case of the burnt offering is wholly different from that which is used in the sin offering. I shall, because of the peculiar interest of the subject, refer to a few of the passages in which each word occurs. The word used in the burnt offering signifies "incense," or to "burn incense," and occurs in the following passages, in some one or other of its various inflections. Lev. 6: 15; "and all the *frankincense*, . . . and shall *burn*

it upon the altar." Deut, 33: 10; "they shall put *incense* before thee, and whole *burnt* sacrifice upon thine altar. Ex. 30: 1; "and thou shalt make an altar to *burn incense* upon." Ps. 46: 15; "with the incense of rams." Jer. 44: 21 "The *incense* that ye *burned* in the cities of Judah." Cant. 3: 15 Perfumed with Myrrh and *frankincense*." Passages might be multiplied, but the above will suffice to show the use of the word which occurs in the burnt offering.

The Hebrew word which is rendered "burn," in connection with the sin offering, signifies to burn, in general, and occurs in the following passages. Gen. 40: 3; "let us make brick, and *burn* them thoroughly." Lev. 10: 16; "And Moses diligently sought the goat of the *sin* offering and, behold, it was *burnt*." 2 Chr. 16: 14; "And they made a very great *burning* for him."

Thus, not only was the sin offering burnt in a different place, but a different word is adopted by the Holy Ghost to express the burning of it. Now, we cannot imagine, for a moment, that this distinction is a mere interchange of words, the use of which is indifferent. I believe the wisdom of the Holy Ghost is as manifest in the use of the two words, as it is in any other point of difference in the two offerings. The spiritual reader will attach the proper value to the above most interesting distinction. }

We should have a very defective apprehension of the mystery of the cross, were we only to see in it that which meets man's need as a sinner. There were depths in that mystery, which only the mind of God could fathom. It is, therefore, important to see that when the Holy Ghost would furnish us with foreshadowings of the cross, He gives us, in the very first place, one which sets it forth in its aspect to God-ward. This alone would be sufficient to teach us that there are heights and depths in the doctrine of the cross which man never could reach. He may approach to "that one well-spring of delight," and drink for ever — he may satisfy the utmost longings of his spirit — he may explore it with all the powers of the renewed nature; but, after all, there is that in the cross which only God could know and appreciate. Hence it is that the burnt offering gets the first place. It typifies Christ's death as viewed and valued by God alone. and surely, we may say, we could not have done without such a type as this, for, not only does it give us the highest possible aspect of the

death of Christ, but it also gives us a most precious thought in reference to God's peculiar interest in that death. The very fact of His instituting a type of Christ's death, which was to be exclusively for Himself, contains a volume of instruction for the spiritual mind.

But though neither man nor angel can ever fully sound the amazing depths of the mystery of Christ's death, we can, at least, see some features of it which would needs make it precious, beyond all thought, to the heart of God. From the cross, He reaps His richest harvest of glory. In no other way could He have been so glorified, as by the death of Christ. In Christ's voluntary surrender of Himself to death, the divine glory shines out in its fullest brightness. In it, too, the solid foundation of all the divine counsels was laid. This is a most comforting truth. Creation never could have furnished such a basis. Moreover, the cross furnishes a righteous channel through which divine love can flow. and, finally, by the cross, Satan is eternally confounded, and "principalities and powers made a show of openly." These are glorious fruits produced by the cross; and, when we think of them, we can see just reason why there should have been a type of the cross exclusively for God Himself, and also a reason why that type should occupy the leading place - should stand at the very top of the list. Again, let me say, there would have been a grievous blank among the types had the burnt offering been lacking; and there would be a grievous blank in the page of inspiration had the record of that type been withheld.

"But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." This action rendered the sacrifice, typically, what Christ was essentially — pure, both inwardly and outwardly, pure. There was the most perfect correspondence between Christ's inward motives and His outward conduct. The latter was the index of the former. All tended to the one point, namely, the glory of God. The members of His Body perfectly obeyed and carried out the counsels of His devoted heart — that heart which only beat for God, and for His glory, in the salvation of men. Well, therefore, might the priest "burn all on the altar." It was all typically pure, and all designed only as food for the altar of God. Of some sacrifices the priest partook; of some, the

offerer; but the burnt offering was "all" consumed on the altar. It was exclusively for God. The priests might arrange the wood and the fire, and see the flame ascend; and a high and holy privilege it was so to do. But they did not eat of the sacrifice. God alone was the object of Christ, in the burnt offering aspect of His death. We cannot be too simple in our apprehension of this. From the moment that the unblemished male was voluntarily presented at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, until it was reduced to ashes, by the action of the fire, we discern in it Christ offering Himself, by the Eternal Spirit, without spot to God.

This makes the burnt offering unspeakably precious to the soul. It gives us the most exalted view of Christ's work. In that work God had His own peculiar joy — a joy into which no created intelligence could enter. This must never be lost sight of. It is unfolded in the burnt offering, and confirmed by "the law of the burnt offering," to which we shall just refer.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons, saying, this is the law of the burnt offering: it is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it. And the priest, shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place. And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it, it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it, and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offering. The fire shall ever be burning upon the, altar: it shall never go out." (Lev. 6: 8-13) The fire on the altar consumed the burnt offering, and the fat of the peace offering. It was the apt expression of divine holiness which found in Christ, and His perfect sacrifice, a proper material on which to feed. That fire was never to go out. There was to be the perpetual maintenance of that which set forth the action of divine holiness. Through the dark and silent watches of the night, the fire blazed on the altar of God.

"And the priest shall put on his linen garment," &c. Here, the priest takes, in type, the place of Christ, whose personal righteousness is set forth by the white linen garment. He, having given Himself up to the death of the cross, in order to accomplish the will of God, has entered, in His own eternal righteousness, into heaven, bearing with Him the memorials of His finished work. The ashes declared the completion of the sacrifice, and God's acceptance thereof. Those ashes, placed beside the altar, indicated that the fire had consumed the sacrifice — that it was not only a completed, but also an accepted, sacrifice. The ashes of the burnt offering declared the acceptance of the sacrifice. The ashes of the sin offering declared the judgement of the sin.

Many of the points on which we have been dwelling will, with the divine blessing, come before us with increasing clearness, fullness, precision, and power as we proceed with the offerings. Each offering is, as it were, thrown into relief, by being viewed in contrast with all the rest. All the offerings, taken together, give us a full view of Christ. They are like so many mirrors, arranged in such a manner, as to reflect, in various ways, the figure of that true and only perfect Sacrifice. No one type could fully present Him. We needed to have Him reflected in life and in death — as a Man and as a Victim — to God-ward and to us-ward; and we have Him thus, in the offerings of Leviticus. God has graciously met our need, and may He give us an enlarged capacity to enter into and enjoy His provision.

Leviticus 2.

We, now, come to consider the meat offering which presents, in a very distinct manner, the man Christ Jesus." As the Burnt offering typifies Christ in death, the meat offering typifies Him in life. In neither the one nor the other, is there a question of sin-bearing. In the burnt offering, we see atonement but no sin bearing* — no imputation of sin — no outpoured wrath on account of sin. How can we know this? Because it was all consumed on the altar. Had there been ought of sin-bearing, it would have been consumed outside the camp. (Comp. Lev. 4: 11, 22, with Heb. 13: 11)

{*That is to say sin-bearing is not prominent, Of course, where there is atonement, sin must be in question. }

But, in the meat offering, there was not even a question of blood shedding. We simply find, in it, a beautiful type of Christ, as He lived and walked and served, down here, on this earth. This one fact is, of itself, sufficient to draw the spiritual mind to the close and prayerful consideration of this offering. The pure and perfect manhood of our blessed Lord is a theme which must command the attention of every true Christian. It is to be feared that great looseness of thought prevails, in reference to this holy mystery. The expressions which one sometimes hears and reads are sufficient to prove that the fundamental doctrine of incarnation is not laid hold of as the word presents it. Such expressions may, very probably, proceed from misapprehension as to the real nature of His relations, and as to the true character of His sufferings; but, from what cause soever they arise, they should be judged in the light of holy scripture, and rejected. Doubtless, many who make use of those expressions, would recoil, with just horror and indignation, from the real doctrine contained in them, were it put before them in its broad and true characters; and, for this reason, one should be sorry to attribute unsoundness as to fundamental truth, where it may merely be inaccuracy of statement.

There is, however, one consideration which should weigh heavily in the estimation of every Christian, and that is, the vital nature of the doctrine of Christ's humanity. It lies at the very foundation of Christianity; and, for this reason, Satan has diligently

sought, from the beginning, to lead people astray in reference to it. Almost all the leading errors which have found their way into the professing church disclose the Satanic purpose to undermine the truth as to the Person of Christ. And even when earnest, godly men have sought to combat those errors, they have, in many cases, plunged into errors on the opposite side. Hence, therefore, the need of close adherence to the veritable words which the Holy Ghost has made use of in unfolding this profound and most sacred mystery. Indeed, I believe that, in every case, subjection to the authority of holy scripture, and the energy of the divine life in the soul, will prove effectual safeguards against every complexion of error. It does not require high theological attainments to enable a soul to keep clear of error with respect to the doctrine of Christ. If only the word of Christ be dwelling richly, and "the Spirit of Christ" be in energy, in the soul, there will be no room for Satan to thrust in his dark and horrible suggestions. If the heart be delighting in the Christ which Scripture unfolds, it will, assuredly, shrink from the false Christs which Satan would introduce. If we are feeding upon God's reality, we shall unhesitatingly reject Satan's counterfeit. This is the best possible way in which to escape the entanglements of error, in every shape and character. "The sheep *hear His voice*, and follow him: for they *know His voice*. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; *for they know not the voice of strangers*" (John 10: 4, 5) It is not, by any means, needful to be acquainted with the voice of a stranger, in order to turn away from it; all we require is to know the voice of the good Shepherd." This will secure us against the ensnaring influence of every strange sound. While, therefore, I feel called upon to warn the reader against strange sounds, in reference to the divine mystery of Christ's humanity, I do not deem it needful to discuss such sounds, but would rather seek, through grace, to arm him against them, by unfolding the doctrine of Scripture on the subject.

There are few things in which we exhibit more failure than in maintaining vigorous communion with the perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence it is that we suffer so much from vacancy, barrenness, restlessness, and wandering. Did we but enter, with a more artless faith, into the truth that there is a real Man, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens — One whose sympathy is

perfect, whose love is fathomless, whose power is omnipotent, whose wisdom is infinite, whose resources are exhaustless, whose riches are unsearchable, whose ear is open to our every breathing, whose hand is open to our every need, whose heart is full of unspeakable love and tenderness towards us — how much more happy and elevated we should be, and how much more independent of creature streams, through what channel soever they may flow! There is nothing the heart can crave which we have not in Jesus. Does it long for genuine sympathy? Where can it find it, save in Him who could mingle His tears with those of the bereaved sisters of Bethany? Does it desire the enjoyment of sincere affection? It can only find it in that heart which told forth its love in drops of blood. Does it seek the protection of real power? It has but to look to Him who made the world. Does it feel the need of unerring wisdom to guide? Let it betake itself to Him who is wisdom personified, and who of God is made unto us wisdom." In one word, we have all in Christ. The divine mind and the divine affections have found a perfect object in the man Christ Jesus;" and, surely, if there is that in the Person of Christ which can perfectly satisfy God, there is that which ought to satisfy us, and which will satisfy us, in proportion as, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, we walk in communion with God.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the only perfect man that ever trod this earth. He was all perfect — perfect in thought, perfect in word, perfect in action. In Him every moral quality met in divine and, therefore, perfect proportion. No one feature preponderated. In Him were exquisitely blended a majesty which overawed, and a gentleness which gave perfect ease in His presence. The Scribes and the Pharisees met His withering rebuke; while the poor Samaritan. and "the woman that was a sinner," found themselves unaccountably, yet irresistibly, attracted to Him. No one feature displaced another, for all was in fair and comely proportion. This may be traced in every scene of His perfect life. He could say, in reference to five thousand hungry people, "Give ye them to eat;" and, when they were filled, He could say, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." The benevolence and the economy are both perfect and neither interferes with the other. Each shines in its own proper sphere. He could not send unsatisfied hungry away; neither could He suffer a single fragment of God's creatures to be

wasted. He would meet, with a full and liberal hand, the need of the human family, and, when that was done, He would carefully treasure up every atom. The self-same hand that was widely open to every form of human need was firmly closed against all prodigality. There was nothing niggardly nor yet extravagant in the character of the perfect, the heavenly Man.

What a lesson for us! How often, with us, does benevolence resolve itself into an unwarrantable profusion! and, on the other hand, how often is our economy marred by the exhibition of a miserly spirit! At times, too, our niggard hearts refuse to open themselves to the full extent of the need which presents itself before us; while, at other times, we squander, through a wanton extravagance, that which might satisfy many a needy fellow-creature. Oh! my reader, let us carefully study the divine picture set before us in the life of the "Man Christ Jesus." How refreshing and strengthening to "the inward man" to be occupied with Him who was perfect in all His ways, and who "in all things must have the pre-eminence!"

See Him in the garden of Gethsemane. There, He kneels in the profound depths of a humility which none but Himself could exhibit; but yet, before the traitor's band, He exhibits a self-possession and majesty which cause them to go backward and fall to the ground. His deportment before God is prostration; before His judges and accusers, unbending dignity. All is perfect. The self-emptiness and the self-possession, the prostration and the dignity, are all divine.

So also, when we contemplate the beautiful combination of His divine and human relations, the same perfectness is observable. He could say, How was it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" And, at the same time, He could go down to Nazareth, and there set an example of perfect subjection to parental authority. (See Luke 2: 49-51.) He could say to His mother, Woman, what have I to do with thee?" And yet, when passing through the unutterable agony of the cross, He could tenderly commit that mother to the care of the beloved disciple. In the former case, He separated Himself in the spirit of perfect Nazariteship to accomplish His Father's will; while, in the latter, He gave expression

to the tender feelings of the perfect human heart. The devotion of the Nazarite and the affection of the man were both perfect. Neither was permitted to interfere with the other. Each shone with undimmed lustre in its proper sphere.

Now, the shadow of this perfect man passes before us in the "fine flour" which formed the basis of the meat offering. There was not so much as a single coarse grain. There was nothing uneven — nothing unequal — nothing rough to the touch. No matter what pressure came from without, there was always an even surface. He was never ruffled by any circumstance or set of circumstances. He never had to retrace a step, or recall a word. Come what might, He always met it in that perfect evenness which is so strikingly typified by the "fine flour."

In all these things, it is needless to say, He stands in marked contrast with His most honoured and devoted servants. For example, Moses, though "the meekest man in all the earth," yet "spoke unadvisedly with his lips." In Peter, we find a zeal and an energy which, at times, proved too much for the occasion; and, again, a cowardice which shrank from the place of testimony and reproach. There was the assertion of a devotedness which, when the time for action arrived, was not forthcoming. John, who breathed so much of the atmosphere of the immediate presence of Christ, exhibited, at times, a sectarian and an intolerant spirit. In Paul, the most devoted of servants, we observe considerable unevenness. He uttered words to the high priest which he had to recall. He sent a letter to the Corinthians, of which at first he repented, and afterwards repented not. In all, we find some flaw, save in Him who is "the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

In the examination of the meat offering, it will give clearness and simplicity to our thoughts to consider, first, the materials of which it was composed; secondly, the various forms in which it was presented; and, thirdly, the persons who partook of it.

As to the materials, the "fine flour" may be regarded as the basis of the offering; and, in it, we have a type of Christ's humanity, wherein every perfection met. Every virtue was there, and ready for effectual action, in due season. The Holy Ghost delights to unfold

the glories of Christ's Person, to set Him forth in all His peerless excellence — to place Him before us in contrast with all beside. He contrasts Him with Adam, even in his very best and highest state; as we read, "the first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." (1 Cor. 15: 47) The first Adam, even in his unfallen condition, was "of the earth;" but the second Man was "the Lord from heaven."

The "oil," in the meat offering, is a type of the Holy Ghost. But, inasmuch as the oil is applied in a twofold way, so we have the Holy Ghost presented in a double aspect, in *connection* with the *incarnation* of the Son. The fine flour was "*mingled*" with oil; and there was oil "*poured*" upon it. Such was the type; and, in the Anti type, we see the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, first, "*conceived*," and then "*anointed*," by the Holy Ghost. (Comp. Matt. 1: 18, 23, with Lev. 3: 16) This is divine! The accuracy, which is here so apparent, draws forth the soul's admiration. It is one and the same Spirit which records the ingredients of the type, and gives us the facts in the antitype. The one who has detailed for us, with such amazing precision, the types and shadows of the Book of Leviticus, has also given us the glorious subject thereof, in the gospel narratives. The same Spirit breathes through the pages of the Old and those of the New Testament, and enables us to see how exactly the one corresponds with the other.

The conception of Christ's humanity, by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin, unfolds one of the most profound mysteries, which can possibly engage the attention of the renewed mind. It is most fully set forth in Luke's gospel; and this is entirely characteristic, inasmuch as, throughout that Gospel, it would seem to be the special object of the Holy Ghost to unfold, in His own divinely touching manner, "the Man Christ Jesus." In Matthew, we have "the Son of Abraham — the Son of David." In Mark, we have the Divine Servant — the Heavenly Workman. In John, we have "the Son of God — the Eternal Word — the Life — the Light, by whom all things were made. But the great theme of the Holy Ghost in Luke is "the Son of man."

When the angel Gabriel had announced to Mary the dignity which was about to be conferred upon her, in connection with the

great work of incarnation, she, not in a spirit of scepticism, but of honest ignorance, enquired, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" It, manifestly, seemed to her that the birth of this glorious Person who was about to appear should be according to the ordinary principles of generation; and this her thought is made the occasion, in the exceeding goodness of God, of developing much valuable light, in reference to the cardinal truth of incarnation. The angel's reply to the virgin's question is unspeakably interesting, and cannot be too closely considered. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore* also that *Holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1: 35)

From this magnificent passage, we learn that the human body into which the eternal Son entered, was formed by "the power of the Highest." "A body hast *thou* prepared me." (Comp. Psalm 40: 6 with Heb. 10: 6) It was a real human body — real "flesh and blood." There is no possible foundation here, on which Gnosticism or mysticism can base its vapid and worthless theories no warrant for the cold abstractions of the former, or the misty fancies of the latter. all is deep, solid, and divine reality. The very thing which our hearts needed- the very thing which God has given. The early promise had declared that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," and none but a real man could accomplish this prediction — one whose nature was as real as it was pure and incorruptible. Thou shalt conceive in thy womb," said the angelic messenger, "and bring forth a son"* And, then, lest there should be any room for an error, in reference to the mode of this conception, he adds such words as prove unanswerably, that "the flesh and blood" of which the Eternal Son "took part" while absolutely real, was absolutely incapable of receiving, of retaining, or of communicating a single taint. The humanity of the Lord Jesus was, emphatically, *that holy thing.*" And, inasmuch as it was wholly without taint, it was wholly without a seed of mortality. We cannot think of mortality, save in connection with sin; and Christ's humanity had nought to do with sin, either personally or relatively. Sin was imputed to Him, on the cross, where He was made sin for us." But the meat offering is not the type of Christ as a sin-bearer. It foreshadows Him in His perfect life, here below — a life in which He suffered, no doubt, hut not as a sin-

bearer — not as a substitute — not at the hand of God. Let this be distinctly noted. Neither in the burnt offering, nor in the meat offering, have we Christ as a sin-bearer. In the latter, we see Him *living*; and, in the former, we see Him *dying*; but, in neither, is there a question of the imputation of sin, nor of enduring the wrath of God, on account of sin. In short, to present Christ as the sinner's substitute any where else save on the cross, is to rob His life of all its divine beauty and excellency, and to displace the cross altogether. Moreover, it would involve the types of Leviticus in hopeless confusion.

{*"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." (*genomenon ek gunaikos, genomenon hupo nomon.*) This is a most important passage inasmuch as it sets forth our blessed Lord as Son of God, and Son of man. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman" Precious testimony.}

I would, at this point, solemnly admonish my reader, that he cannot be too jealous in reference to the vital truth of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, If there be error as to this, there is no security as to anything. God cannot give the sanction of His presence to ought that has not this truth for its foundation. The Person of Christ is the living — the divine ground which the Holy Ghost carries on all His operations. Let slip the truth as to Him, and you are like a vessel broken from its moorings, and carried, without rudder or compass, over the wild watery waste, and in imminent danger of being dashed to fragments upon the rocks of Arianism, Infidelity, or Atheism. Question the eternal Sonship of Christ — question His Deity — question His unspotted humanity, and you have opened the floodgate for a desolating tide of deadly error to rush in. Let no one imagine, for a moment, that this is a mere matter to be discussed by learned theologians — a curious question — a recondite mystery — a point about which we may lawfully differ. No; it is a vital, fundamental truth, to be held in the power of the Holy Ghost, and maintained at the expense of all beside — yea, to be confessed, under all circumstances, whatever may be the consequences.

What we want is simply to receive into our hearts, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Father's revelation of the Son, and, then,

our souls shall be effectually preserved from the snares of the enemy, let them take what shape they may. He may speciously cover the trap of Arianism or Socinianism with the grass and leaves of a most plausible and attractive system of interpretation; but directly the devoted heart discovers what this system attempts to make of the Blessed One to whom it owes everything, and where it attempts to put Him, it finds but little difficulty in sending it back to where it manifestly came from. We can well afford to do without human theories; but we can never do without Christ — the Christ of God — the Christ of God's affections — the Christ of God's counsels — the Christ of God's word.

The Lord Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, a distinct Person in the glorious Trinity, God manifest in the flesh, God over all, blessed for ever, assumed a body which was inherently and divinely pure, holy, and without the possibility of taint — absolutely free from every seed or principle of sin and mortality. Such was the humanity of Christ, that He could at any moment, so far as He was personally concerned, have returned to heaven, from whence He had come, and to which He belonged. I speak not here of the eternal counsels of redeeming love, or of the unswerving love of the heart of Jesus — His love to God — His love to God's elect, or of the work that was needful to ratify God's everlasting covenant with the seed of Abraham, and with the whole creation. Christ's own words teach us that it behoved Him to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." (Luke 24: 46) It was necessary that He should suffer, in order to the full manifestation and perfect accomplishment of the great mystery of redemption. It was His gracious purpose to "bring many sons unto glory. He would not abide alone," and, therefore, He, as the corn of wheat, "should fall into the ground and die." The more fully we enter into the truth of His Person, the more fully do we apprehend the grace of His work.

When the apostle speaks of Christ's being made perfect through suffering," it is as "the Captain of our salvation that he contemplates Him, and not as the eternal Son who, as regards His own abstract Person and nature, was divinely perfect and could not possibly have ought added to Him. So, also, when He Himself says, "Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and

the third day I shall be perfected," (Luke 13: 32) He refers to His being perfected, in the power of resurrection, as the accomplisher of the entire work of redemption. So far as He was personally concerned, He could say, even on His way forth from the garden of Gethsemane, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26: 53, 54)

It is well that the soul be clear as to this — well to have a divine sense of the harmony which exists between those scriptures which present Christ in the essential dignity of His Person, and the divine purity of His nature, and those which present Him in His relation with His people, and as accomplishing the great work of redemption. At times we find both these things combined, in the same passage, as in Heb. 5: 8, 9: "Though *he were a Son*, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." We must, however, bear in mind that not one of those relations into which Christ, voluntarily, entered — whether as the expression of divine love to a lost world, or the servant of the divine counsels not one of these could possibly interfere with the essential purity, excellency, and glory of His Person. "The Holy Ghost came upon" the virgin, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her;" and "therefore that holy thing which was born of her was called the Son of God." Most magnificent unfolding, this, of the deep secret of Christ's pure and perfect humanity — the great antitype of the "*fine flour mingled with oil!*"

And here, let me observe, that, between humanity, as seen in the Lord Jesus Christ, and humanity, as seen in us, there could be no union. That which is pure could never coalesce with that which is impure. That which is incorruptible could never unite with that which is corruptible. The spiritual and the carnal — the heavenly and the earthly — could never combine. Hence, therefore, it follows that incarnation was not, as some have attempted to teach, Christ's taking our fallen nature into union with Himself. If He could have done this, there would have been no need of the death of the cross. He needed not, in that case, to feel "straitened" until the baptism was

accomplished — the corn of wheat did not need to fall into the ground and die." This is a point of great moment. Let the spiritual mind ponder it deeply. Christ could not possibly take sinful humanity into union with Himself. Hear what the angel said to Joseph, in the first chapter of Matthew's gospel. "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; *for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*" See now Joseph's natural sensibilities, as well as Mary's pious ignorance, are made the occasion of a fuller unfolding of the holy mystery of Christ's humanity; and also of guarding that humanity against all the Blasphemous attacks of the enemy!

How, then, is it that believers are united to Christ. Is it in incarnation or resurrection? In resurrection, assuredly. How is this proved? "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth *alone.*" (John 12: 24.) At this side of death, there could be no union between Christ and His people. It is in the power of a new life that believers are united to Christ. They were dead *in sin*, and He, in perfect grace, came down, and, though Himself pure and sinless, was "made sin" — "died *unto sin*" — put it away — rose triumphant over it, and all pertaining to it, and, in resurrection, became the Head of a new race. Adam was the head of the old creation, which fell with him. Christ, by dying, put Himself under the full weight of His people's condition, and having perfectly met all that was against them, rose; victorious over all, and carried them with Him into the new creation, of which He is the glorious Head and Centre. Hence, we read, He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. 6: 17.) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us *together with Christ*, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2: 4-6.) For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. 5: 30.) "And you *being dead in your sins*, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, *hath he quickened together with him*, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. 2: 13.)

Passages might be multiplied, but the above are amply sufficient to prove that it was not in incarnation, but in death, that Christ took a position in which His people could be "quickened

together with him." Does this seem unimportant to the reader? Let him examine it in the light of Scripture. Let him weigh all the consequences. Let him view it in its bearing upon Christ's Person, upon His life, upon His death, upon our condition, by nature, in the old creation, and our place, through mercy, in the new. Let him consider it thus, and, I feel persuaded, he will no longer regard it as a light matter. Of one thing, at least, he may rest assured, that the writer of these pages would not pen a single line to prove this point, did he not consider it to be fraught with the most momentous results. The whole of divine revelation so hangs together — is so adjusted by the hand of the Holy Ghost is so consistent in all its parts, that, if one truth be disturbed, the entire arch is injured. This consideration should suffice to produce, in the mind of every Christian, a holy caution lest, by some rude touch, he mar the beautiful superstructure. Every stone must be left in its divinely appointed place; and, unquestionably, the truth as to Christ's Person is the keystone of the arch.

Having thus endeavoured to unfold the truth typified by the "fine flour *mingled* with oil," we may remark another point of much interest in the expression, "He shall *pour* oil upon it." In this we have a type of the anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost. The body of the Lord Jesus was not merely formed, mysteriously, by the Holy Ghost, but that pure and holy vessel was also anointed for service, by the same power. And it came to pass when all the people were baptised, and Jesus also being baptised and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, as a dove, upon him, and there was a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3: 21, 22)

The anointing of the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, previous to His entrance upon His public ministry, is of immense practical importance to every one who really desires to be a true and an effectual servant of God. though conceived, as to His manhood, by the Holy Ghost; though, in His own proper Person, "God manifest in the flesh;" though embodying, in Himself, all the fullness of the Godhead; yet, be it well observed, when coming forth, as man, to do the will of God, on the earth, whatever that will might be, whether

preaching the gospel, teaching in the synagogues, healing the sick, cleansing the leper, casting out devils, feeding the hungry, or raising the dead, He did all by the Holy Ghost. That holy and heavenly vessel in which God the Son was pleased to appear in this world, was formed, filled, Anointed, and led by the Holy Ghost.

What a deep and holy lesson for us! A most needful and salutary lesson! How prone are we to run unspent! How prone to act in the mere energy of the flesh! How much of that which looks like ministry is only the restless and unhallowed activity of a nature which has never been measured and judged in the divine presence! Truly, we need to contemplate, more closely, our divine "meat offering" — to understand, more fully, the meaning of the "Fine flour anointed with oil." We need to meditate, more deeply, upon Christ Himself, who, though possessing, in His own Person, divine power, nevertheless, did all His work, wrought all His miracles, and, finally, offered himself without spot to God, by the eternal Spirit. He could say, "I, by the Spirit of God, cast out devils."

Nothing is of any value save that which is wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. A man may write; but, if his pen be not guided and used by the Holy Ghost, his lines will produce no permanent result. A man may speak; but, if his lips be not anointed by the Holy Ghost, his word will not take permanent root. This is a solemn consideration, and, if properly weighed, would lead to much watchfulness over ourselves, and much earnest dependence upon the Holy Ghost. What we need is thorough self-emptiness, so that there may be room left for the Spirit to act by us. It is impossible that a man full of himself can be the vessel of the Holy Ghost. Such an one must, first, be emptied of himself, and, then, the Spirit can use him. When we contemplate the Person and ministry of the Lord Jesus, we see how that, in every scene and circumstance, He acted by the direct power of the Holy Ghost. Having taken His place, as man, down here, He showed that men should not only live by the Word, but act by the Spirit of God. Even though, as man, His will was perfect — His thoughts, His words, His acts, all perfect, yet would He not act, save by the direct authority of the Word, and by the direct power of the Holy Ghost. Oh! that in this, as in every thing else, we could, more closely, more faithfully, follow in His steps.

Then, indeed, would our ministry be more effective, our testimony more fruitful, our whole course more entirely to the glory of God.

The next ingredient in the meat offering demanding our consideration is "the frankincense." As has been remarked, the "fine flour" was the basis of the offering. The "oil" and "frankincense" were the two leading adjuncts; and, truly, the connection between these two latter is most instructive. The "oil" typifies the *power* of Christ's ministry; the "frankincense" typifies the *object* thereof. The former teaches us that He did everything by the Spirit of God; the latter that He did everything to the glory of God. The frankincense presents that in the life of Christ, which was, exclusively, for God. This is evident from the second verse: "And he shall bring it (the meat offering) to Aaron's sons, the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with *all the frankincense* thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Thus was it in the true meat offering — the Man Christ Jesus. There was that in His blessed life which was exclusively for God. Every thought, every word, every look, every act of His, emitted a fragrance which went up, immediately, to God. And, as in the type, it was the fire of the altar" that drew forth the sweet odour of the frankincense; so, in the Anti type, the more he was "tried," in all the scenes and circumstances of His blessed life, the more fully was it manifested that, in His manhood, there was nothing that could not ascend, as an odour of a sweet smell, to the throne of God. If, in the burnt offering, we behold Christ "offering himself, without spot, to God;" in the meat offering, we behold Him presenting all the intrinsic excellence and perfect actings of His human nature to God. A perfect, a self-emptied, an obedient man, on the earth, doing the will of God, acting by the authority of the word, and by the power of the Spirit, had a sweet odour which could only be for divine acceptance. The fact that all the frankincense" was consumed on the altar, fixes its import in the simplest manner.

It now only remains for us to consider an ingredient which was an inseparable adjunct of the meat offering, namely, "*salt*." "and every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be

lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." The expression, "salt of the covenant," sets forth the enduring character of that covenant. God Himself has so ordained it, in all things, that nought can ever alter it — no influence can ever corrupt it. In a spiritual and practical point of view, it is impossible to over-estimate the value of such an ingredient. "Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with *salt*." The whole conversation of the Perfect Man exhibited the power of this principle. His words were not merely words of grace, but words of pungent power — words divinely adapted to preserve from all taint and corrupting influence. He never uttered a word which was not redolent with "frankincense" and seasoned with salt. The former was most acceptable to God, the latter most profitable for man.

Sometimes, alas! man's corrupt heart and vitiated taste could not tolerate the pungency of the divinely salted meat offering. Witness, for example, the scene in the synagogue of Nazareth. (Luke 4: 16-29) The people could bear him witness, and wonder at the *gracious* words which proceeded out of his mouth;" but when He proceeded to season those words with *salt*, which was so needful, in order to preserve them from the corrupting influence of their national pride, they would fain have cast Him over the brow of the hill whereon their city was built.

So, also, in Luke 14, when His words of "grace" had drawn "great multitudes" after Him, He instantly throws in the "salt," by setting forth, in words of holy faithfulness, the sure results of following Him. Come, for all things are now ready," Here was the "grace." but, then, "whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." Here was the salt." Grace is attractive; but "Salt is good." Gracious discourse may be popular; but salted discourse never will. The pure gospel of the grace of God may, at certain times, and under certain circumstances, be run after by the multitude" for a while; but when the "salt" of a fervid and faithful application is introduced, it will soon thin the benches of all save such as are brought under the power of the word.

Having thus considered the ingredients which composed the meal offering, we shall now refer to those which were excluded from it.

The first of these was "leaven." No meat offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven." This ingredient is used throughout the inspired volume, without so much as a single exception, as the symbol of *evil*. In Lev. 23, which will be noticed in due course, we find leaven admitted in the two loaves which were offered on the day of Pentecost; but from the meat offering, leaven was most sedulously excluded. There was to be nothing sour: nothing that would puff up, nothing expressive of evil in that which typified the Man Christ Jesus." In Him, there could be nothing savouring of nature's sourness, nothing turgid, nothing inflated. All was pure, solid, and genuine. His word might, at times, cut to the quick; but it was never sour. His style never rose above the occasion. His deportment ever exhibited the deep reality of one walking in the immediate presence of God.

In those who bear the name of Jesus, we know, too well, alas! how leaven shows itself in all its properties and effects. There has been but one untainted sheaf of human fruit — but one perfectly unleavened meat offering; and, blessed be God, that one is ours — ours to feed upon in the sanctuary of the divine presence, in fellowship with God. No exercise can be more truly edifying and refreshing for the renewed mind than to dwell upon the unleavened perfectness of Christ's humanity — to contemplate the life and ministry of One who was, absolutely and essentially, unleavened. In all His springs of thought, affection, desire, and imagination, there was not so much as a particle of leaven. He was the sinless, spotless, perfect Man. And the more we are enabled, by the power of the Spirit, to enter into all this, the deeper will be our experience of the grace which led this perfect One to place Himself under the full consequences of His people's sins, as He did when He hung upon the cross. His thought, however, belongs entirely to the sin-offering aspect of our blessed Lord. In the meat offering, sin is not in question. It is not the type of a sin-bearer, but of a real, perfect, unblemished Man, conceived and anointed by the Holy Ghost, possessing an unleavened nature, and living an unleavened life, down here; emitting, ever, to God-ward, the fragrance of His own personal excellency, and maintaining, amongst men, a deportment characterised by grace seasoned with salt."

But there was another ingredient, as positively excluded from the meat offering as leaven," and that was honey." For ye shall burn no leaven, *nor any honey*, in any offering of the Lord made by fire." (Ver. 11). Now, as "leaven" is the expression of that which is positively and palpably *evil*, in nature, we may regard honey" as the significant symbol of that which is apparently *sweet* and attractive. Both are disallowed of God — both were carefully excluded from the meat offering — both were unfit for the altar. Men may undertake, like Saul, to distinguish between what is "vile and refuse," and what is not; but the judgement of God ranks the delicate Agag with the vilest of the sons of Amalek;. No doubt, there are some good moral qualities in man which must be taken for what they are worth. hast thou found *honey*, eat so much as is convenient;" but, be it remembered, it found no place in the meat offering, nor in its Antitype. There was the fullness of the Holy Ghost; there was the fragrant odour of the frankincense; there was the preservative virtue of the salt of the covenant." All these things accompanied the fine flour," in the Person of the true "meat offering;" but "no honey."

What a lesson for the heart is here! yea, what a volume of wholesome instruction! The blessed Lord Jesus knew how to give nature and its relationships their proper place. He knew how much honey "was convenient." He could say to His mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" And yet He could say, again, to the beloved disciple, Behold thy mother." In other words, nature's claims were never allowed to interfere with the presentation to God of all the energies of Christ's perfect manhood. Mary and others too might have thought that her human relation to the blessed One gave her some peculiar claim or influence, on merely natural grounds. There came, then, his brethren ("after the flesh") and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him; and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee." What was the reply of the true Meat Offering? Did He, at once, abandon His work, in order to respond to nature's call? By no means. Had He done so, it would have been to mingle honey" with the meat offering, which could not be. The honey was faithfully excluded, on this, as on every occasion, when God's claims were to be attended to, and instead thereof, the

power of the Spirit, the odour of the frankincense," and the virtues of the salt" were blessedly exhibited. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother."* (Mark 3: 31-35.)

{*How important to see, in the above beautiful passage, that doing God's will brings the soul into a relationship with Christ, of which His brethren according to the flesh knew nothing, on merely natural grounds. It was as true, with respect to those brethren, as any one else, that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Mary could not have been saved by the mere fact of her being the mother of Jesus. She needed personal faith in Christ as much as any other member of Adam's fallen family. She needed to pass, by being born again, not of the old creation into the new. It was by treasuring up Christ's words in her heart that this blessed woman was saved. No doubt, she was highly favoured" in being chosen as a vessel, to such a holy office; but, then, as a lost sinner, she needed! to rejoice in God her Saviour, like any one else. She stands on the same platform, is washed in the same blood, clothed in the same righteousness, and will sing the same song, as all the rest of God's redeemed.

This simple fact will give additional force and clearness to a point already stated, namely; that incarnation was not Christ's taking our nature into union with Himself. This truth should be carefully pondered. It is fully brought out in 2 Cor. 5, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, *though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.* Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (Ver. 14-17)}

There are few things which the servant of Christ finds more difficult than to adjust, with spiritual accuracy, the claims of natural relationship, so as not to suffer them to interfere with the claims of

the Master. In the case of our blessed Lord, as we know, the adjustment was divine. In our case, it often happens that divinely-recognised duties are openly neglected for what we imagine to be the service of Christ. The doctrine of God is constantly sacrificed to the apparent work of the gospel. Now, it is well to remember that true devotedness always starts from a point within which all godly claims are fully secured. If I hold a situation which demands my services from ten till four every day, I have no right to go out to visit or preach, during those hours. If I am in business, I am bound to maintain the integrity of that business, in a godly manner. I have no right to run hither and thither preaching, while my business, at home, lies in sixes and sevens, bringing great reproach on the holy doctrine of God. A man may say, I feel myself called to preach the gospel, and I find my situation, or my business, a clog. Well, *if you are divinely called and fitted* for the work; of the gospel, and that you cannot combine the two things, then resign your situation, or wind up your business, in a godly manner, and go forth, in the name of the Lord. But, clearly, so long as I hold a situation, or carry on a business, my work in the gospel must begin from a point within which the godly claims of such business or situation are fully responded to. This is devotedness. Ought else is confusion, however well intended. Blessed be God, we have a perfect example before us in the life of the Lord Jesus, and ample guidance, for the new man, in the word of God; so that we need not make any mistakes, in the varied relationships which we may be called, in the providence of God, to all, or as to the various claims which God's moral government has set up, in connection with such relationships.

2. The second point, in our theme, is the mode in which the meat offering was prepared. This was, as we read, by the action of fire. It was "baken in an oven" — "baken in a pan" — or "baken in a frying pan." The process of baking suggests the idea of suffering. But inasmuch as the meat offering is called "a sweet savour" — a term which is never applied to the sin offering, or trespass offering — it is evident that there is no thought of suffering for sin — no thought of suffering the wrath of God on account of sin — no thought of suffering at the hand of infinite Justice, as the sinner's substitute. The two ideas of "sweet savour" and suffering for sin, are wholly incompatible, according to the Levitical economy. It would

completely destroy the type of the meat offering, were we to introduce into it the idea of suffering for sin.

In contemplating the *life* of the Lord Jesus, which, as we have already remarked, is the special subject foreshadowed in the meat offering, we may notice three distinct kinds of suffering; namely, suffering for righteousness; suffering by the power of sympathy; and suffering, in anticipation.

As the righteous Servant of God, He suffered in the midst of a scene in which all was contrary to Him; but this was the very opposite of suffering for sin. It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between these two kinds of suffering. The confounding of them must lead to serious error. suffering as a righteous One, standing amongst men, on God's behalf, is one thing; and suffering instead of men, under the hand of God, is quite another. The Lord Jesus suffered for righteousness, during His *life*. He suffered for sin, in His death. During His life, man and Satan did their utmost; and, even at the cross, they put forth all their powers; but when all that they could do was done — when they had travelled, in their deadly enmity, to the utmost limit of human and diabolical opposition, there lay, far beyond a region of impenetrable gloom and horror into which the Sin-bearer had to travel, in the accomplishment of His work. During His life He ever walked in the unclouded light of the Divine countenance; but, on the cursed tree, the dark shadow of sin intervened, and shut out that light, and drew forth that mysterious cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was a moment which stands absolutely alone, in the annals of eternity. From time to time, during the life of Christ, down here heaven had opened to give forth the expression of divine complacency in Him; but on the cross God forsook Him, because He was making His soul an offering for sin. If Christ had been a sin-bearer all His life, then what was the difference between the cross and any other period? Why was He not forsaken of God during His entire course? What was the difference between Christ on the cross, and Christ on the holy mount of transfiguration? was He forsaken of God, on the mount? Was He a sin-bearer there? These are very simple questions, which should be answered By those who maintain the ides of a life of sin-bearing.

The plain fact is this, there was nothing either in Christ's humanity, or in the nature of His associations, which could possibly connect Him with sin, or wrath, or death. He was made sin" on the cross; and there He endured the wrath of God, and there He gave up His life, as an all-sufficient atonement for sin; but nothing of this finds a place in the meat offering. True, we have the process of baking — the action of fire; but this is not the wrath of God. The meat offering was not a sin offering, but a sweet savour" offering. Thus, its import is definitely fixed; and, moreover, the intelligent interpretation of it must ever guard, with holy jealousy, the precious truth of Christ's spotless humanity, and the true nature of His associations. To make Him, by the necessity of His birth, a sinbearer, or to place Him, thereby, under the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, is to contradict the entire truth of God, as to incarnation — truth announced by the angel, and repeated, again and again, by the inspired apostle. Moreover, it destroys the entire character and object of Christ's life, and robs the cross of its distinctive glory. It lowers the sense of what sin is, and of what atonement is. In one word, it removes the keystone of the arch of revelation, and lays all in hopeless ruin and confusion around us.

But, again, the Lord Jesus suffered by the power of Sympathy; and this character of suffering unfolds to us the deep secrets of His tender heart. Human sorrow, and human misery ever touched a chord in that bosom of love. It was impossible that a perfect human heart could avoid feeling, according to its own divine sensibilities, the miseries which sin had entailed upon the human family. Though, personally free, both from the cause and the effect — though belonging to heaven, and living a perfect heavenly life, on the earth, yet did He descend, by the power of an intense sympathy, into the deepest depths of human sorrow yea, He felt the sorrow, more keenly by far, than those who were the direct subjects thereof, inasmuch as His humanity was perfect. And, further, He was able to contemplate both the sorrow and its cause, according to their just measure and character, in the presence of God. He felt as none else could feel. His feelings — His affections — His sensibilities — His whole moral and mental constitution were perfect; and, hence, none can tell what such an One must have suffered, in passing through such a world as this. He beheld the human family struggling beneath

the ponderous weight of guilt and wretchedness; He beheld the whole creation groaning under the yoke; the cry of the prisoner fell upon His ear; the tear of the widow met His view; bereavement and poverty touched His sensitive heart; sickness and death made Him groan in the spirit;" His sympathetic sufferings were beyond all human conception.

I shall quote a passage for my reader, illustrative of that character of suffering to which we are now referring. When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*" (Matt. 8: 16, 17) This was entirely sympathetic — the power of fellow-feeling, which in Him was perfect. He had no sicknesses or infirmities of His own. Those things which are sometimes spoken of as sinless infirmities," were, in His case, but the evidences of a veritable, a real, a perfect manhood. But by sympathy, by perfect fellow feeling, He took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." None? but a perfect man could have done this. We may feel for, and with, each other; but only Jesus could make human infirmity and sickness His own.

Now, had He been bearing all these things by the necessity of His birth, or of His relations with Israel and the human family, we should have lost all the beauty and preciousness of His voluntary sympathy. There could be no room for voluntary action when absolute necessity was laid upon Him. But, on the other hand, when we see His entire freedom, both personally and relatively, from human misery and that which produced it, we can enter into that perfect grace and compassion which led Him to take our infirmities, and bear our sicknesses," in the power of true sympathy. There is, therefore, a very manifest difference between Christ's suffering as a voluntary sympathiser with human misery, and His sufferings as the sinner's substitute. The former are apparent throughout His entire *life*; the latter are confined to His *death*.

Finally, we have to consider Christ's sufferings, by anticipation. We find the dark shadow of the cross casting itself athwart His path, and producing a very keen order of suffering

which, however, must be as clearly distinguished from His atoning suffering as either His suffering for righteousness, or His suffering by sympathy. Let us take a passage, in proof: And he came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation and he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him. and being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22: 39-44.) Again, we read, And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me he went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matt. 26: 37-42.)

From these verses, it is evident, there was a something, in prospect, which the blessed Lord had never encountered before. There was a cup" being filled out for Him of which He had not yet drunk. If He had been a sin-bearer all His life, then why this intense agony at the thought of coming in contact with sin and enduring the wrath of God on account of sin? what was the difference between Christ, in Gethsemane, and Christ, at Calvary, if He were a sin-bearer all His life? There was a material difference! but it is because He was not a sin-bearer all His life. What is the difference? In Gethsemane, He was *anticipating* the cross! at Calvary, He was actually *enduring* it. In Gethsemane, there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him;" at Calvary, He was forsaken of all. There was no angelic ministry there. In Gethsemane He addresses God as *Father*," thus enjoying the full communion of that ineffable relationship; but at Calvary, He cries, *My God, My God*, why hast thou forsaken me?" Here the sin-bearer looks up, and beholds the throne of eternal Justice enveloped in dark clouds, and the countenance of inflexible Holiness averted from Him because He was being made sin for us."

The reader will, I trust, find no difficulty in examining this subject for himself. He will be able to trace, in detail, the three characters of the *life*-sufferings of our blessed Lord, and to distinguish between them and His *death*-sufferings—His sufferings for sin. He will see how that, when man and Satan had done their utmost, there yet remained a character of suffering which was perfectly unique, namely, suffering, at the hand of God, on account of sin — suffering as the sinner's substitute. Until He came to the cross, He could ever look up and bask in the clear light of His Father's countenance. In the darkest hour, He found a sure resource above. His path down here was a rough one. How could it be otherwise, in a world where all was directly contrary to His pure and holy nature? He had to endure the contradiction of singers against himself." He had to endure" the reproach of them that reproached God." What had He not to endure? He was misunderstood, misinterpreted, abused, maligned, accused of being mad, and of having a devil. He was betrayed, denied, deserted, mocked, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, cast out, condemned, and nailed between two malefactors. All these things He endured at the hand of man, together with all the unutterable terrors which Satan brought to bear upon His spirit; but let it be, once more, emphatically repeated, when man and Satan had exhausted their power and enmity, our blessed Lord and Saviour had to endure a something compared with which all the rest was as nothing, and that was the hiding of God's countenance — the three hours of darkness and awful gloom, during which He suffered what none but God could know.

Now, when scripture speaks of our having fellowship with Christ's sufferings, it refers, simply, to His sufferings for righteousness — his sufferings at the hand of man. Christ suffered for sin, that we might not have to suffer for it. He endured the wrath of God, that we might not have to endure it. This is the ground of our peace. But, as regards suffering from man, we shall always find that the more faithfully we follow in the footsteps of Christ, the more we shall suffer in this respect; but this is a matter of gift, a matter of privilege, a favour, a dignity. (See Phil. 1: 29, 30) To walk in the footsteps of Christ — to enjoy companionship with Him — to be thrown into a place of sympathy with Him, are privileges of the very highest order. Would that we all entered, more fully, into them!

But, alas! we are too well content to do without them — too well satisfied, like Peter, to follow afar off" — to keep aloof from a despised and suffering Christ. All this is, undoubtedly, our heavy loss. Had we only more fellowship with His sufferings, the crown would glisten, far more brightly, in our soul's vision. When we shrink from fellowship with Christ's sufferings, we rob ourselves of the deep joy of His present companionship, and also of the moral power of the hope of His future glory.

3. Having considered the ingredients which composed the meat offering, and the various forms in which it was presented, it only remains for us to refer to the persons who partook of it. These were the head and members of the priestly house. "And that which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons: it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire." (Ver. 10) As in the burnt offering, we observed the sons of Aaron introduced as types of all true believers, not as convicted sinners, but as worshipping Priests; so, in the meat offering, we find them feeding upon the remnant of that which had been laid, as it were, on the table of the God of Israel. This was a high and holy privilege. None but priests could enjoy it. This is set forth, with great distinctness, in "the law of the meat offering," which I shall here quote at length. And this is the law of the meat offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord, before the altar. And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat offering, and of the oil thereof, and *all the frankincense* which is upon the meat offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it unto the Lord. And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with *unleavened bread* shall it be eaten, *in the Holy place*; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it. It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering. *All the males* among the children of Aaron shall eat of it: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations, concerning the offerings of the Lord made by fire: *every one that toucheth them shall be holy.*" (Lev. 6: 14-18)

Here, then, we are furnished with a beautiful figure of the Church, feeding, "in the holy place," in the power of practical

holiness, upon the perfections of the Man Christ Jesus." This is our portion, through the grace of God; but, we must remember, it is to be eaten with unleavened bread." We cannot feed upon Christ if we are indulging in anything evil. Every one that toucheth them shall be holy." Moreover, it must be in the holy place." Our position, our practice, our persons, our associations, must be holy, ere we can feed upon the meat offering. Finally, it is, all the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it." That is to say, real priestly energy, according to the divine idea of it, is required, in order to enjoy this holy portion. Aaron's *Sons*" set forth the idea of *energy* in priestly action. His "*daughters*," *feebleness* therein. (Comp. Num. 18: 8-13) There were some things which the sons could eat which the daughters could not. Our hearts should earnestly desire the highest measure of priestly energy, so that we may discharge the highest priestly functions, and partake of the highest order of priestly food.

In conclusion, let me add that, inasmuch as we are made, through grace," partakers of the divine nature," we can, if living in the energy of that nature, walk in the footsteps of Him who is foreshadowed in the meat offering. If only we are self-emptied, our every act may emit a sweet odour to God. the smallest as well as the greatest services may, by the power of the Holy Ghost, present the fragrance of Christ. The paying of a visit, the writing of a letter, the public ministry of the word, giving a cup of cold water to a disciple, giving a penny to a pauper, yea, the common-place acts of eating and drinking — all may emit the sweet perfume of the name and grace of Jesus.

So, also, if only nature be kept in the place of death, there may be, in us, the exhibition of that which is not corruptible, even a conversation seasoned with the "salt" of abiding communion with God. But, in all these things, we fail and come short. We grieve the Holy Spirit of God in our ways. We are prone to self-seeking or men-pleasing, in our very best services, and we fail to "season" our conversation. Hence, our constant deficiency in the "oil," the "frankincense," and the Salt while, at the same time, there is the tendency to suffer the "leaven" or the "honey" of nature to make its appearance. There has been but one perfect meat offering;" and, blessed be God, we are accepted in Him. We are the sons" of the

true Aaron; our place is in the sanctuary, where we can feed upon the holy portion. Happy place! Happy portion! May we enjoy them more than ever we have done. May our retirement of heart from all but Christ be more profound. May our gaze at Him be so intense, that we shall have no heart for the attractions of the scene around us, nor yet for the ten thousand petty circumstances, in our path, which would fret the heart and perplex the mind. May we rejoice in Christ, in the sunshine and in the darkness; when the gentle breezes of summer play around us, and when the storms of winter rage fiercely abroad; when passing over the surface of a placid lake, or tossed on the bosom of a stormy ocean. Thank God "we have found Him" who is to be our satisfying portion for ever. We shall spend eternity dwelling upon the divine perfections of the Lord Jesus. Our eyes shall never be averted from Him, when once we have seen Him as He is.

May the Spirit of God work mightily in us, to strengthen us, "in the inner man." May He enable us to feed upon that perfect Meat Offering, the memorial of which has been fed upon by God Himself! This is our holy and happy privilege. May we realise it, yet more fully!

Leviticus 3.

The more closely we contemplate the offerings, the more fully do we see how that no one offering furnishes a complete view of Christ. It is only by putting all together, that anything like a just idea can be formed. Each offering, as might be expected, has features peculiar to itself. The Peace offering differs from the burnt offering, in many points; and a clear understanding of the points in which any one type differs from the others, will be found to help much in the apprehension of its special import.

Thus, in comparing the peace offering with the burnt offering, we find that the threefold action of "flaying," "Cutting it into its pieces," and "washing the inwards and legs" is entirely omitted; and this is quite in character. In the burnt offering, as we have seen, we find Christ offering Himself to, and accepted by God, and hence, the completeness of His self-surrender, and also the searching process to which He submitted Himself, had to be typified. In the peace offering, the leading thought is the communion of the worshipper. It is not Christ as enjoyed, exclusively, by God, but as enjoyed by the worshipper, in communion with God. Therefore it is that the whole line of action is less intense. No heart, be its love ever so elevated, could possibly rise to the height of Christ's devotedness to God, or of God's acceptance of Christ. None but God Himself could duly note the pulsations of that heart which throbbed in the bosom of Jesus; and, therefore, a type was needed to set forth that one feature of Christ's death, namely, His perfect devotedness therein to God. This type we have in the burnt offering, in which, alone, we observe the threefold action above referred to.

So, also, in reference to the character of the sacrifice. In the burnt offering, it should be "a male without blemish;" whereas, in the peace offering, it might be "a male or female," though equally "without blemish." The nature of Christ, whether we view Him as enjoyed exclusively by God, or by the worshipper in fellowship with God, must ever be one and the same. There can be no alteration in that. The only reason why "a female" was permitted in the peace offering, was because it was a question of the worshipper's capacity

to enjoy that blessed One, who, in Himself, is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever." (Heb. 13)

Again, in the burnt offering, we read, "The priest shall burn *all*," whereas, in the peace offering, a *part* only was burnt, that is, "the fat, the kidneys, and the caul. This makes it exceedingly simple. The most excellent portion of the sacrifice was laid on God's altar. The inward parts — the hidden energies — the tender sensibilities of the blessed Jesus, were devoted to God as the only One who could perfectly enjoy them. Aaron and his sons fed upon "the wave breast" and "the heave shoulder."* (See carefully Lev. 7: 28-36) All the members of the priestly family, in communion with their head, had their proper portion of the peace offering. And now, all true believers constituted, by grace, priests unto God, can feed upon the *affections* and the *strength* of the true Peace Offering — can enjoy the happy assurance of having His loving heart and powerful shoulder to comfort and sustain them continually.** "This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister unto the Lord in the priest's office; which the Lord commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that he anointed them by a statute for ever throughout their generations." (Lev. 7: 35, 36)

{*The "breast" and the "shoulder" are emblematical of love and power — strength and affection.}

{**There is much force and beauty in verse 31: "The breast shall be Aaron's and his sons." It is the privilege of all true believers to feed upon the affections of Christ — the changeless love of that heart which beats with a deathless and changeless love for them.}

All these are important points of difference between the burnt offering and the peace offering; and, when taken together, they set the two offerings, with great clearness, before the mind. There is something more in the peace offering than the abstract devotedness of Christ to the will of God. The worshipper is introduced; and that, not merely as a spectator, but as a participator — not merely to gaze, but to feed. This gives very marked character to this offering. When I look at the Lord Jesus in the burnt offering, I see Him as One

whose heart was devoted to the one object of glorifying God and accomplishing His will. But when I see Him in the peace offering, I find One who has a place in His loving heart, and on His powerful shoulder, for a worthless, helpless sinner. In the burnt offering, the breast and shoulder, legs and inwards, head and fat, were all burnt on the altar — all went up as a sweet savour to God. But in the peace offering, that very portion that suits me is left for me. Nor am I left to feed, in solitude, on that which meets my individual need. By no means. I feed in communion — in communion with God, and in communion with my fellow priests. I feed, in the full and happy intelligence, that the selfsame sacrifice which feeds my soul has already refreshed the heart of God; and, moreover, that the same portion which feeds me feeds all my fellow worshippers. Communion is the order here — communion with God — the communion of saints. There was no such thing as isolation in the peace offering. God had His portion, and so had the priestly family.

Thus it is in connection with the Antitype of the peace offering. The very same Jesus who is the object of heaven's delight, is he spring of joy, of strength, and of comfort to every believing heart; and not only to every heart, in particular, but also to the whole church of God, in fellowship. God, in His exceeding grace, has given His people the very same object that He has Himself. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1) True, our thoughts of Jesus can never rise to the height of God's thoughts. Our estimation of such an object must ever fall far short of His; and, hence, in the type, the house of Aaron could not partake of the fat. But though we can never rise to the standard of the divine estimation of Christ's Person and sacrifice, it is, nevertheless, the same object we are occupied With, and, therefore, the house of Aaron had "the wave breast and the heave shoulder." All this is replete with comfort and joy to the heart. The Lord Jesus Christ — the One "who was dead, but is alive for evermore," is now the exclusive object before the eye and thoughts of God; and, in perfect grace, He has given unto us a portion in the same blessed and all-glorious Person. Christ is our object too — the object of our hearts, and the theme of our song. "Having made peace by the blood of his cross," He ascended into heaven, and sent down the Holy Ghost, that "other Comforter," by whose powerful ministrations we

feed upon the breast and shoulder "of our divine "Peace Offering." He is, indeed, our peace; and it is our exceeding joy to know that such is God's delight in the establishment of our peace that the sweet odour of our Peace offering has refreshed His heart. This imparts a peculiar charm to this type. Christ, as the burnt offering, commands the admiration of the heart; Christ, as the peace offering, establishes the peace of the conscience, and meets the deep and manifold necessities of the soul. The sons of Aaron might stand around the altar of burnt offering; they might behold the flame of that offering ascending to the God of Israel; they might see the sacrifice reduced to ashes; they might, in view of all this, bow their heads and worship; but they carried nought away for themselves. Not so in the peace offering. In it they not only beheld that which was capable of emitting a sweet odour to God, but also of yielding a most substantial portion for themselves on which they could feed, in happy and holy fellowship.

And, assuredly, it heightens the enjoyment of every true priest to know that God (to use the language of our type) has had His portion, ere he gets the breast and the shoulder. The thought of this gives tone and energy, unction and elevation to the worship and communion. It unfolds the amazing grace of Him who has given us the same object, the same theme, the same joy with Himself. Nothing lower — nothing less than this could satisfy Him. The Father will have the prodigal feeding upon the fatted calf, in fellowship with Himself. He will not assign him lower — place than at His own table, nor any other portion than that on which He feeds Himself. The language of the peace offering is, "it is meet that we should make merry and be glad" — "Let *us* eat and be merry." Such is the precious grace of God! No doubt, we have reason to be glad, as being the partakers of such grace; but when we can hear the blessed God saying, "Let us eat and be merry," it should call forth from our hearts a continual stream of praise and thanksgiving. God's joy in the salvation of sinners, and His joy in the communion of saints, may well elicit the admiration of men and angels throughout eternity.

Having, thus, compared the peace offering with the burnt offering, we may, now, briefly glance at it, in connection with the

meat offering. The leading point of difference, here, is that, in the peace offering, there was blood-shedding, and in the meat offering, there was not. They were both "sweet savour" offerings; and, as we learn, from Lev. 7: 12, the two offerings here very intimately associated. Now, both the connection and the contrast are full of meaning and instruction.

It is only in communion with God that the soul can delight itself in contemplating the perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Holy Ghost must *impart*, as He must also *direct*, by the word, the vision by which we can gaze on "the Man Christ Jesus." He might have been revealed "in the likeness of sinful flesh;" He might have lived and laboured on this earth; He might have shone, amid the darkness of this world, in all the heavenly lustre and beauty which belonged to His Person; He might have passed rapidly, like a brilliant luminary, across this world's horizon; and, all the while, have been beyond the range of the sinner's vision.

Man could not enter into the deep joy of communion with all this, simply because there would be no basis laid down on which this communion might rest. In the peace offering, this necessary basis is fully and clearly established. "He shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about." (Lev. 3: 2) Here, we have that which the meat offering does not supply, namely, a solid foundation for the worshipper's communion with all the fullness, the preciousness, and the beauty of Christ, so far as He, by the gracious energy of the Holy Ghost, is enabled to enter thereunto. Standing on the platform which "the precious blood of Christ "provides, we can range, with tranquillised hearts, and worshipping spirits, throughout all the wondrous scenes of the manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Had we nought save the meat offering aspect of Christ, we should lack the title by which, and the ground on which, we can contemplate and enjoy Him therein. If there were no blood-shedding, there could be no title, no standing place for the sinner. but Leviticus 7: 12 links the meat offering with the peace offering, and, by so doing, teaches us that, when our souls have found peace, we can delight in the One, who has "made peace," and who is "our peace."

But let it be distinctly understood that while, in the peace offering, we have the shedding and sprinkling of blood, yet sin-bearing is not the thought. When we view Christ, in the peace offering, He does not stand before us as the bearer of our sins, as in the sin and trespass offerings; but (having borne them) as the ground of our peaceful and happy fellowship with God. If sin-bearing were in question, it could not be said, "It is an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord." (Lev. 3: 5 comp. with Lev. 4: 10-12) Still, though sin-bearing is not the thought, there is full provision for one who knows himself to be a sinner, else he could not have any portion therein. To have fellowship with God we must be "in the light;" and how can we be there? Only on the ground of that precious statement, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1) The more we abide in the light, the deeper will be our sense of everything which is contrary to that light, and the deeper, also, our sense of the value of that blood which entitles us to be there. The more closely we walk with God, the more we shall know of "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

It is most needful to be established in the truth that we are in the presence of God, only as the partakers of divine life, and as standing in divine righteousness. The Father could only have the prodigal at his table, clothed in "the best robe," and in all the integrity of that relationship in which He viewed him. Had the prodigal been left in his rags, or placed "as a hired servant" in the house, we never should have heard those glorious words, "Let us eat and be merry: for this *my son* was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Thus it is with all true believers. Their old nature is not recognised as existing, before God. He counts it dead, and so should they. It is dead, to God — dead, to faith. It must be kept in the place of death. It is not by improving our old nature that we get into the divine presence; but as the possessors of a new nature. It was not by repairing the rags of his former condition that the prodigal got a place at the Father's table, but by being clothed in a robe which he had never seen, or thought of before. He did not bring this robe with him from the "far country," neither did he provide it as he came along; but the father had it for him in the house. The prodigal did not make it, or help to make it; but the father provided

it for him, and rejoiced to see it on him. Thus it was they sat down together, to feed in happy fellowship, upon "the fatted calf."

I shall now proceed to quote at length "the law of the sacrifice of peace offering," in which we shall find some additional points of much interest — points which belong peculiarly to itself: "And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the Lord. If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour fried. Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings. And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the Lord, and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten; but the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity. And the flesh that toucheth any unclean thing shall not be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire: and as for the flesh all that be clean shall eat thereof. But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain unto the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." (Lev. 7: 11-21)

It is of the utmost importance that we accurately distinguish between sin in the flesh, and sin on the conscience. If we confound these two, our souls must, necessarily, be unhinged, and our worship

marred. An attentive consideration of 1 John 1: 8-10 will throw much light upon this subject, the understanding of which is so essential to a due appreciation of the entire doctrine of the peace offering, and more especially of that point therein at which we have now arrived. There is no one who will be so conscious of indwelling sin as the man who walks in the light. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." In the verse immediately preceding, we read, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son Cleanseth us from *all sin*." Here the distinction between sin in us, and sin on us, is fully brought out and established. To say that there is sin on the believer, in the presence of God, is to call in question the purging efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and to deny the truth of the divine record. If the blood of Jesus can perfectly purge, then the believer's conscience is perfectly purged. The word of God thus puts the matter; and we must ever remember that it is from God Himself we are to learn what the true condition of the believer is, in His sight. We are more disposed to be occupied in telling God what we are in ourselves, than to allow Him to tell us what we are in Christ. In other words, we are more taken up with our own self-consciousness, than with God's revelation of Himself. God speaks to us on the ground of what He is in Himself and of what He has accomplished, in Christ. Such is the nature and character of His revelation of which faith takes hold, and thus fills the soul with perfect peace. God's revelation is one thing; my consciousness is quite another.

But the same word which tells us we have no sin *on* us, tells us, with equal force and clearness, that we have sin *in* us. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Every one who has "truth" in him, will know that he has "*sin*" in him, likewise; for truth reveals every thing as it is. What, then, are we to do? It is our privilege so to walk in the power of the new nature, that the "*sin*" which dwells in us may not manifest itself in the form of "*sins*." The Christian's position is one of victory and liberty. He is not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but also from sin as a ruling principle in his life. "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal body, that ye

should *obey it* in the lusts thereof...For sin shall not have dominion over you: for we are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. 6: 6-14) Sin is there in all its native vileness; but the believer is "dead to it." How? He died in Christ. By nature he was dead *in sin*. By grace he is dead *to* it. What claim can anything or any one have upon a dead man? None whatever. Christ "died unto sin once," and the believer died in Him. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." What is the result of this, in reference to believers? "*Likewise reckon* ye also yourselves to be *dead indeed unto sin*, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Such is the believer's unalterable position, before God so that it is his holy privilege to enjoy freedom from sin as a *ruler* over him, though it be a *dweller* in him.

But, then, "if any man sin," what is to be done? The inspired apostle furnishes a full and most blessed answer: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 9) Confession is the mode in which the conscience is to be kept free. The apostle does not say, "If we pray for pardon, he is gracious and merciful to forgive us." No doubt, it is ever happy for a child to breathe the sense of need into his father's ear — to tell him of feebleness, to confess folly, infirmity, and failure. All this is most true; and, moreover, it is equally true that our Father is most gracious and merciful to meet His children in all their weakness and ignorance; but, while all this is true, the Holy Ghost declares, by the apostle, that, "if we *confess*," God is "*faithful* and *just* to forgive." confession, therefore, is the divine mode. A Christian, having erred, in thought, word, or deed, might pray for pardon, for days and months together, and not have any assurance, from 1 John 1: 9, that he was forgiven; whereas the moment he truly confesses his sin, before God, it is a simple matter of faith to know that he is perfectly forgiven and perfectly cleansed.

There is an immense moral difference between praying for forgiveness, and confessing our sins, whether we look at it in reference to the character of God, the sacrifice of Christ, or the

condition of the soul. It is quite possible that a person's prayer may involve the confession of his sin, whatever it may happen to be, and thus come to the same thing. But, then, it is always well to keep close to scripture, in what we think, and say, and do. It must be evident that when the Holy Ghost speaks of *confession*, He does not mean praying. And, it is equally evident that He knows there are moral elements in, and practical results flowing out of, confession, which do not belong to prayer. In point of fact, one has often found that a habit of importuning God for the forgiveness of sins, displayed ignorance as to the way in which God has revealed Himself in the Person and work of Christ; as to the relation in which the sacrifice of Christ has set the believer; and as to the divine mode of getting the conscience relieved from the burden, and purified from the soil, of sin.

God has been perfectly satisfied, as to all the believer's sins, in the cross of Christ. On that cross, a full atonement was presented for every jot and tittle of sin, in the believer's nature, and on his conscience. Hence, therefore, God does not need any further propitiation. He does not need ought to draw His heart toward the believer. We do not require to supplicate Him to be "faithful and just," when His faithfulness and justice have been so gloriously displayed, vindicated, and answered, in the death of Christ. Our sins can never come into God's presence, inasmuch as Christ who bore them all, and put them away, is there instead. But, if we sin, conscience will feel it, must feel it; yes, the Holy Ghost will make us feel it. He cannot allow so much as a single light thought to pass unjudged. What then? Has our sin made its way into the presence of God? Has it found its place in the unsullied light of the inner sanctuary? God forbid! The "Advocate" is there — "Jesus Christ the righteous," to maintain, in unbroken integrity, the relationship in which we stand. But, though sin cannot affect God's thoughts in reference to us, it can and does affect our thoughts in reference to Him.* Though it cannot make its way into His presence, it can make its way into ours, in a most distressing and humiliating manner. Though it cannot hide the Advocate from God's view, it can hide Him from ours. It gathers, like a thick, dark cloud, on our spiritual horizon, so that our souls cannot bask in the blessed beams of our Father's countenance, It cannot affect our relationship with God, but

it can very seriously affect our enjoyment thereof. What, therefore, are we to do? The word answers, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." By confession, we get our conscience cleared; the sweet sense of our relationship restored; the dark; cloud dispersed; the chilling, withering influence removed; our thoughts of God set straight. Such is the divine method; and we may truly say that the heart that knows what it is to have ever been in the place of confession, will feel the divine power of the apostle's words, "My little children, these things write I unto you, THAT YE SIN NOT." (1 John 2: 1)

{*The reader will bear in mind that the subject treated of in the text, leaves wholly untouched the important and most practical truth taught in John 14: 21-23, namely, the peculiar love of the Father for an obedient child, and the special communion of such a child with the Father and the Son. May this truth be written on all our hearts, by the pen of God the Holy Ghost}

Then, again, there is a style of praying for forgiveness, which involves a losing sight of the perfect ground of forgiveness, which has been laid in the sacrifice of the cross. If God forgives sins, He must be "faithful and just," in so doing. But it is quite clear that our prayers, be they ever so sincere and earnest, could not form the basis of God's faithfulness and justice, in forgiving us our sins. Nought save the work of the cross could do this. There the faithfulness and justice of God have had their fullest establishment, and that, too, in immediate reference to our actual sins, as well as to the root thereof, in our nature. God has already judged our sins in the Person of our Substitute, "on the tree;" and, in the act of confession, we judge ourselves. This is essential to divine forgiveness and restoration. The very smallest unconfessed, unjudged sin, on the conscience, will entirely mar our communion with God. Sin in us need not do this; but if we suffer sin to remain on us, we cannot have fellowship with God. He has put away our sins in such a manner, as that He can have us in His presence; and, so long as we abide in His presence, sin does not trouble us. But, if we get out of His presence, and commit sin, even in thought, our communion must, of necessity, be suspended, until, by confession, we have got rid of the sin. All this, I

need hardly add, is founded, exclusively, upon the perfect sacrifice and righteous advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, as to the difference between prayer and confession, as respects the condition of the heart before God, and its moral sense of the hatefulness of sin, it cannot, possibly, be over-estimated. It is a much easier thing to ask, in a general way, for the forgiveness of our sins than to confess those sins. Confession involves *self-judgement*; asking for forgiveness may not, and, in itself, does not. This alone would be sufficient to point out the difference. Self-judgement is one of the most valuable and healthful exercises of the Christian life; and, therefore, anything which produces it, must be highly esteemed by every earnest Christian.

The difference between asking for pardon, and confessing the sin, is continually exemplified in dealing with children. If a child has done anything wrong, he finds much less difficulty in asking his father to forgive him, than in openly and unreservedly confessing the wrong. In asking for forgiveness, the child may have in his mind a number of things which tend to lessen the sense of the evil; he may be secretly thinking that he was not so much to blame, after all, though, to be sure, it is only proper to ask his father to forgive him; whereas, in confessing the wrong, there is just the one thing, and that is self-judgement. Further, in asking for forgiveness the child may be influenced, mainly, by a desire to escape the consequences of his wrong; whereas, a judicious parent will seek to produce a just sense of its moral evil, which can only exist in connection with the full confession of the fault — in connection with self-judgement.

Thus it is, in reference to God's dealings with His children, when they do wrong. He must have the whole thing brought out and thoroughly judged. He will make us not only dread the consequences of sin which are unutterable — but hate the thing itself, because of its hatefulness, in his sight. Were it possible for us, when we commit sin, to be forgiven, merely for the asking, our sense of sin, and our shrinking from it, would not be nearly so intense; and, as a consequence, our estimate of the fellowship with which we are blessed, would not be nearly so high. The moral effect of all this upon the general tone of our spiritual constitution, and

also upon our whole character and practical career, must be obvious to every experienced Christian.*

{*The case of Simon Magus, in Acts 8, may present a difficulty to the reader. But of him, it is sufficient to say that one "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, "could never be set forth as a model for God's dear children. His case in nowise interferes with the doctrine of 1 John 1: 9. He was not in the relationship of a child, and, as a consequence, not a subject of the advocacy. I would further add, that the subject of the Lord's prayer is by no means involved in what is stated above. I wish to confine myself to the immediate passage under consideration. We must ever avoid laying down iron rules. A soul may cry to God, under any circumstances, and ask for what it needs. He is ever ready to hear and answer.}

This entire train of thought is intimately connected with, and fully borne out by, two leading principles laid down in "the law of the peace offering."

In verse 13, of the seventh of Leviticus, we read, "he shall offer for his offering leavened bread." And, yet, at verse 20, we read, "But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." Here, we have the two things clearly set before us, namely, sin in us, and sin on us. "Leaven" was permitted, because there was sin in the worshipper's nature. "Uncleanness" was forbidden, because there should be no sin on the worshipper's conscience. If sin be in question, communion must be out of the question. God has met and provided for the sin, which He knows to be in us, by the blood of atonement; and, hence, of the leavened bread in the peace offering, we read, "of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the Lord, and it shall be *the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings.*" (ver. 14) In other words, the "leaven," in the worshipper's nature, was perfectly met by the "blood" Of the sacrifice. The priest who eats the leavened bread, must be the sprinkler of the blood. God has put our sin out of His sight for ever. Though it be in us, it is not the object on which His eye rests. He sees only the blood; And, therefore, He can go on with us, and allow

us the most unhindered fellowship with Him. but if we allow the "*sin*" which is in us to develop itself in take shape of "*sins*," there must be confession, forgiveness, and cleansing, ere we can again eat of the flesh of the peace offering. The cutting off of the worshipper, because of ceremonial uncleanness, answers to the suspension of the believer's communion now, because of unconfessed sin. To attempt to have fellowship with God in our sins, would involve the blasphemous insinuation that He could walk in companionship with sin. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (1 John 1: 6)

In the light of the foregoing line of truth, we may easily see how much we err, when we imagine it to be a mark of spirituality to be occupied with our sins. Could sin or sins ever be the ground or material of our communion with God? Assuredly not. We have just seen that, so long as sin is the object before us, communion must be interrupted. Fellowship can only be "in the light;" and, undoubtedly, there is no sin in the light. There is nought to be seen there, save the blood which has put our sins away, and brought us nigh, and the Advocate which keeps us nigh. Sin has been for ever obliterated from that platform on which God and the worshipper stand in hallowed fellowship. What was it which constituted the material of communion between the Father and the prodigal? Was it the rags of the latter? Was it the husks of "the far country?" By no means. It was not anything that the prodigal brought with him. It was the rich provision of the Father's love — "the fatted calf." Thus it is with God and every true worshipper. They feed together, in holy and elevated communion, upon Him whose precious blood has brought them into everlasting association, in that light to which no sin can ever approach.

Nor need we, for an instant, suppose that true humility is either evidenced or promoted by looking at, or dwelling upon, our sins. An unhallowed and melancholy mopishness may, thus, be super induced; but the deepest humility springs from a totally different source. Whether was the prodigal an humbler man, "when he came to himself" in the far country, or when he came to the Father's bosom and the Father's house? Is it not evident that the grace which elevates us to the loftiest heights of fellowship with

God, is that alone which leads us into the most' profound depths of a genuine humility Unquestionably. The humility which springs from the removal of our sins, must ever be deeper than that which springs from the discovery of them. The former connects us with God; the latter has to do with self. The way to be truly humble is to walk with God in the intelligence and power of the relationship in which He has set us. He has made us His children; and if only we walk as such, we shall be humble.

Ere leaving this part of our subject, I would offer a remark as to the Lord's Supper, which, as being a prominent act of the Church's communion, may, with strict propriety, be looked at in connection with the doctrine of the peace offering. The intelligent celebration of the Lord's Supper must ever depend upon the recognition of its purely eucharistic or thanksgiving character. It is, very especially, a feast of thanksgiving — thanksgiving for an accomplished redemption. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10: 16) Hence, a soul, bowed down under the heavy burden of sin, cannot, with spiritual intelligence, eat the Lord's Supper, inasmuch as that feast is expressive of the complete removal of sin by the death of Christ. Ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11) in the death of Christ, faith sees the end of everything that pertained to our old-creation standing; and, seeing that the Lord's Supper" shows forth" that death, it is to be viewed as the memento of the glorious fact that the believer's burden of sin was borne by One who put it away for ever. It declares that the chain of our sins, which once tied and bound us, has been eternally snapped by the death of Christ, and can never tie and bind us again. We gather round the Lord's table in all the joy of conquerors. We look back to the cross where the battle was fought and won; and we look forward to the glory where we shall enter into the full and eternal results of the victory.

True, we have "leaven" *in* us; but we have no "uncleanness" *on* us. We are not to gaze upon our sins; but upon Him who bore them on the cross, and put them away for ever. We are not to "deceive ourselves" by the vain notion "that we have no sin" in us;

nor are we to deny the truth of God's word, and the efficacy of Christ's blood, by refusing to rejoice in the precious truth that we have no sin on us, for "the blood Of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. It is truly deplorable to observe the heavy cloud that gathers round the Supper of the Lord, in the judgement of so many professing Christians. It tends, as much as anything else, to reveal the immense amount of misapprehension which obtains, in reference to the very elementary truths of the gospel. In fact, we know that when the Lord's Supper is resorted to on any ground save that of known salvation — enjoyed forgiveness — conscious deliverance, the soul becomes wrapped up in thicker and darker clouds than ever. That which is only a memorial of Christ is used to displace Him. That which celebrates an accomplished redemption is used as a stepping-stone thereto. It is thus that the ordinances are abused, and souls plunged in darkness, confusion, and error.

How different from this is the beautiful ordinance of the peace offering! In this latter, looked at in its typical import, we see that the moment the blood was shed, God and the worshipper could feed in happy, peaceful fellowship. Nothing more was needed. Peace was established by the blood; and, on that ground, the communion proceeded. A single question as to the establishment of peace must be the death-blow to communion. If we are to be occupied with the vain attempt to make peace with God, we must be total strangers to either communion or worship. If the blood of the peace offering has not been shed, it is impossible that we can feed upon "the wave breast" or "the heave shoulder." But if, on the other hand, the blood has been shed, then peace is made already. God Himself has made it, and this is enough for faith; and, therefore, by faith, we have fellowship with God, in the intelligence and joy of accomplished redemption. We taste the freshness of God's own joy in that which He has wrought. We feed upon Christ, in all the fullness and blessedness of God's presence.

This latter point is connected with, and based upon, another leading truth laid down in "the law of the peace offering." "And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered: he shall not leave any of it until the morning." That is to say, the communion of the worshipper must

never be separated from the sacrifice on which that communion is founded. So long as one has spiritual energy to maintain the connection, the worship and communion are also maintained, in freshness and acceptableness; but no longer. *We must keep close to the sacrifice*, in the spirit of our minds, the affections of our hearts, and the experience of our souls. This will impart power and permanency to our worship. We may commence some act or expression of worship, with our hearts in immediate occupation with Christ; and, ere we reach the close, we may become occupied with what we are doing or saying, or with the persons who are listening to us; and, in this way, fall into what may be termed "iniquity in our holy things." This is deeply solemn, and should make us very watchful. We may begin our worship in the Spirit and end in the flesh. Our care should ever be, not to suffer ourselves to proceed for a single moment beyond the energy of the Spirit, at the time, for the Spirit will always keep us occupied directly with Christ. If the Holy Ghost produces "five words" of worship or thanksgiving, let us utter the five and have done. If we proceed further, we are eating the flesh of our sacrifice beyond the time; and, so far from its being "accepted," it is, really, "an abomination." Let us remember this, and be watchful. It need not alarm us. God would have us led by the Spirit, and so filled with Christ in all our worship. He can only accept of that which is divine; and, therefore, He would have us presenting that only which is divine.

"But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: *and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten.*" (Lev. 7: 16) When the soul goes forth to God in a voluntary act of worship, such worship will be the result of a larger measure of spiritual energy than where it merely springs from some special mercy experienced at the time. If one has been visited with some marked favour from the Lord's own hand, the soul, at once, ascends in thanksgiving. In this case, the worship is awakened by, and connected with, that favour or mercy, whatever it may happen to be, and there it ends. But, where the heart is led forth by the Holy Ghost in some voluntary or deliberate expression of praise, it will be of a more enduring character. But spiritual worship will always connect itself with the precious sacrifice of Christ.

"The remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice, on the third day, shall be burnt with fire. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity." Nothing is of any value, in the judgement of God, which is not immediately connected with Christ. There may be a great deal of what looks like worship, which is, after all, the mere excitement and outgoing of natural feeling. There may be much apparent devotion, which is, merely, fleshly pietism. Nature may be acted upon, in a religious way, by a variety of things, such as pomp, ceremony, and parade, tones and attitudes, robes and vestments, an eloquent liturgy, all the varied attractions of a splendid ritualism, while there may be a total absence of spiritual worship. Yea, it not infrequently happens that the very same tastes and tendencies which are called forth and gratified by the splendid appliances of so-called religious worship, would find most suited aliment at the opera or in the concert room.

All this has to be watched against by those who desire to remember that "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4) Religion, so called, is, at this moment, decking herself with her most powerful charms. Casting off the grossness of the middle ages, she is calling to her aid all the resources of refined taste, and of a cultivated and enlightened age. Sculpture, music, and painting, are pouring their rich treasures into her lap, in order that she may, therewith, prepare a powerful opiate to lull the thoughtless multitude into a slumber, which shall only be broken in upon by the unutterable horrors of death, judgement, and the lake of fire. She, too, can say, "I have *peace offerings* with me; this day have I paid my *vows* I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon." (Prov. 7) Thus does corrupt religion allure, by her powerful influence, those who will not hearken to wisdom's heavenly voice.

Reader, beware of all this. See that your worship stands inseparably connected with the work of the cross. See that Christ is the ground, Christ the material, and the Holy Ghost the power of

your worship. Take care that your outward act of worship does not stretch itself beyond the inward power. It demands much watchfulness to keep clear of this evil. Its incipient workings are most difficult to be detected and counteracted. We may commence a hymn in the true spirit of worship, and, through lack of spiritual power, we may, ere we reach the close, fall into the evil which answers to the ceremonial act of eating the flesh of the peace offering on the third day. Our only security is in keeping close to Jesus. If we lift up our hearts in "thanksgiving," for some special mercy, let us do so in the power of the name and sacrifice of Christ. If our souls go forth in "voluntary" worship, let it be in the energy of the Holy Ghost. In this way shall our worship exhibit that freshness, that fragrance, that depth of tone, that moral elevation, which must result from having the Father as the object, the Son as the ground, and the Holy Ghost as the power of our worship.

Thus may it be, O Lord, with all thy worshipping people, until we find ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, in the security of thine own eternal presence, beyond the reach of all- the unhallowed influences of false worship and corrupt religion, and also beyond the reach of the various hindrances which arise from these bodies of sin and death which we carry about with us!

NOTE. — It is interesting to observe that, although the peace offering itself stands third in order, yet "the law" thereof is given us last of all. This circumstance is not; without its import. There is none of the offerings in which the communion of the worshipper is so fully unfolded as in the peace offering. In the burnt offering, it is Christ offering Himself to God. In the meat offering, we have Christ's perfect humanity. Then, passing on to the sin offering, we learn that sin, in its root, is fully met. In the trespass offering, there is a full answer to the actual sin in the life. But, in none is the doctrine of the communion of the worshipper unfolded. This latter belongs to "the peace offering;" and, hence, I believe, the position which the law of that offering occupies. It comes in, at the close of all, thereby teaching us that, when it becomes a question of the soul's feeding upon Christ, it must be a full Christ, looked at in every possible phase of His life, His character, His Person, His work, His

offices. And, furthermore, that, when we shall have done, for ever, with sin and sins, we shall delight in Christ, and feed upon Him, throughout the everlasting ages. It would, I believe, be a serious defect in our study of the offerings, were we to pass over a circumstance so worthy of notice as the above. If "the law of the peace offering" were given in the order in which the offering itself occurs, it would come in immediately after the law of the meat offering; but, instead of that, "the law of the sin offering, and "the Law of the trespass offering "are given, and, then, "the law of the peace offering" closes the entire.

Leviticus 4 - 5: 13.

Having Considered the "sweet savour" Offerings, We now approach the "sacrifices for sin." These were divided into two classes, namely, sin offerings and trespass offerings. Of the former, there were three grades; first, the offering for "the priest that is anointed," and for "the whole congregation." These two were the same in their rites and ceremonies. (Compare. ver. 3-12, with ver. 13-21) It was the same in result, whether it were the representative of the assembly, or the assembly itself, that sinned. In either case there were three things involved: God's dwelling-place in the assembly, the worship of the assembly, and individual conscience. Now, inasmuch as all three depended upon the blood, we find, in the first grade of sin offering, there were three things done with the blood. It was sprinkled "seven times before the Lord, *before the veil of the sanctuary.*" This secured Jehovah's relationship with the people, and His dwelling in their midst. Again, we read, "The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation." This secured the worship of the assembly. By putting the blood upon "the golden altar," the true basis of worship was preserved; so that the flame of the incense and the fragrance thereof might continually ascend. Finally, "He shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." Here we have the claims of individual conscience fully answered; for the brazen altar was the place of individual approach. It was the place where God met the sinner.

In the two remaining grades, for "a ruler" or "one of the common people: it was merely a question of individual conscience; and, therefore, there was only one thing done with the blood. It was all poured "at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering." (Comp. ver. 7 with ver. 25, 30) There is divine precision in all this, which demands the close attention of my reader, if only he desires to enter into the marvellous detail of this type.*

{*There is this difference between the offering for "a ruler," and for "one of the common people:" in the former, it was "a male without blemish;" in the latter, "a female without blemish." The sin

of a ruler would, necessarily, exert a wider influence than that of a common person; and, therefore, a more powerful application of the value of the blood was needed. In Lev. 5: 13, we find cases demanding a still lower application of the sin offering — cases of swearing and of touching any uncleanness, in which "the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour "was admitted as a sin offering. (See Lev. 5: 11-13) What a contrast between the view of atonement presented by a ruler's bullock, and a poor man's handful of flour! And yet, in the latter, just as truly as in the former, we read, "it shall be forgiven him."

The reader will observe that Lev. 5: 1-13, forms a part of Lev. 6. Both are comprehended under one head, and present the doctrine of sin offering, in all its applications, from the bullock to the handful of flour. Each class of offering is introduced by the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses." Thus, for example, the sweet savour offerings (Lev. 1 - 3) are introduced by the words, "The Lord called unto Moses." These words are not repeated until Lev. 4: 1, where they introduce the sin offering. They occur again at Lev. 5: 14, where they introduce the trespass offering for wrongs done "in the holy things of the Lord;" and again at Lev. 6: 1, where they introduce the trespass offering for wrong done to one's neighbour.

This classification is beautifully simple, and will help the reader to understand the different classes: of offering. As to the different grades in each class, whether "a bullock," "a ram," "a female," "a bird," "or "a handful of flour: they would seem to be so many varied applications of the same grand truth. }

The effect of individual sin could not extend beyond individual conscience. The sin of "a ruler," or of "one of the common people," could not, in its influence, reach "the altar of incense" — the place of priestly worship. Neither could it reach to "the veil of the sanctuary" — the sacred boundary of God's dwelling place in the midst of His people. It is well to ponder this. We must never raise a question of personal sin or failure, in the place of priestly worship, or in the assembly. It must be settled in the place of personal approach. Many err as to this. They come into the assembly, or into the ostensible place of priestly worship, with their conscience defiled, and thus drag down the whole assembly and mar

its worship. This should be closely looked into, and carefully guarded against. We need to walk more watchfully, in order that our conscience may ever be in the light. And when we fail, as, alas! we do in many things, let us have to do with God, in secret, about our failure, in order that true worship, and the true position of the assembly may always be kept, with fullness and clearness, before the soul.

Having said thus much as to the three grades of sin offering, we shall proceed to examine, in detail, the principles unfolded in the first of these. In so doing, we shall be able to form, in some measure, a just conception of the principles of all. Before, however entering upon the direct comparison already proposed, I would call my reader's attention to a very prominent point set forth in the second verse of this fourth chapter. It is contained in the expression, "If a soul shall sin through *ignorance*." This presents a truth of the deepest blessedness, in connection with the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. In contemplating that atonement, we see infinitely more than the mere satisfaction of the claims of conscience, even though that conscience had reached the highest point of refined sensibility. It is our privilege to see, therein, that which has fully satisfied all the claims of divine holiness, divine justice, and divine majesty. The holiness of God's dwelling-place, and the ground of His association with His people, could never be regulated by the standard of man's conscience, no matter how high the standard might be. There are many things which man's conscience would pass over — many things which might escape man's cognisance — many things which his heart might deem all right, which God could not tolerate; and which, as a consequence, would interfere with man's approach to, his worship of, and his relationship with, God. Wherefore, if the atonement of Christ merely made provision for such sins as come within the compass of man's apprehension, we should find ourselves very far short of the true ground of peace. We need to understand that sin has been atoned for, according to God's measurement thereof—that the claims of His throne have been perfectly answered — that sin, as seen in the light of His inflexible holiness, has been divinely judged. This is what gives settled peace to the soul. A full atonement has been made for the believer's sins of ignorance, as well as for his known sins. The

sacrifice of Christ lays the foundation of his relationship and fellowship with God, according; to the divine estimate of the claims thereof.

A clear sense of this is of unspeakable value. Unless this feature of the atonement be laid hold of, there cannot be settled peace; nor can there be any just moral sense of the extent and fullness of the work of Christ, or of the true nature of the relationship founded thereon. God knew what was needed in order that man might be in His presence without a single misgiving; and He has made ample provision for it in the cross. Fellowship between God and man were utterly impossible if sin had not been disposed of, according to God's thoughts about it: for, albeit man's conscience were satisfied, the question would ever be suggesting itself, Has God been satisfied If this question could not be answered in the affirmative, fellowship could never subsist.* The thought would be continually intruding itself upon the heart, that things were manifesting themselves in the details of life, which divine holiness could not tolerate. True, we might be doing such things "through ignorance but this could not alter the matter before God, inasmuch as all is known to Him. Hence, there would be continual apprehension, doubt, and misgiving. All these things are divinely met by the fact that sin has been atoned for, not according to our "ignorance," but according to God's knowledge. The assurance of this gives great rest to the heart and conscience. All God's claims have been answered by His own work. He Himself has made the provision; and, therefore, the more refined the believer's conscience becomes, under the combined action of the word and Spirit of God, the more he grows in a divinely-adjusted sense of all that morally befits the sanctuary — the more keenly alive he becomes to every thing which is unsuited to the divine presence, the fuller, clearer, deeper, and more vigorous will be his apprehension of the infinite value of that sin offering which has not only travelled beyond the utmost bounds of human conscience, but also met, in absolute perfection, all the requirements of divine holiness.

{*I would desire it to be particularly remembered, that the point before us in the text is simply atonement. The Christian reader is fully aware, I doubt not, that the possession of "the divine nature,

is essential to fellowship with God. I not only need a title to approach God: but a nature to enjoy Him. The soul that "believes in the name of the only-begotten Son of God" has both the one and the other. (See John 12, John 13; John 3: 36; John 5: 24; John 20: 31; 1 John 5: 11-13)}

Nothing can more forcibly express man's incompetence to deal with sin, than the fact of there being such a thing as a "sin of ignorance." How could he deal with that which he knows not? How could he dispose of that which has never even come within the range of his conscience? Impossible. Man's ignorance of sin proves his total inability to put it away. If he does not know of it, what can he do about it? Nothing. He is as powerless as he is ignorant. Nor is this all. The fact of a "sin of ignorance" demonstrates, most clearly, the uncertainty which must attend upon every settlement of the question of sin, in which no higher claims have been responded to than those put forth by the most refined human conscience. There can never be settled peace upon this ground. There will always be the painful apprehension that there is something wrong underneath. If the heart be not led into settled repose by the scripture testimony that the inflexible claims of divine Justice have been answered, there must, of necessity, be a sensation of uneasiness, and every such sensation presents a barrier to our worship, our communion, and our testimony. If I am uneasy in reference to the settlement of the question of sin, I cannot worship; I cannot enjoy communion, either with God or His people; nor can I be an intelligent or effective witness for Christ. The heart must be at rest, before God, as to the perfect remission of sin, ere we can "Worship him in spirit and in truth." If there be guilt on the conscience, there must be terror in the heart; and, assuredly, a heart filled with terror cannot be a happy or a worshipping heart. It is only from a heart filled with that sweet and sacred repose which the blood of Christ imparts, that true and acceptable worship can ascend to the Father. The same principle holds good with respect to our fellowship with the People of God, and our service and testimony amongst men. All must rest upon the foundation of settled peace; and this peace rests upon the foundation of a perfectly purged conscience; and this purged conscience rests upon the foundation of the perfect remission of all our sins, whether they be sins of knowledge or sins of ignorance.

We shall now proceed to compare the sin offering with the burnt offering, in doing which, we shall find two very different aspects of Christ. But, although the aspects are different, it is one and the same Christ; and, hence, the sacrifice, in each case, was "without blemish." This is easily understood. It matters not in what aspect we contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ, He must ever be seen as the same pure, spotless, holy, perfect One. True, He did, in His abounding grace, stoop to be the sin-bearer of His people; but it was a perfect, spotless Christ who did so; and it would be nothing short of diabolical wickedness to take occasion, from the depth of His humiliation, to tarnish the personal glory of the humbled One. The intrinsic excellence, the unsullied purity, and the divine glory of our blessed Lord appear in the sin offering, as fully as in the burnt offering. It matters not in what relationship He stands, what office He fills, what work He performs, what position He occupies, His personal glories shine out, in all their divine effulgence.

This truth of one and the same Christ, whether in the burnt offering, or in the sin offering, is seen, not only in the fact that, in each case, the offering was "without blemish," but, also, in "the Law of the sin offering," where we read, "this is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy." (Lev. 6: 25) Both types point to one and the same great Antitype, though they present Him in such contrasted aspects of His work. In the burnt offering, Christ is seen meeting the divine affections; in the sin offering, He is seen meeting the depths of human need. That presents Him to us as the Accomplisher of the will of God; this, as the Bearer of the sin of man. In the former, we are taught the preciousness of the sacrifice; in the latter, the hatefulness of sin. Thus much, as to the two offerings, in the main. The most minute examination of the details will only tend to establish the mind in the truth of this general statement.

In the first place, when considering the burnt offering, we observed that it was a voluntary offering. "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will."* Now, the word "voluntary" does not occur in the sin offering. This is precisely what we might expect. It is in full keeping with the specific object of the Holy Ghost, in the burnt

offering, to set it forth as a free-will offering. It was Christ's meat and drink to do the will of God, whatever that will might be. He never thought of inquiring what ingredients were in the cup which the Father was putting into His hand. It was quite sufficient for Him that the Father had mingled it. Thus it was with the Lord Jesus as foreshadowed by the burnt offering. But, in the sin offering, we have quite a different line of truth unfolded. This type introduces Christ to our thoughts, not as the "voluntary" Accomplisher of the will of God, but as the Bearer of that terrible thing called "sin," and the Endurer of all its appalling consequences, of which the most appalling, to Him, was the hiding of God's countenance. Hence, the word "voluntary" would not harmonise with the object of the Spirit, in the sin offering. It would be as completely out of place, in that type, as it is divinely in place, in the burnt offering. Its presence and its absence are alike divine; and both alike exhibit the perfect, the divine precision of the types of Leviticus.

{*some may find difficulty in the fact that the word "voluntary" has reference to the worshipper and not to the sacrifice; but this can, in no wise, affect the doctrine put forward in the text, which is founded upon the fact that a special word used in the burnt offering is omitted in the sin offering. The contrast holds good, whether we think of the offerer or the offering. }

Now, the point of contrast which we have been considering, explains, or rather harmonises, two expressions used by our Lord. He says, on one occasion, "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And, again, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The former of these expressions was the full carrying out of the words with which He entered upon His course, namely, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and, moreover, it is the utterance of Christ, as the burnt offering. The latter, on the other hand, is the utterance of Christ, when contemplating the place which He was about to occupy, as the sin offering. What that place was, and what was involved to Him, in taking it, we shall see, as we proceed; but it is interesting and instructive to find the entire doctrine of the two offerings involved, as it were, in the fact that a single word introduced in the one is omitted in the other. If, in the burnt offering, we find the perfect readiness of heart with which

Christ offered Himself for the accomplishment of the will of God; then, in the sin offering, we find how perfectly He entered into all the consequences of man's sin, and how He travelled into the most remote distance of man's position as regards God. He delighted to do the will of God; He shrank from losing, for a moment, the light of His blessed countenance. No one offering could have foreshadowed Him in both these phases. We needed a type to present Him to us as One delighting to do the will of God; and we needed a type to present Him to us as One whose holy nature shrank from the consequences of imputed sin. Blessed be God, we have both. The burnt offering furnishes the one, the sin offering the other. Wherefore, the more fully we enter into the devotion of Christ's heart to God, the more fully we shall apprehend His abhorrence of sin; and *vice versa*. Each throws the other into relief; and the use of the word "voluntary" in the one, and not in the other, fixes the leading import of each.

But, it may be said, "Was it not the will of God that Christ should offer Himself as an atonement for sin? And, if so, how could there be ought of shrinking from the accomplishment of that will?" Assuredly, it was "the determinate counsel" of God that Christ should suffer; and, moreover, it was Christ's joy to do the will of God. But how are we to understand the expression, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me?" Is it not the utterance of Christ? And is there no express type of the Utterer thereof? Unquestionably There would be a serious blank among the types of the Mosaic economy, were there not one to reflect the Lord Jesus in the exact attitude in which the above expression presents Him. But the burnt offering does not thus reflect Him. There is not a single circumstance connected with that offering which would correspond with such language. The sin offering alone furnishes the fitting type of the Lord Jesus as the One who poured forth those accents of intense agony, for in it alone do we find the circumstances which evoked such accents from the depths of His spotless soul. The awful shadow of the cross, with its shame, its curse, and its exclusion from the light of God's countenance, was passing across His spirit, and He could not even contemplate it without an "If it be possible let this cup pass from me." But, no sooner had He uttered these words, than His profound subjection manifests itself in, "thy Will be done."

What a bitter cup" it must have been to elicit, from a perfectly subject heart, the words, "let it pass from me!" What perfect subjection there must have been when, in the presence of so bitter a cup, the heart could breathe forth, "thy will be done!"

We shall now consider the, typical act of "laying on of hands." This act was common both to the burnt offering and the sin offering; but, in the case of the former, it identified the offerer with an unblemished offering in the case of the latter, it involved the transfer of the sin of the offerer to the head of the offering. Thus it was in the type; and, when we look at the Antitype, we learn a truth of the most comforting and edifying nature — a truth which, were it more clearly understood, and fully experienced, would impart a far more settled peace than is ordinarily possessed.

What, then, is the doctrine set forth in the laying on of hands? It is this: Christ was "made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5) He took our position with all its consequences, in order that we might get His position with all its consequences. He was treated as sin, upon the cross, that we might be treated as righteousness, in the presence of infinite Holiness. He was cast out of God's presence because He had sin upon Him, by imputation, that we might be received into God's house and into His bosom, because we have a perfect righteousness by imputation. He had to endure the hiding of God's countenance, that we might bask in the light of that countenance. He had to pass through three hours' darkness, that we might walk in everlasting light. He was forsaken of God, for a time, that we might enjoy His presence for ever. all that was due to us, as ruined sinners, was laid upon Him, in order that all that was due to Him, as the Accomplisher of redemption, might be ours. There was everything against Him When He hung upon the cursed tree, in order that there might be nothing against us He was identified with us, in the reality of death and judgement, in order that we might be identified with Him, in the reality of life and righteousness. He drank the cup of wrath, — the cup of trembling, that we might drink the cup of salvation — the cup of infinite favour. He was treated according to our deserts, that we might be treated according to His.

Such is the wondrous truth illustrated by the ceremonial act of imposition of hands. When the worshipper had laid his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, it ceased to be a question as to what he was, or what he deserved, and became entirely a question of what the offering was in the judgement of Jehovah. If the offering was without blemish, so was the offerer; if the offering was accepted, so was the offerer. They are perfectly identified. The act of laying on of hands constituted them one, in God's view. He looked at the offerer through the medium of the offering. Thus it was, in the case of the burnt offering. But, in the sin offering, when the offerer had laid his hand upon the head of the offering, it became a question of what the offerer was, and what he deserved. The offering was treated according to the deserts of the offerer. They were perfectly identified. The act of laying on of hands constituted them one, in the judgement of God. The sin of the offerer was dealt with in the sin offering; the person of the offerer: was accepted in the burnt offering. This made a vast difference. Hence, though the act of laying on of hands was common to both types, and, moreover, though it was expressive, in the case of each, of identification, yet here the consequences as different as possible. The just treated as the unjust; the unjust accepted in the just. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." This is the doctrine. Our sins brought Christ to the cross; but He brings us to God. And, if He brings us to God, it is in His own acceptableness, as risen from the dead, having put away our sins, according to the perfectness of His own work. He bore away our sins far from the sanctuary of God, in order that He might bring us nigh, even into the holiest of all, in full confidence of heart, having the conscience purged by His precious blood from every stain of sin.

Now, the more minutely we compare all the details of the burnt offering and the sin offering, the more clearly shall we apprehend the truth of what has been above stated, in reference to the laying on of hands, and the results thereof, in each case.

In the first chapter of this volume, we noticed the fact that "the sons of Aaron" are introduced in the burnt offering, but not in the sin offering. As priests they were privileged to stand around the altar, and behold the flame of an acceptable sacrifice ascending to the

Lord. But in the sin offering, in its primary aspect, it was a question of the solemn judgement of sin, and not of priestly worship or admiration; and, therefore, the sons of Aaron do not appear. It is as convicted sinners that we have to do with Christ, as the Antitype of the sin offering. It is as worshipping priests, clothed in garments of salvation, that we contemplate Christ, as the Antitype of the burnt offering.

But, further, my reader may observe that the burnt offering was "flayed," the sin offering was not. The burnt offerings was "cut into his pieces," the sin offering was not. "The inwards and the legs" of the burnt offering were "washed in water," which act was entirely omitted in the sin offering. Lastly, the burnt offering was burnt upon the altar, the sin offering was burnt without the camp. These are weighty points of difference arising simply out of the distinctive character of the offerings. We know there is nothing in the word of God without its own special meaning; and every intelligent and careful student of Scripture will notice the above points of difference; and, when he notices them, he will, naturally, seek to ascertain their real import. *Ignorance* of this import there may be; but *indifference* to it there should not. In any section of inspiration, but especially one so rich as that which lies before us, to pass over a single point, would be to offer dishonour to the Divine Author, and to deprive our own souls of much profit. We should hang over the most minute details, either to adore God's wisdom in them, or to confess our own ignorance of them. To pass them by, in a spirit of indifference, is to imply that the Holy Ghost has taken the trouble to write what we do not deem worthy of the desire to understand. This is what no right-minded Christian would presume to think. If the Spirit, in writing upon the ordinance of the sin offering, has omitted the various rites above alluded to — rites which get a prominent place in the ordinance of the burnt offering, there must, assuredly, be some good reason for, and some important meaning in, His doing so. These we would seek to apprehend; and, no doubt, they arise out of the special design of the divine mind in each offering. The sin offering sets forth that aspect of Christ's work in which He is seen taking, judicially, the place which belonged to us morally. For this reason we could not look for that intense expression of what He was, in all His secret springs of action, as unfolded in the typical act of

"flaying." Neither could there be that enlarged exhibition of what He was, not merely as a whole, but in the most minute features of His character, as seen in the act of "cutting it into his pieces." Nor, yet, could there be that manifestation of what He was, personally, practically, and intrinsically, as set forth in the significant act of "washing the inwards and legs in water."

All these things belonged to the burnt-offering phase of our blessed Lord, and to that alone, because, in it, we see Him offering Himself to the eye, to the heart, and to the altar of Jehovah, without any question of imputed sin, of wrath, or of judgement. In the sin offering, on the contrary, instead of having, as the great prominent idea, what Christ is, we have what sin is. Instead of the preciousness of Jesus, we have the odiousness of sin. In the burnt offering, inasmuch as it is Christ Himself offered to, and accepted by, God, we have every thing done that could possibly make manifest what He was, in every respect. In the sin offering, because it is sin, as judged By God, the very reverse is the case. All this is so plain as to need no effort of the mind to understand it. It naturally flows out of the distinctive character of the type.

However, although the leading object in the sin offering, is to shadow forth what Christ became for us, and not what He was in Himself; there is, nevertheless, one rite connected with this type, which most fully expresses His personal acceptableness to Jehovah. This rite is laid down in the following words, "And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away, as it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offering; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering." (Lev. 4: 8-10) Thus, the intrinsic excellency of Christ is not omitted, even in the sin-offering. The fat burnt upon the altar is the apt expression of the divine appreciation of the preciousness of Christ's Person, no matter what place He might, in perfect grace, take, on our behalf or in our stead; He was made sin for us, and the sin offering is the divinely-appointed shadow of Him, in this respect. But, inasmuch as it was the Lord Jesus Christ, God's elect, His Holy

One, His pure, His spotless, His eternal Son that was made sin, therefore the fat of the sin offering was burnt upon the altar, as a proper material for that fire which was the impressive exhibition of divine holiness.

But, even in this very point, we see what a contrast there is between the sin offering and the burnt offering. In the case of the latter, it was not merely the fat, but the whole sacrifice that was burnt upon the altar, because it was Christ, without any question of sin-bearing whatever. In the case of the former, there was nothing but the fat to be burnt upon the altar, because it was a question of sin-bearing, though Christ was the sin bearer. The divine glories of Christ's Person shine out, even from amid the darkest shades of that cursed tree to which He consented to be nailed as a curse for us. The hatefulness of that with which, in the exercise of divine love, He connected His blessed Person, on the cross, could not prevent the sweet odour of His preciousness from ascending to the throne of God. Thus, have we unfolded to us the profound mystery of God's face hidden from that which Christ became, and God's heart refreshed by what Christ was. This imparts a peculiar charm to the sin offering. The bright beams of Christ's Personal glory shining out from amid the awful gloom of Calvary — His Personal worth set forth, in the very deepest depths of His humiliation — God's delight in the One from whom He had, in vindication of His inflexible justice and holiness, to hide His face — all this is set forth in the fact that the fat of the sin offering was burnt upon the altar.

Having, thus, endeavoured to point out, in the first place, what was done with "the blood;" and, in the second place, what was done with "the fat;" we have, now, to consider what was done with "the flesh." "And the skin of the bullock, and *all his flesh.. even the whole bullock* shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him On the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt." (Ver. 11, 12) In this act, we have the main feature of the sin offering—that which distinguished it both from the burnt offering and the peace offering. Its flesh was not burnt upon the altar, as in the burnt offering; neither was it eaten by the priest or the worshipper, as in the peace offering. It was wholly burnt without the camp.* "No sin

offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation, to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire." (Lev. 6: 30) "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought unto the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13: 11, 12)

{*The statement in the text refers only to the sin offerings of which the blood was brought into the holy place. There were sin offerings of which Aaron and his sons partook. (See Lev 6: 26-29; Num. 18: 9, 10)}

Now, in comparing what was done with the "blood" with what was done with the "flesh" or "body" of the sacrifice, two great branches of truth present themselves to our view, namely, worship and discipleship. The blood brought into the sanctuary is the foundation of the former. The body burnt outside the camp is the foundation of the latter. Before ever we can worship, in Peace of conscience, and liberty of heart, we must know, on the authority of the word, and by the power of the Spirit, that the entire question of *sin* has been for ever settled by the blood of the divine sin offering—that His blood has been sprinkled, perfectly, before the Lord — that all God's claims, and all our necessities, as ruined and guilty sinners, have been, for ever, answered. This gives perfect peace; and, in the enjoyment of this peace, we worship God. When an Israelite, of old, had offered his sin offering, his conscience was set at rest, in so far as the offering was capable of imparting rest. True, it was but a temporary rest, being the fruit of a temporary sacrifice. But, clearly, whatever kind of rest the offering was fitted to impart, that the offerer might enjoy. Hence, therefore, our Sacrifice being divine and eternal, our rest is divine and eternal also. As is the sacrifice such is the rest which is founded thereon. A Jew never had an eternally purged conscience, simply because he had not an eternally efficacious sacrifice. He might in a certain way, have his conscience purged for a day, a month, or a year; but he could not have it purged for ever. "But Christ being come, an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of

goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained *eternal* redemption. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 11: 11-14)

Here, we have the full, explicit statement of the doctrine. The blood of goats and calves procured a temporary redemption; the blood of Christ procures eternal redemption. The former purified outwardly; the latter, inwardly. that purged the flesh, for a time; this, the conscience, for ever. The whole question hinges, not upon the character or condition of the offerer, but upon the value of the offering. The question is not, by any means, whether a Christian is a better man than a Jew, but whether the blood of Christ is better than the blood of a bullock. Assuredly, it is better. How much better? Infinitely better. The Son of God imparts all the dignity of His own divine Person to the sacrifice which He offered; and, if the blood of a bullock purified the flesh for a year, "how much more" shall the blood of the Son of God purge the conscience for ever? If that took away *some* sin, how much more shall this take away "*all*?"

Now, why was the mind of a Jew set at rest, for the time being, when he had offered his sin offering? How did he know that the special sin for which he had brought his sacrifice was forgiven? Because God had said, "it shall be forgiven him." His peace of heart, in reference to that particular sin, rested upon the testimony of the God of Israel, and the blood of the victim. So, now, the peace of the believer, in reference to "all SIN," rests upon the authority of God's word, and "the precious blood of Christ." If a Jew had sinned, and neglected to bring his sin offering, he should have been "Cut Off from among his people;" but when he took his place as a sinner — when he laid his hand upon the head of a sin offering, then, the offering was "Cut Off" instead of him, and he was free, so far. The offering was treated as the offerer deserved; and, hence, for him not to know that his sin was forgiven him, would have been to make God a liar, and to treat the blood of the divinely-appointed sin offering as nothing.

And, if this were true, in reference to one who had only the blood of a goat to rest upon, "how much more" powerfully does it apply to one, who has the precious blood of Christ to rest upon? The believer sees in Christ One who has been judged for all his sin — One who, when He hung upon the cross, sustained the entire burden of his sin — One who, having made Himself responsible for that sin, could not be where He now is, if the whole question of sin had not been settled, according to all the claims of infinite justice. So absolutely did Christ take the believer's place on the cross — so entirely was he identified with Him — so completely was all the believer's sin imputed to Him, there and then, that all question of the believer's liability — all thought of his guilt all idea of his exposure to judgement and wrath, is eternally set aside.* It was all settled on the cursed tree, between Divine Justice and the Spotless Victim. And now the believer is as absolutely identified with Christ, on the throne, as Christ was identified with him on the tree. Justice has no charge to bring against the believer, because it has no charge to bring against Christ. Thus it stands for ever. If a charge could be preferred against the believer, it would be calling in question the reality of Christ's identification with him, on the cross, and the perfectness of Christ's work, on his behalf. If, when the worshipper, of old, was on his way back, after having offered his sin offering, any one had charged him with that special sin for which his sacrifice had bled, what would have been His reply? Just this: "the sin has been rolled away, by the blood of the victim, and Jehovah has pronounced the words, 'It shall be forgiven him.'" The victim had died instead of him; and he lived instead of the victim.

{*We have a singularly beautiful example of the divine accuracy of Scripture, in 2 Cor. 5: 21, "He hath *made* him to be sin (*hamartian epioiesen*) for us, that we might *become* (*ginometha*) the righteousness of God in him." The English reader might suppose that the word which is rendered "made" is the same in each clause of the passage, This is not the case.}

Such was the type. And, as to the Antitype, when the eye of faith rests on Christ as the sin offering, it beholds Him as One who, having assumed a Perfect human life, gave up that life on the cross, because sin was, there and then, attached to it by imputation. But, it

beholds Him, also, As One who, having, in Himself, the power of divine and eternal life, rose from the tomb therein, and who now imparts this, His risen, His divine, His eternal life to all who believe in His name. The sin is gone, because the life to which it was attached is gone, and now, instead of the life to which sin was attached, all true believers possess the life to which righteousness attaches. The question of sin can never once be raised, in reference to the risen and victorious life of Christ; but this is the life which believers possess. There is no other life. All beside is death, because all beside is under the power of sin. "He that hath the Son hath life;" and he that hath life, hath righteousness also. The two things are inseparable, because Christ is both the one and the other. If the judgement and death of Christ, upon the cross, were realities, then, the life and righteousness of the believer are realities. If imputed sin was a reality to Christ, imputed righteousness is a reality to the believer. The one is as real as the other; for, if not, Christ would have died in vain. The true and irrefragable ground of peace is this — that the claims of God's nature have been perfectly met, as to sin. The death of Jesus has satisfied them all — satisfied them of the awakened conscience? The great fact of resurrection. A risen Christ declares the full deliverance of the believer — his perfect discharge from every possible demand. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4: 25) For a Christian not to know that his sin is gone, and gone for ever, is to cast slight upon the blood of his divine sin offering. It is to deny that there has been the perfect presentation — the sevenfold sprinkling of the blood before the Lord.

And now, ere turning from this fundamental point which has been occupying us, I would desire to make an earnest and a most solemn appeal to my reader's heart and conscience Let me ask you, dear friend, have you been led to repose on this holy and happy foundation? Do you know that the question of your sin has been for ever disposed of? Have you laid your hand, by faith, on the head of the sin offering? Have you seen the atoning blood of Jesus rolling away all your guilt, and carrying it into the mighty waters of God's forgetfulness? Has Divine Justice anything against you? Are you free from the unutterable horrors of a guilty conscience? Do not, I pray you, rest satisfied until you can give a joyous answer to these

enquiries. Be assured of it, it is the happy privilege of the feeblest babe in Christ to rejoice in full and everlasting remission of sins, on the ground of finished atonement; and, hence, for any to teach otherwise, is to lower the sacrifice of Christ to the level of "goats and calves." If we cannot know that our sins are forgiven, then, where are the good tidings of the gospel? Is a Christian in no wise better off in the matter of a sin offering, than a Jew? The latter was privileged to know that his matters were set straight for a year, by the blood of an annual sacrifice. Can the former not have any certainty at all? Unquestionably. Well, then, if there is any certainty, it must be eternal, inasmuch as it rests on an eternal sacrifice.

This, and this alone, is the basis of worship. The full assurance of sin put away, ministers, not to a spirit of self-confidence, but to a spirit of promise, thankfulness, and worship. It produces, not a spirit of self-complacency, but of Christ-complacency, which, blessed be God, is the spirit which shall characterise the redeemed throughout eternity. It does not lead one to think little of sin, but to think much of the grace which has perfectly pardoned it, and of the blood which has perfectly cancelled it. It is impossible that any one can gaze on the cross — can see the place which Christ took — can meditate upon the sufferings which He endured — can ponder on those three terrible hours of darkness, and, at the same time, think lightly of sin. When all these things are entered into, in the power of the Holy Ghost, there are two results which must follow, namely, an abhorrence of sin, in all its forms, and a genuine love to Christ, His people, and His cause.

Let us now consider what was done with the "flesh" or "body" of the sacrifice, in which, as has been stated, we have the true ground of discipleship. "The whole bullock shall he carry forth, *without the camp*, unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire." (Lev. 4: 12) This act is to be viewed in a double way; first, as expressing the place which the Lord Jesus took for us, as bearing sin; secondly, as expressing the place into which He was cast, by a world which had rejected Him. It is to this latter point that I would here call my reader's attention.

The use which the apostle, in Heb. 13, makes of Christ's having "suffered without the gate," is deeply practical. "Let us go

forth, therefore, *unto him*, without the camp, *bearing his reproach.*" If the sufferings of Christ have secured us an entrance into heaven, the place where He suffered expresses our rejection from earth. His death has procured us a city on high; the place where He died divests us of a city below.* "He suffered without the gate," and, in so doing, He set aside Jerusalem as the present centre of divine operation. There is no such thing, now, as a consecrated spot on the earth. Christ has taken His place, as a suffering One, outside the range of this world's religion — its politics, and all that pertains to it. The world hated Him, and cast Him out. Wherefore, the word is, "*go forth.*" This is the motto, as regards every thing that men would set up here, in the form of a "camp," no matter what that camp may be. If men set up "a holy city," you must look for a rejected Christ "without the gate." If men set up a religious camp, call it by what name you please, you must "go forth" out of it, in order to find a rejected Christ. It is not that blind superstition will not grope amid the ruins of Jerusalem, in search of relics of Christ. It assuredly will do so, and has done so. It will affect to find out, and do honour to, the site of His cross, and to His sepulchre. Nature's covetousness, too, taking advantage of nature's superstition, has carried on, for ages, a lucrative traffic, under the crafty plea of doing honour to the so-called sacred localities of antiquity. But a single ray of light from Revelation's heavenly lamp, is sufficient to enable us to say that you must "go forth" of all these things, in order to find and enjoy communion with a rejected Christ.

{*The Epistle to the Ephesians furnishes the most elevated view of the Church's place above, and gives it to us, not merely as to the title, but also as to the mode. The title is, assuredly, the blood; but the mode is thus stated: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2: 4-6)}

However, my reader will need to remember that there is far more involved in the soul-stirring call to "go forth," than a mere escape from the gross absurdities of an ignorant superstition, or the designs of a crafty covetousness. There are many who can,

powerfully and eloquently, expose all such things, who are very far indeed from any thought of responding to the apostolic summons. When men set up a "camp," and rally round a standard on which is emblazoned some important dogma of truth, or some valuable institution — when they can appeal to an orthodox creed — an advanced and enlightened scheme of doctrine — a splendid ritual, capable of satisfying the most ardent aspirations of man's devotional nature — when any or all of these things exist, it demands much spiritual intelligence to discern the real force and proper application of the words, "Let us go forth," and much spiritual energy and decision to act upon them. They should, however, be discerned and acted upon, for it is perfectly certain that the atmosphere of a camp, let its ground or standard be what it may, is destructive of personal communion with a rejected Christ; and no so-called religious advantage can ever make up for the loss of that communion. It is the tendency of our hearts to drop into cold stereotyped forms. This has ever been the case in the professing church. These forms may have originated in real power. They may have resulted from positive visitations of the Spirit of God. The temptation is to stereotype the form when the spirit and power have all departed. This is, in principle, to set up a camp. The Jewish system could boast a divine origin. A Jew could triumphantly point to the temple, with its splendid system of worship, its priesthood, its sacrifices, its entire furniture, and show that it had all been handed down from the God of Israel. He could give chapter and verse, as we say, for everything connected with the system to which he was attached. Where is the system, ancient, mediaeval, or modern, that could put forth such lofty and powerful pretensions, or come down upon the heart with such an overwhelming weight of authority? And yet, the command was to "GO FORTH."

This is a deeply solemn matter. It concerns us all, because we are all prone to slip away from communion with a living Christ and sink into dead routine. Hence the practical power of the words, to go forth therefore unto *him*." It is not, Go forth from one system to another — from one set of opinions to another — from one company of people to another. No: but go forth from everything that merits the appellation of a camp, "*to him*" who "suffered without the gate." The Lord Jesus is as thoroughly outside the gate now, as He

was when He suffered there eighteen centuries ago. What was it that put Him outside? "The religious world" of that day: and the religious world of that day is, in spirit and principle, the religious world of the present moment. The world is the world still. "There is nothing new under the sun." Christ and the world are not one. The world has covered itself with the cloak; of Christianity; but it is only in order that its hatred to Christ may work itself up into more deadly forms underneath. Let us not deceive ourselves. If we will walk with a rejected Christ, we must be a rejected people. If our Master "suffered *without* the gate," we cannot expect to reign *within* the gate. If we walk in His footsteps, whither will they lead us? Surely, not to the high places of this Godless, Christless world.

"His path, uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the cross."

He is a despised Christ — a rejected Christ — a Christ outside the camp. Oh! then, dear Christian reader, let us go forth to Him, bearing His reproach. Let us not bask in the sunshine of this world's favour, seeing it crucified, and still hates, with an unmitigated hatred, the beloved One to whom we owe our present and eternal all, and who loves us with a love which many waters cannot quench. Let us not, directly or indirectly, accredit that thing which calls itself by His sacred name; but, in reality, hates His Person, hates His ways, hates His truth, hates the bare mention of His advent. Let us be faithful to an absent Lord. Let us live for Him who died for us. While our consciences repose in His blood, let our heart's affections entwine themselves around His Person; so that our separation from "this present evil world" may not be merely a matter of cold principle, but an affectionate separation, because the object of our affections is not here. May the Lord deliver us from the influence of that consecrated, prudential selfishness, so common at the present time, which would not be without religiousness, but is the enemy of the cross of Christ. What we want, in order to make a successful stand against this terrible form of evil, is not peculiar views, or special principles, or curious theories, or cold intellectual accuracy. We want a deep-toned devotedness to the Person of the Son of God; a whole-hearted consecration of ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to His service; an earnest longing for His glorious advent. These, my

reader, are the special wants of the times in which you and I live. Will you not, then, join in uttering, from the very depths of your heart, the cry, "O Lord, revive thy work" — "accomplish the number of thine elect!" — "hasten thy kingdom!" — "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Leviticus 5: 14 - 6: 7.

These verses contain the doctrine of the trespass offering, of which there were two distinct kinds, namely, trespass against *God*, and trespass against *man*. "If a soul commit a trespass, and sin *through ignorance*, in the holy things of the Lord, then shall he bring for his trespass unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering." Here we have a case in which a positive wrong was done, in the holy things which pertained unto the Lord; and, albeit this was done "through ignorance," yet could it not be passed over. God can forgive all manner of trespass, but He cannot pass over a single jot or tittle. His grace is perfect, and therefore He can forgive all. His holiness is perfect, and therefore He cannot pass over anything. He cannot sanction iniquity, but He can blot it out, and that, moreover, according to the perfection of His grace, and according to the perfect claims of His holiness.

It is a very grave error to suppose that, provided a man acts up to the dictates of his conscience, he is all right and safe. The peace which rests upon such a foundation as this will be eternally destroyed when the light of the judgement-seat shines in upon the conscience. God could never lower His claim to such a level. The balances of the sanctuary are regulated by a very different scale from that afforded by the most sensitive conscience. We have had occasion to dwell upon this point before, in the notes on the sin offering. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon. There are two things involved in it. First, a just perception of what the holiness of God really is; and, secondly, a clear sense of the ground of a believer's peace, in the divine presence.

Whether it be a question of my condition or my conduct, my nature or my acts, God alone can be the Judge of what suits Himself, and of what befits His holy presence. Can human ignorance furnish a plea, when divine requirements are in question? God forbid. A wrong has been done "in the holy things of the Lord;" but man's conscience has not taken cognisance of it. What then? Is there to be nothing more about it? Are the claims of God to be thus lightly disposed of? Assuredly not. This would be subversive of every thing

Like divine relationship. The righteous are called to give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness. (Psalm 97: 12) How can they do this? Because their peace has been secured on the ground of the full vindication and perfect establishment of that holiness. Hence, the higher their sense of what that holiness is, the deeper and more settled must be their peace. This is a truth of the most precious nature. The unregenerate man could never rejoice in the divine holiness His aim would be to lower that holiness, if he could not ignore it altogether. Such an one will console himself with the thought that God is good, God is gracious, God is merciful; but you will never find him rejoicing in the thought that God is holy. He has unholy thoughts respecting God's goodness, His grace, and His mercy. He would fain find in those blessed attributes, an excuse for his continuing in sin.

On the contrary, the renewed man exults in the holiness of God. He sees The full expression thereof in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that holiness which has laid the foundation of his peace; and, not only so, but he is made a partaker of it, and he delights in it, while he hates sin with a perfect hatred. The instincts of the divine nature shrink from it, and long after holiness. It would be impossible to enjoy true peace and liberty of heart, if one did not know that the claims connected with "the holy things of the Lord" had been perfectly met by our divine Trespass Offering;. There would ever be, springing up in the heart, the painful sense that those claims had been slighted, through our manifold infirmities and shortcomings. Our very best services, our holiest seasons, our most hallowed exercises, may present something of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord" — "something that ought not to be done." How often are our seasons of public worship and private devotion infringed upon and marred by barrenness and distraction! Hence it is that we need the assurance that our trespasses have all been divinely met by the precious blood of Christ. Thus, in the ever-blessed Lord Jesus, we find One who has come down to the full measure of our necessities as sinners by nature, and trespassers in act. We find in Him the perfect answer to all the cravings of a guilty conscience, and to all the claims of infinite holiness, in reference to all our sins and all our trespasses; so that the believer can stand, with an

uncondemning conscience and emancipated heart, in the full light of that holiness which is too pure to behold iniquity or look upon sin.

"And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him." (Lev. 5: 16) In the addition of "the fifth part," as here set forth, we have a feature of the true Trespass Offering, which, it is to be feared, is but little appreciated. When we think of all the wrong and all the trespass which we have done against the Lord; and, further, when we remember how God has been wronged of His rights in this wicked world, with what interest can we contemplate the work of the cross as that wherein God has not merely received back what was lost, but whereby He is an actual gainer. He has gained more by redemption than ever He lost by the fall. He reaps a richer harvest of glory, honour, and praise, in the fields of redemption, than ever He could have reaped from those of creation. "The sons of God" could raise a loftier song of praise around the empty tomb of Jesus than ever they raised in view of the Creator's accomplished work. The wrong has not only been perfectly atoned for, but an eternal advantage has been gained, by the work of the cross. 'This is a stupendous truth. God is a gainer by the work of Calvary. Who could have conceived this? When we behold man, and the creation of which he was Lord, laid in ruins at the feet of the enemy, How could we conceive that, from amid those ruins, God should gather richer and nobler spoils than any which our unfallen world could have yielded. Blessed be the name of Jesus for all this. It is to Him we owe it all. It is by His precious cross that ever a truth so amazing, so divine, could be enunciated. Assuredly, that cross involves a mysterious wisdom "which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2: 8) No marvel, therefore, that round that cross, and round Him who was crucified thereon, the affections of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, have ever entwined themselves. No marvel that the Holy Ghost should have given forth that solemn but just decree, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." (1 Cor. 16: 22) Heaven and earth shall echo forth a loud and an eternal amen to this

anathema. No marvel that it should be the fixed and immutable purpose of the divine mind, that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 10, 11)

The same law in reference to "the fifth part" obtained in the case of a trespass committed against a man, as we read, "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass *against the Lord*,* and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or have deceived his neighbour, or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offerings) (Lev. 6: 2-5)

{*There is a fine principle invoked in the expression, "against the Lord." Although the matter in question was a wrong done to one's neighbour, yet the Lord looked upon it as a trespass against himself. Everything must be viewed in reference to the Lord. It matters not who may be affected, Jehovah must get the first place. Thus, when David's conscience was pierced by the arrow of conviction, in reference to his treatment of Uriah, he exclaims, "I have sinned *against the Lord*." (2 Sam. 12: 13) This principle does not, in the least, interfere with the injured man's claim. }

Man, as well as God, is a positive gainer by the cross. The believer can say, as he gazes upon that cross, "Well, it matters not how I have been wronged, how I have been trespassed against, how I have been deceived, what ills have been done to me, I am a gainer by the cross. I have not merely received back all that was lost, but much more beside."

Thus, whether we think of the injured, or the injurer, in any given case, we are equally struck with the glorious triumphs of

redemption, and the mighty practical results which flow from that gospel which fills the soul with the happy assurance, that "all trespasses" are "forgiven," And that the root from whence those trespasses have sprung, has been judged "The gospel of the glory of the blessed God" is that which alone can send forth a man into the midst of a scene which has been the witness of his sins, his trespasses, and his injurious ways — can send him back to all who, in anywise, have been sufferers by his evil doings, furnished with grace, not only to repair the wrongs, but, far more, to allow the full tide of practical benevolence to flow forth in all his ways, yea, to love his enemies, to do good to them that hate him, and to pray for them that despitefully use him and persecute him. Such is the precious grace of God, that acts in confession with our great Trespass Offering. — such are its rich, rare, and refreshing fruits!

What a triumphant answer to the caviller who could say, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Grace not merely cuts up sin by the roots, but transforms the sinner from a curse into a blessing; from a moral plague, into a channel of divine mercy; from an emissary of Satan, into a messenger of God; from a child of darkness, into a son of the light; from a self-indulgent pleasure-hunter, into a self-denying lover of God; from a slave of vile, selfish lusts, into a willing-hearted servant of Christ; from a cold, narrow-hearted miser, into a benevolent minister to the need of his fellow-man. Away, then, with the oft repeated taunts, "Are we to do nothing?" — "That is a marvellously easy way to be saved" — "According to this Gospel we may live as we list." Let all who utter such language behold yonder thief transformed into a liberal donor, and let them be silent for ever. (See Eph. 4: 28) They know not what grace means. They have never felt its sanctifying and elevating influences. They forget that, while the blood of the trespass offering cleanses the conscience, the law of that offering sends the trespasser back to the one whom he has wronged, with "the principal" and "the fifth" in his hand. Noble testimony this, both to the grace and righteousness of the God of Israel! Beauteous exhibition of the results of that marvellous scheme of redemption, whereby the injurer is forgiven, and the injured becomes the actual gainer! The conscience has been set to rights, by the blood of the cross, in reference to the claims of God, the conduct must be set to rights, by

the holiness of the cross, in reference to the claims of practical righteousness. These things must never be separated. God has joined them together, and let not man put them asunder. The hallowed union will never be dissolved by any mind which is governed by pure gospel morality. Alas! it is easy to profess the principles of grace, while the practice and power thereof are completely denied. It is easy to talk of resting in the blood of the trespass offering, while "the principal" and "the fifth" are not forthcoming. This is vain, and worse than vain. "He that doeth not righteousness is not of God." (1 John 3: 10)

Nothing can be more dishonouring to the pure grace of the gospel than the supposition that a man may belong to God, while his conduct and character exhibit not the fair traces of practical holiness. "known unto God are all his works," no double; but He has given us, in His holy word, those evidences by which we can discern those that belong to Him. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2: 19) We have no right to suppose that an evildoer belongs to God. The holy instincts of the divine nature are shocked by the mention of such a thing. People sometimes express much difficulty in accounting for such and such evil practices on the part of those whom they cannot help regarding in the light of Christians. The word of God settles the matter so clearly and so authoritatively, as to leave no possible ground for any such difficulty. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' It is well to remember this, in this day of laxity and self-indulgence. There is a fearful amount of easy, uninfluential profession abroad, against which the genuine Christian is called upon to make a firm stand, and bear a severe testimony — a testimony resulting from the steady exhibition of "the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." It is most deplorable to see so many going along the beaten path — the well-trodden highway of religious profession, and yet manifesting not a trace of love or holiness in their conduct. Christian reader, let us be faithful. Let us rebuke, by a life of self-denial and genuine benevolence, the self-indulgence and culpable inactivity of

evangelical yet worldly profession. May God grant unto all His true-hearted people abundant grace for these things!

Let us now proceed to compare the two classes of trespass offering; namely, the offering on account of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord," and that which had reference to a trespass committed in the common transactions and relations of human life. In so doing, we shall find one or two points which demand our attentive consideration.

And, first, the expression, "if a soul sin through ignorance," which occurs in the former, is omitted in the latter. The reason of this is obvious. The claims which stand connected with the holy things of the Lord, must pass, infinitely, beyond the reach of the most elevated human sensibility. Those claims may be, continually, interfered with — continually trespassed upon, and the trespasser not be aware of the fact. A man's consciousness can never be the regulator in the sanctuary of God. This is an unspeakable mercy. God's holiness alone must fix the standard, when God's rights are in question.

Oh the other hand, the human conscience can readily grasp the full amount of a human claim, and can readily take cognisance of any interference with such claim. How often may we have wronged God, in His holy things, without ever taking a note of it in the tablet of conscience — yea without having the competency to detect it. (See Mal. 3: 8) Not so, however, when man's rights are in question. The wrong which the human eye can see, and the human heart feel, the human conscience can take notice of. A man, "through ignorance" of the laws which governed the sanctuary of old, might commit a trespass against those laws, without being aware of it, until a higher light had shone in upon his conscience. But a man could not, "through ignorance," tell a lie, swear falsely, commit an act of violence, deceive his neighbour, or find a lost thing and deny it. These were all plain and palpable acts, lying within the range of the most sluggish sensibility. Hence it is that the expression, "through ignorance" is introduced, in reference to "the holy things of the Lord," and omitted, in reference to the common affairs of men. How blessed it is to know that the precious blood of Christ has settled all questions whether with respect to God or man — our sins of

ignorance or our known sins! Here lies the deep and settled foundation of the believer's peace. The cross has divinely met ALL.

Again, when it was a question of trespass "in the holy things of the Lord," the unblemished sacrifice was first introduced; and, afterward "the principal" and "the fifth." This order was reversed when it was a question of the common affairs of life. (Comp. Lev. 5: 15, 16 with Lev. 6: 4-7) The reason of this is equally obvious. When the divine rights were infringed, the blood of atonement was made the great prominent matter. Whereas, when human rights were interfered with, restitution would naturally assume the leading place in the mind. But, inasmuch as the latter involved the question of the soul's relation with God, as well as the former, therefore the sacrifice is introduced, though it be last in order. If I wrong my fellow man, that wrong will, undoubtedly, interfere with my communion with God; and that communion can only be restored on the ground of atonement. Mere restitution would not avail. It might satisfy the injured man, but it could not form the basis of restored communion with God. I might restore "the principal" and add "the fifth," ten thousand times over, and yet my sin remain, for "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22) Still, if it be a question of injury done to my neighbour, then restitution must first be made. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. 5: 23, 24)*

{*From a comparison of Matt. 5.23, 24 with Matt. 18. 21, 22, we may learn a fine principle, as to the way in which wrongs and injuries are to be settled between two brothers. The injurer is sent back from the altar, in order to have his matters set straight with the injured one; for there can be no communion with the Father so long as my brother "hath ought against me" But, then, mark the beautiful way in which the injured one is taught to receive the injurer. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, *until seventy times seven.*" Such is the divine mode of settling all questions between brethren. "Forbearing one another, and

forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (Col 3: 13)}

There is far more involved in the divine order prescribed in the trespass offering, than might, at first sight, appear. The claims which arise out of our human relations must not be disregarded. They must ever get their proper place in the heart. This is distinctly taught in the trespass offering. When an Israelite had, by an act of trespass, deranged his relation with Jehovah, the order was, sacrifice and restitution. When he had, by an act of trespass, deranged his relation with his neighbour, the order was, restitution and sacrifice. Will any one undertake to say this is a distinction without a difference? Does the change of the order not convey its own appropriate, because divinely appointed, lesson? Unquestionably. Every point is pregnant with meaning, if we will but allow the Holy Ghost to convey that meaning to our hearts, and not seek to grasp it by the aid of our poor vain imaginings. Each offering conveys its own characteristic view of the Lord Jesus, and His work; and each is presented in its own characteristic order; and we may safely say, it is, at once, the business and the delight of the spiritual mind to apprehend both the one and the other. The very same character of mind which would seek to make nothing of the peculiar order of each offering, would also set aside the idea of a peculiar phase of Christ in each. It would defy the existence of any difference between the burnt offering and the sin offering; and between the sin offering and the trespass offering; and between any or all of these and the meat offering or the peace offering. Hence, it would follow that the first seven chapters of the Book of Leviticus are all a vain repetition, each successive chapter going over the same thing. Who could cede ought so monstrous as this? What Christian mind could suffer such an insult to be offered to the sacred page? A German rationalist or theologian may put forth such vain and detestable notions; but those who have been divinely taught that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," will be led to regard the various types, in their specific order, as so many variously-shaped caskets, in which the Holy Ghost has treasured up, for the people of God, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." There is no tedious repetition, no redundancy. All is rich, divine, heavenly variety; and all we need is to be personally acquainted with the great Antitype, in order to enter into the beauties

and seize the delicate touches of each type. Directly the heart lays hold of the fact that it is Christ we have, in each type, it can hang, With spiritual interest, over the most minute details. It sees meaning and beauty in everything — it finds Christ in all. As, in the kingdom of nature, the telescope and the microscope present to the eye their own special wonders, so with the word of God. Whether we look at it as a whole, or scrutinise each clause, we find that which elicits the worship and thanksgiving of our hearts.

Christian reader, may the name of the Lord Jesus ever be more precious to our hearts! Then shall we value everything that speaks of Him everything that sets Him forth — everything according a fresh insight into His peculiar excellency and matchless beauty.

NOTE — The remainder of Lev. 6, together with the whole of Lev. 7, is occupied with the law of the various offerings to which reference has already been made. There are, however, some points presented in the law of the sin offering and the trespass offering which may be noticed ere we leave this copious section of our book.

In none of the offerings is Christ's personal holiness more strikingly presented than in the sin offering. "Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. in the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: *it is most holy*Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof *shall be holy*...All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: *it is most holy*." (Lev. 6: 25- 29) So also in speaking of the meat offering, "it is most holy, *as is the sin offering*, and as the trespass offering." This is most marked and striking. The Holy Ghost did not need to guard with such jealousy, the personal holiness of Christ in the burnt offering; but lest the soul should, by any means, lose sight of that holiness, while contemplating the place which the Blessed One took in the sin offering, we are, again and again, reminded of it by the words, "it is most holy." Truly edifying and refreshing it is to behold the divine and essential holiness of the Person of Christ shining forth in the midst of Calvary's profound and awful gloom The same point is observable in "the law of the trespass offering. (See Lev. 7: 1, 6) Never was the Lord Jesus more fully seen to be "the Holy One of God" than when He was "made sin" upon the cursed tree. The vileness and blackness of that with which

He stood identified on the cross, only served to show out more clearly that He was "most holy." Though a sin-bearer, He was sinless. Though enduring the wrath of God, He was the *Father's* delight. Though deprived of the light of *God's* countenance, He dwelt in the *Father's* bosom. precious mystery! Who can sound its mighty depths How wonderful to find it so accurately shadowed forth in "the law of the sin offering "

Again, my reader should seek to apprehend the meaning of the expression, "all the males among the priests shall eat thereof." The ceremonial act of eating the sin offering, or the trespass offering, was expressive of full identification. But, to eat the sin offering — to make another's sin one's own, demanded a higher degree of priestly energy, such as was expressed in all the *males* among the priests." "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to *thy sons*, by an ordinance for ever. This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for *thy sons*. In the most Holy place shalt thou eat it; *every male* shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. and this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to *thy daughters* with thee, by a statute for ever: *every one that is clean* in thy house shall eat of it." (Num. 18: 8-11)

It demanded a larger measure of priestly energy to eat of the sin or trespass offering, than merely to partake of the heave and wave offerings of gift. The "daughters" of Aaron could eat of the latter. None but the "sons" could eat of the former. In general, "the male," expresses a thing according to the divine Idea: "the female," according to human development. The former gives you the thing in full energy; the latter, in its imperfection. How few of us have sufficient priestly energy to enable us to make another's sin or trespass our own! The blessed Lord Jesus did this perfectly. He made His people's sins His own, and bore the judgement thereof, on

the cross. He fully identified Himself with us, so that we may know, in full and blessed certainty, that the whole question of sin and trespass has been divinely settled. If Christ's identification was perfect, then, the settlement was perfect, likewise; and that it was perfect, the scene enacted at Calvary declares. All is accomplished. The sin, the trespasses, the claims of God, the claims of man — all have been eternally settled; and, now, perfect peace is the portion of all who, by grace, accept as true the record of God. It is as simple as God could make it, and the soul that believes it is made happy. The peace and happiness of the believer depend wholly upon the perfection of Christ's sacrifice. It is not a question of his mode of receiving it, his thoughts about it, or his feelings respecting it. It is simply a question of his crediting, by faith, the testimony of God, as to the value of the sacrifice. The Lord be praised for His own simple and perfect way of peace! May many troubled souls be led by the Holy Spirit into an understanding thereof!

We shall here close our meditations upon one of the richest sections in the whole canon of inspiration. It is but little we have been enabled to glean from it. We have hardly penetrated below the surface of an exhaustless mine. If, however, the reader has, for the first time, been led to view the offerings as so many varied exhibitions of the great Sacrifice, and if he is led to cast himself at the feet of the great Teacher, to learn more of the living depths of these things, I cannot but feel that an end has been gained for which we may well feel deeply thankful.

Leviticus 8, 9.

Having considered the doctrine of sacrifice, as unfolded in the first seven chapters of this book, we now approach the subject of priesthood. The two subjects are intimately connected. The Sinner needs a *sacrifice*; the believer needs a *priest*. We have both the one and the other in Christ, who, having offered Himself, without spot, to God, entered upon the sphere of His priestly ministry, in the sanctuary above. We need no other sacrifice, no other priest. Jesus is divinely sufficient. He imparts the dignity and worth of His own Person to every office He sustains, and to every work He performs. When we see Him as a sacrifice, we know that we have in Him all that a perfect sacrifice could be; and, when we see Him as a priest, we know that every function of the priesthood is perfectly discharged by Him. As a sacrifice, He introduces His people into a settled relationship with God; and, as a priest, He maintains them therein, according to the perfectness of what He is. Priesthood is designed for those who already stand in a certain relationship with God. As sinners, by nature and by practice, we are all brought nigh to God by the blood of the cross." We are brought into an established relationship with Him. We stand before Him as the fruit of His own work. He has put away our sins, in such a manner as suits Himself, so that we might be before Him, to the praise of His name, as the exhibition of what He can accomplish through the power of death and resurrection.

But, though so fully delivered from every thing that could be against us; though so perfectly accepted in the Beloved; though so complete in Christ; though so highly exalted, yet are we, in ourselves, while down here, poor feeble creatures, ever prone to wander, ready to stumble, exposed to manifold temptations, trials, and snares. As such, we need the ceaseless ministry of our "Great High Priest," whose very presence, in the sanctuary above, maintains us, in the full integrity of that place and relationship in which, through grace, we stand, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. 7: 25) We could not stand, for a moment, down here, If He were not living for us, up there. "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14: 19) "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being

reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. 5: 10) The "death" and the "life "are inseparably connected, in the economy of grace. But, be it observed, the life comes after the death. It is Christ's life as risen from the dead, and not His life down here, that the apostle refers to, in the last-quoted passage. This distinction is eminently worthy of my reader's attention. The life of our blessed Lord Jesus, while down here, was, I need hardly remark, infinitely precious; but He did not enter upon His sphere of priestly service until He had accomplished the work of redemption. Nor could He have done so, inasmuch as "it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." (Heb. 7: 14) "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." (Heb. 8: 3, 4) "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9: 11, 12, 24)

Heaven, not earth, is the sphere of Christ's Priestly ministry; and on that sphere He entered when He had offered Himself without spot to God. He never appeared as a priest in the temple below. He oftentimes went up to the temple to teach, but never to sacrifice or burn incense. There never was any one ordained of God to discharge the functions of the priestly office on earth, save Aaron and his sons. "If he were on earth, he should not be a priest." This is a point of much interest and value, in connection with the doctrine of priesthood. Heaven is the sphere, and accomplished redemption the basis, of Christ's priesthood. Save in the sense that all Believers are priests, (1 Peter 2: 5) there is no such thing as a priest upon earth. Unless a man can show his descent from Aaron, unless he can trace his pedigree up to that ancient source, he has no right to exercise the priestly office. Apostolic succession itself, could it be proved, would be of no possible value here, inasmuch as the Apostles themselves

were not priests, save in the sense above referred to. The feeblest member of the household of faith is as much a priest as the Apostle Peter himself. He is a spiritual priest; he worships in a spiritual temple; he stands at a spiritual altar; he offers a spiritual sacrifice; he is clad in spiritual vestments. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2: 5) "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. 13: 15, 16)

If one of the direct descendants of the house of Aaron were converted to Christ, he would enter upon an entirely new character and ground of priestly service. And be it observed, that the passages just quoted present the two great classes of spiritual sacrifice which the spiritual priest is privileged to offer. There is the sacrifice of praise to God, and the sacrifice of benevolence to man. There is a double stream continually going forth from the believer who is living in the realisation of his priestly place — a stream of grateful praise ascending to the throne of God, and a stream of active benevolence flowing forth to a needy world. The spiritual priest stands with one hand lifted up to God, in the presentation of the incense of grateful praise; and the other opened wide to minister, in genuine beneficence, to every form of human need. Were these things more distinctly apprehended, what hallowed elevation, and what moral grace, would they not impart to the Christian character! Elevation, inasmuch as the heart would ever be lifted up to the infinite Source of all that is capable of elevating — moral grace, inasmuch as the heart would ever be kept open to all demands upon its sympathies. The two things are inseparable. Immediate occupation of heart with God must, of necessity, elevate and enlarge. But, on the other hand, if one walks at a distance from God, the heart will become grovelling and contracted. Intimacy of communion with God — the habitual realisation of our priestly dignity, is the only effectual remedy for the downward and selfish tendencies of the old nature.

Having said thus much on the subject of priesthood in general, both as to its primary and secondary aspects, we shall proceed to examine the contents of the eighth and ninth chapters of the Book of Leviticus.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." There is special grace unfolded here. The whole assembly is convened at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, in order that all might have the privilege of beholding the one who was about to be entrusted with the charge of their most important interests. In Ex 28 and 29 we are taught the same general truth with respect to the vestments and sacrifices connected with the priestly office; but, in Leviticus, the congregation is introduced, and allowed to look on at every movement in the solemn and impressive Service of consecration. The humblest member of the assembly had his own place. Each one, the lowest as well as the highest, was permitted to gaze upon the person of the high priest, upon the sacrifice which he offered, and upon the robes which he wore. Each one had his own peculiar need, and the God of Israel would have each to see and know that his need was fully provided for by the varied qualifications of the high priest who stood before him. Of these qualifications the priestly robes were the apt typical expression. Each portion of the dress was designed and adapted to put forth some special qualification in which the assembly as a whole, and each individual member, would, of necessity, be deeply interested. The coat, the girdle, the robe, the ephod, the breastplate, the Urim and the Thummim, the mitre, the holy crown — all told out the varied virtues, qualifications, and functions of the one who was to represent the congregation and maintain the interests thereof in the divine presence.

Thus it is the believer can, with the eye of faith, behold his great High Priest, in the heavens, and see in Him the divine realities of which the Aaronic vestments were but the shadows. The Lord

Jesus Christ is the holy One, the anointed One, the mitred One, the girded One. He is all these, not in virtue of outward garments to be put on or off, but in virtue of the divine and eternal graces of His Person, the changeless efficacy of His work, and the imperishable virtue of His sacred offices. This is the special value of studying the types of the Mosaic economy. The enlightened eye sees Christ in all. The blood of the sacrifice and the robe of the high priest both point to Him — both were designed of God to set Him forth. If it be a question of conscience, the blood of the sacrifice meets it, according to the just claims of the sanctuary. Grace has met the demand of holiness. And, then, if it be a question of the need connected with the believer's position down here, he can see it all divinely answered in the official robes of the high priest.

And, here, let me say, there are two ways in which to contemplate the believer's position — two ways in which that position is presented in the word, which must be taken into account ere the true idea of priesthood can be intelligently laid hold of. The believer is represented as being part of a body of which Christ is the Head. This body, with Christ its Head, is spoken of as forming one man, complete, in every respect. It was quickened with Christ, raised with Christ, and seated with Christ, in the heavens. It is one with Him, complete in Him, accepted in Him, possessing His life, and standing in His favour, before God. All trespasses are blotted out. There is no spot. All is fair and lovely beneath the eye of God. (See 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13; Eph. 2: 5-10; Col. 2: 6-15; 1 John 4: 17)

Then, again, the believer is contemplated as in the place of need, meekness, and dependence, down here, in this world. He is ever exposed to temptation; prone to wander, liable to stumble and fall. As such, he, continually, stands in need of the perfect sympathy and powerful ministrations of the High Priest, who ever appears in the presence of God, in the full value of His Person and work, and who represents the believer and maintains His cause before the throne.

Now my reader should ponder both these aspects of the believer, in order that he may see, not only what a highly exalted and privileged place he occupies with Christ on high, but also what ample provision there is for him, in reference to his every need and

weakness, here below. This distinction might, further, be developed, in this way. The believer is represented as being *of the church*, and in the *kingdom*. As the former, heaven is his place, his home, his portion, the seat of his affections. As the latter, he is on earth, in the place of trial, responsibility, and conflict. Hence, therefore, priesthood is a divine provision for those who though being of the Church, and belonging to heaven, are, nevertheless, in the kingdom, and walking on the earth. This distinction is a very simple one, and, when apprehended, explains a vast number of passages of Scripture in which many minds encounter considerable difficulty.*

{*A comparison of the Epistle to the Ephesians with the First Epistle of Peter will furnish the reader with much valuable instruction in reference to the double aspect of the believer's position, The former shows him as seated in heaven; the latter, as a pilgrim and a sufferer, on earth.}

In looking into the contents of the chapters which lie open before us, we may remark three things put prominently forward, namely, the authority of the word, the value of the blood, the power of the Spirit. These are weighty matters — matters of unspeakable importance — matters which must be regarded, by every Christian, as, unquestionably, vital and fundamental.

And, first, as to the authority of the word, it is of the deepest interest to see that, in the consecration of the priests, as well as in the entire range of the sacrifices, we are brought immediately under the authority of the word of God. "And Moses said unto the congregation, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.*" (Lev. 8: 5) And, again, "Moses said, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you.*" (Lev. 9: 6) Let these words sink down into our ears. Let them be carefully and prayerfully pondered. They are priceless words. "*This is the thing which the Lord commanded.*" He did not say, "This is the thing which is expedient, agreeable, or suitable." Neither did He say, "This is the thing which has been arranged by the voice of the fathers, the decree of the elders, or the opinion of the doctors." Moses knew nothing of such sources of authority. To him there was one holy, elevated, paramount source of authority, and that was, the word of Jehovah, and he would bring

every member of the assembly into direct contact with that blessed source. This gave assurance to the heart, and fixedness to all the thoughts. There was no room left for tradition, with its uncertain sound, or for man, with his doubtful disputations. All was clear, conclusive, and authoritative. Jehovah had spoken; and all that was needed was to hear what He had said, and obey. Neither tradition nor expediency has any place in the heart that has learnt to prize, to reverence, and to obey the word of God.

And what was to be the result of this strict adherence to the word of God? A truly blessed result, indeed. "The glory of the Lord shall appear unto you." Had the word been disregarded, the glory would not have appeared. The two things were intimately connected. The slightest deviation from "thus saith Jehovah" would have prevented the beams of the divine glory from appearing to the congregation of Israel. Had there been the introduction of a single rite or ceremony not enjoined by the word, or had there been the omission of ought which that word commanded, Jehovah would not have manifested His glory. He could not sanction by the glory of His presence the neglect or rejection of His word. He can bear with ignorance and infirmity, but He cannot sanction neglect or disobedience.

Oh! that all this were more solemnly considered, in this day of tradition and expediency. I would, in earnest affection, and in the deep sense of personal responsibility to my reader, exhort him to give diligent heed to the importance of close — I had almost said severe — adherence and reverent subjection to the word of God. Let him try everything by that standard, and reject all that comes not up to it; let him weigh everything in that balance, and cast aside all that is not full weight; let him measure everything by that rule, and refuse all deviation. If I could only be the means of awakening one soul to a proper sense of the place which belongs to the word of God, I should feel I had not written my book for nought or in vain.

Reader, pause, and, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, ask yourself this plain, pointed question, "Am I sanctioning by my presence, or adopting in my practice, any departure from, or neglect of, the word of God?" Make this a solemn, personal matter before the Lord. Be assured of it, it is of the very deepest moment, the very

last importance. If you find that you have been, in any wise, connected with, or involved in, ought that wears not the distinct stamp of divine sanction, reject it at once and for ever. Yes, reject it, though arrayed in the imposing vestments of antiquity, accredited by the voice of tradition, and putting forward the almost irresistible plea of expediency. If you cannot say, in reference to everything with which you stand connected, "this is the thing which the Lord hath commanded," then away with it unhesitatingly, away with it for ever. Remember these words, "as he hath done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do." Yes, remember the "as" and the "so;" see that you are connecting them in your ways and associations, and let them never be separated.

"So Aaron and his sons did *all* things *which the Lord commanded* by the hand of Moses." (Lev. 8: 36) "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle, of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces." (Lev. 9: 23, 24) Here we have an "eighth day" scene — a scene of resurrection-glory. Aaron, having offered the sacrifice, lifted up his hands in priestly benediction upon the people; and then Moses and Aaron retire into the tabernacle, and disappear, while the whole assembly is seen in waiting outside. Finally, Moses and Aaron, representing Christ in His double character as Priest and King, come forth, and bless the people; the glory appears in all its splendour, the fire consumes the sacrifice, and the entire congregation falls prostrate in worship before the presence of the Lord of all the earth.

Now, all this was literally enacted at the consecration of Aaron and his sons. And, moreover, all this was the result of strict adherence to the word of Jehovah. But, ere I turn from this branch of the subject, let me remind the reader, that all that these chapters contain is but the shadow of good things to come." This, indeed, holds good in reference to the entire Mosaic economy. (Heb 10: 1) Aaron and his sons, together, represent Christ and His priestly house. Aaron alone represents Christ in His sacrificial and intercessory functions. Moses and Aaron, together, represent Christ

as King and Priest. "The eighth day" represents the day of resurrection-glory, when the congregation of Israel shall see the Messiah, seated as Royal Priest upon His throne, and when the glory of Jehovah shall fill the whole earth, as the waters cover the sea. these sublime truths are largely unfolded in the word, they glitter like gems of celestial brilliancy, all along the inspired page; but, lest they should, to any reader, wear the suspicious aspect of novelty, I shall refer him to the following direct scripture proofs; viz., Num. 14: 21; Isa. 9: 6, 7; Isa. 11; Isa. 25: 6-12; Isa. 32: 1, 2; Isa. 35; Isa. 37: 31, 32; Isa. 40: 1-5; Isa. 54; Isa. 59: 16-21; Isa. 60 - 66; passim. Jer. 23: 5-8; Jer. 30: 10-24; Jer. 33: 6-22; Ezra 48: 35; Dan. 7: 13, 14; Hosea 14: 4-9; Zeph. 3: 14-20; Zech. 3: 8-10; Zech. 6: 12, 13; Zech. 14.

Let us, now, consider the second point presented in our section, namely, the efficacy of the blood. This is unfolded with great fullness, and put forward in great prominence. Whether we contemplate the doctrine of sacrifice or the doctrine of priesthood, we find the shedding of blood gets the same important place. "And he brought the bullock for the sin offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin offering. And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it" (Lev. 8: 14, 15) "And he brought the ram for the burnt offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." (Ver. 18, 19) "and he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." (Ver. 22-24)

The import of the various sacrifices has been, in some degree, developed in the opening chapters of this volume; but the passages

just quoted serve to show the prominent place which the blood occupies in the consecration of the priests. A blood-stained *ear* was needed to hearken to the divine communications; a blood-stained *hand* was needed to execute the services of the sanctuary; and a blood-stained *foot* was needed to tread the courts of the Lord's house. All this is perfect in its way. The shedding of blood was the grand foundation of all sacrifice for sin; and it stood connected with all the vessels of the ministry, and with all the functions of the priesthood. Throughout the entire range of Levitical service, we observe the value, the efficacy, the power, and the wide application of the blood. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood." (Heb. 9: 22) Christ has entered, by His own blood, into heaven itself. He appears on the throne of the majesty in the heavens, in the value of all that He has accomplished on the cross. His presence on the throne attests the worth and acceptableness of His atoning blood. He is there for us. Blessed assurance! He ever liveth. He never changeth; and we are in Him, and as He is. He presents us to the Father, in His own eternal perfectness; and the Father delights in us, as thus presented, even as He delights in the One who presents us. This identification is typically set forth in "Aaron and his sons" laying their hands upon the head of each of the sacrifices. They all stood before God, in the value of the same sacrifice. Whether it were the "bullock for the sin offering," "the ram for the burnt offering," or "the ram of consecration," they jointly laid their hands on all. True, Aaron alone was anointed before the blood was shed. He was clad in his robes of office, and anointed with the holy oil, before ever his sons were clothed or anointed. The reason of this is obvious. Aaron, when spoken of by himself, typifies Christ in His own peerless excellency and dignity; And, as we know, Christ appeared in all His own personal worth and was anointed by the Holy Ghost, previous to the accomplishment of His atoning work. In all things He has the pre-eminence. (Col. 1) Still, there is the fullest identification, afterwards, between Aaron and his sons, as there is the fullest identification between Christ and His people. "The sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one." (Heb 2) The personal distinctness enhances the value of the mystic oneness.

This truth of the distinctness and yet oneness of the Head and members leads us, naturally, to our third and last point, namely, the

power of the Spirit. We may remark how much takes place between the anointing of Aaron and the anointing of his sons with him. The blood is shed, the fat consumed on the altar, and the breast waved before the Lord. In other words, the sacrifice is perfected, the sweet odour thereof ascends to God, and the One who offered it ascends in the power of resurrection, and takes His place on high. All this comes in between the anointing of the Head and the anointing of the members. Let us quote and compare the passages. First, as to Aaron alone, we read, "And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. And he put the mitre upon his head: and upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him." (Lev. 8: 7-12)

Here we have Aaron presented alone. The anointing oil is poured upon his head, and that, too, in immediate connection with the anointing of all the vessels of the tabernacle. The whole assembly was permitted to behold the high priest clothed in his official robes, mitred and anointed; and not only so, but as each garment was put on, as each act was performed, as each ceremony was enacted, it was seen to be immediately founded upon the authority of the word. There was nothing vague, nothing arbitrary, nothing imaginative. All was divinely stable. The need of the congregation was fully met, and met in such a way as that it could be said, "This is the thing which Jehovah commended to be done."

Now, in Aaron anointed, alone, previous to the shedding of the blood, we have a type of Christ who, until He offered Himself upon the cross, stood entirely alone. There could be no union between Him and His people, save on the ground of death and resurrection. This all-important truth has already been referred to, and, in some

measure, developed in connection with the subject of sacrifice; but it adds force and interest to it to see it so distinctly presented in connection with the question of priesthood. Without shedding of blood there was no remission — the sacrifice was not completed. So, also, without shedding of blood Aaron and his sons could not be anointed together. Let the reader note this fact. Let him be assured of it, it is worthy of his deepest attention. We must ever beware of passing lightly over any circumstance in the Levitical economy. Everything has its own specific voice and meaning; and the One who designed and developed the order can expound to the heart and understanding what that order means.

"And Moses took of the anointing *oil*, and of the *blood* which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments *with him*"; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments *with Him*.' (Lev. 8: 30) Why were not Aaron's sons anointed with him at verse 12? Simply because the blood had not been shed. When "the blood" and "the oil" could be connected together, then Aaron and his sons could be "anointed" and "sanctified" together; but not until then. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 19) The reader who could lightly pass over so marked a circumstance, or say it meant nothing, has yet to learn to value aright the types of the Old Testament Scriptures — "the shadows of good things to come." And, on the other hand, the one who admits that it does mean something, but yet refuses to enquire and understand what that something is, is doing serious damage to his own soul, and manifesting but little interest in the precious oracles of God.

"And Moses said unto Aaron and to his sons, Boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecrations, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it. And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread shall ye burn with fire. And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you. As he hath done this day, so the Lord hath

commanded to do, to make an atonement for you. Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, that ye die not: for so I am commanded." (Ver. 31-35) These verses furnish a fine type of Christ and His people feeding together upon the results of accomplished atonement. Aaron and his sons, having been anointed together, on the ground of the shed blood, are here presented to our view as shut in within the precincts of the tabernacle during "seven days." A striking figure of the present position of Christ and His members, during the entire of this dispensation, shut in with God, and waiting for the manifestation of the glory. Blessed position! Blessed portion! Blessed hope! To be associated with Christ, shut in with God, waiting for the day of glory, and, while waiting for the glory, feeding upon the riches of divine grace, in the power of holiness, are blessings of the most precious nature, privileges of the very highest order. Oh! for a capacity to take them in, a heart to enjoy them, a deeper sense of their magnitude. May our hearts be withdrawn from all that pertains to this present evil world, so that we may feed upon the contents of "the basket of consecrations," which is our proper food as priests in the sanctuary of God.

"And it came to pass *on the eighth day*, that Moses called Aaron, and his sons, and *the elders of Israel*. And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord. And unto *the children of Israel* thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord; and a meat offering mingled with oil; for TODAY THE LORD WILL APPEAR UNTO YOU." (Lev. 9: 1-4)

The "seven days" being over, during which Aaron and his sons were shut in in the retirement of the tabernacle, the whole congregation is now introduced, and the glory of Jehovah unfolds itself. This gives great completeness to the whole scene. The shadows of good things to come are here passing before us, in their divine order. "The eighth day" is a shadow of that bright millennial morning which is about to dawn upon this earth, when the

congregation of Israel shall behold the True Priest coming forth from the sanctuary-, where He is now, hidden from the eyes of men, and with Him a company of priests, the companions of His retirement, and the happy participators of His manifested glory. In short, nothing, as a type or shadow, could be more complete. In the first place, Aaron and his sons washed with water — a type of Christ and His people, as viewed in God's eternal decree, sanctified together, in purpose. (Lev. 8: 6) Then we have the mode and order in which this purpose was to be carried out. Aaron, in solitude, is robed and anointed — a type of Christ as sanctified and sent into the world, and anointed by the Holy Ghost. (Ver. 7-12; comp. Luke 3: 21, 22; John 10: 36; John 12: 24) Then, we have the presentation and acceptance of the sacrifice, in virtue of which Aaron and his sons were anointed and sanctified together, (ver. 14 - 29) a type of the cross, in its application to those who now constitute Christ's priestly household, who are united to Him, anointed with Him, hidden with Him, and expecting with Him "the eighth day," when He with them shall be manifested in all the brightness of that glory which belongs to Him in the eternal purpose of God. (John 14: 19; Acts; 2: 33; 19: 1-7; Col. 3: 1-4.) Finally, we have Israel brought into the full enjoyment of the results of accomplished atonement. They are gathered before the Lord:" And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and Peace offerings." (See Lev. 9: 1-22.)

What, now, we may legitimately enquire, remains to be done? Simply that the topstone should be brought forth with shoutings of victory and hymns of praise. "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: *and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people.* And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, **THEY SHOUTED, AND FELL ON THEIR FACES.**" (ver. 23, 24) This was the shout of victory — the prostration of worship. All was complete. The sacrifice — the robed and mitred priest — the Priestly family associated with their Head in priestly benediction — the appearance of the King and Priest — in short, nothing was lacking, and therefore the divine glory appeared, and the whole

assembly fell prostrate, in adoring worship. It is, altogether, a truly magnificent scene — a marvellously beautiful shadow of good things to come. And, be it remembered, that all which is here shadowed forth will, ere long, be fully actualised. Our great High Priest has passed into the heavens, in the full value and power of accomplished atonement. He is hidden there, now and, with Him, all the members of His priestly family but when the "seven days" have run their course, and "the eighth day" casts its beams upon the earth, then shall the remnant of Israel — a repentant and an expectant people — hail, with a shout of victory, the manifested presence of the Royal Priest; and, in immediate association with Him, shall be seen a company of worshippers occupying the most exalted position. These are "the good things to come" things, surely, well worth waiting for — things worthy of God to give — things in which He shall be eternally glorified, and His people eternally blessed.

Leviticus 10.

The page of human history has ever been a sadly blotted one. It is a record of failure, from first to last. Amid all the delights of Eden, man hearkened to the tempter's lie. (Gen. 3) When preserved from judgement, by the hand of electing love, and introduced into a restored earth, he was guilty of the sin of intemperance. (Gen. 9) When conducted, by Jehovah's outstretched arm, into the land of Canaan, he "forsook; the Lord, and served Baal and Ashteroth." (Judges 2: 13) When placed at the very summit of earthly power and glory, with untold wealth at his feet, and all the resources of the world at his command, he gave his heart to the uncircumcised stranger. (1 Kings 11) No sooner had the blessings of the gospel been promulgated than it became needful for the Holy Ghost to prophesy Concerning "grievous wolves," "apostasy," and all manner of failure. (Acts 20: 29; 1 Tim. 4: 1-3; 2 Tim. 3: 1-5; 2 Peter 3; Jude) And, to crown all, we have the prophetic record of human apostasy from amid all the splendours of millennial glory. (Rev. 20: 7-10)

Thus, man spoils everything. Place him in a position of highest dignity, and he will degrade himself. Endow him with the most ample privileges, and he will abuse them. Scatter blessings around him, in richest profusion, and he will prove ungrateful. Place him in the midst of the most impressive institutions, and he will corrupt them. Such is man! Such is nature, in its fairest forms, and under the most favourable circumstances!

Hence, therefore, we are, in a measure, prepared for the words with which our chapter opens. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord which he commanded them not." What a contrast to the scene with which our last section closed! There all was done "as the Lord commanded," and the result was, manifested glory. Here something is done which the Lord commanded them not," and the result is judgement, hardly had the echo of the shout of victory died away ere the elements of a spurious worship were prepared. Hardly had the divine position been assured ere it was deliberately abandoned, through neglect of the divine commandment. No sooner were those priests inaugurated,

than they grievously failed in the discharge of their priestly functions.

And in what did their failure consist? Were they spurious priests? Were they mere pretenders? By no means. They were genuine sons of Aaron — true members of the priestly family — duly appointed priests. Their vessels of ministry and their priestly garments, too, would seem to have been alright. What, then, was their sin? Did they stain the curtains of the tabernacle with human blood, or pollute the sacred precincts with some crime which shocks the moral sense? We have no proof of their having done so. Their sin was this: "They offered strange fire before the Lord which he commanded them not." Here was their sin. They departed in their worship from the plain word of Jehovah, who had fully and plainly instructed them as to the mode of their worship. We have already alluded to the divine fullness and sufficiency of the word of the Lord, in reference to every branch of priestly service. There was no room left for man to introduce what he might deem desirable or expedient. "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded "was quite sufficient. It made all very plain and very simple. Nothing was needed, on man's part, save a spirit of implicit obedience to the divine command. But, herein, they failed. Man has always proved himself ill-disposed to walk in the narrow path of strict adherence to the plain word of God. The by-path has ever seemed to present resistless charms to the poor human heart. "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." (Prov. 9: 17) Such is the enemy's language; but the lowly, obedient heart knows full well that the path of subjection to the word of God is the only one that leads to "waters" that are really "sweet," or to "bread" that can rightly be called "pleasant." Nadab and Abihu might have deemed one kind of "fire" as good as another; but it was not their province to decide as to that. They should have acted according to the word of the Lord; but, instead of this, they took their own way, and reaped the awful fruits thereof "He knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

"And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." How deeply Solemn! Jehovah was dwelling in the midst of His people, to govern, to judge, and to act,

according to the claims of His nature. At the close of Lev. 9 we read, "And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat." This was Jehovah's acceptance of a true sacrifice. But, in Lev. 10 it is His judgement upon erring priests. It is a double action of the same fire. The burnt offering went up as a sweet odour; the "strange fire" was rejected as an abomination. The Lord was glorified in the former; but it would have been a dishonour to accept the latter. Divine grace accepted and delighted in that which was a type of Christ's most precious sacrifice; divine holiness rejected that which was the fruit of man's corrupt will — a will never more hideous and abominable than when active in the things of God.

"Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." The dignity and glory of the entire economy depended upon the strict maintenance of Jehovah's righteous claims. If these were to be trifled with, all was forfeited. If man were permitted to defile the sanctuary of the divine presence by "strange fire," there was an end to everything. Nothing could be permitted to ascend from the priestly censer but the pure fire, kindled from off the altar of God, and fed by the "pure incense beaten small." Beauteous type of true saintly worship, of which the Father is the object, Christ the material, and the Holy Ghost the power. Man must not be allowed to introduce his devices into the worship of God. All his efforts can only issue in the presentation of "strange fire" — unhallowed incense — false worship. His very best attempts are an absolute abomination in the sight of God.

I speak not, here, of the honest struggles of earnest spirits searching after peace with God — of the sincere efforts of upright, though unenlightened, consciences, to attain to a knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, by works of law or the ordinances of systematic religion. All such will, doubtless, issue, through the exceeding goodness of God, in the clear light of a known and an enjoyed salvation. They prove, very clearly, that peace is earnestly sought; though, at the same time, they prove, just as clearly, that peace has not yet been found. There never yet was one, who honestly followed the faintest glimmerings of light which fell upon his understanding,

who did not, in due time, receive more. "To him that hath shall more be given." And again, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

All this is as plain as it is encouraging; but it leaves wholly untouched the question of the human will, and its impious workings in connection with the service and worship of God. All such workings must, inevitably, call down, sooner or later, the solemn judgement of a righteous God who cannot suffer His claims to be trifled with. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. Men will be dealt with according to their profession. If men are honestly seeking, they will, assuredly, find; but, when men approach as worshippers, they are no longer to be regarded as seekers, but as those who profess to have found; and, then, if their priestly censer smokes with unhallowed fire, if they offer unto God the elements of a spurious worship, if they profess to tread His courts, unwashed, unsanctified, unsubdued, if they place on His altar the workings of their own corrupt will, what must be the result? Judgement! Yes, sooner or later, judgement must come. It may linger; but it will come. It could not be otherwise. And not only must judgement come, at last; but there is, in every case, the immediate rejection, on the part of Heaven, of all worship which has not the Father for its object, Christ for its material, and the Holy Ghost for its power. God's holiness is as quick; to reject all "strange fire" as His grace is ready to accept the faintest, feeblest breathings of a true heart. He must pour out His righteous judgement upon all false worship, though He will never "quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed," The thought of this is most solemnising, when one calls to mind the thousands of censers smoking with strange fire throughout the wide domain of Christendom. May the Lord, in His rich grace, add to the number of true worshippers who worship the Father in spirit and in truth. (John 4) It is infinitely happier to think of the true worship ascending, from honest hearts, to the throne of God, than to contemplate, even for a moment, the spurious worship on which the divine judgements must, ere long, be poured out. Every one who knows, through grace, the pardon of his sins, through the atoning blood of Jesus, can worship the Father, in spirit and in truth. He knows the proper ground, the proper object, the proper title, the proper capacity of

worship. These things can only be known in a divine way. They do not belong to nature or to earth. They are spiritual and heavenly. Very much of that which passes among men for the worship of God is but "strange fire "after all. There is neither the pure fire nor the pure incense, and, therefore, Heaven accepts it not; and, albeit the divine judgement is not seen to fall upon those who present such worship, as it fell upon Nadab and Abihu, of old, this is only because "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." It is not because the worship is acceptable to God, but because God is gracious. The time, however, is rapidly approaching when the strange fire will be quenched for ever, when the throne of God shall no longer be insulted by clouds of impure incense ascending from unpurged worshippers; when all that is spurious shall be abolished, and the whole universe shall be as one vast and magnificent temple, in which the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be worshipped throughout the everlasting ages.

Grateful incense this, ascending

Ever to the Father's throne;

Every knee to Jesus bending,

All the mind in heaven is one.

All the Father's counsels claiming

Equal honours to the Son,

All the Son's effulgence beaming,

Makes the Father's glory known.

By the Spirit all pervading,

Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,

Crowned with light and joy unfading

Hail Him as the great "I AM."

For this the redeemed are waiting; and, blessed be God, it is but a little while when all their longing desires shall be fully met, and met for ever — yea met, after such a fashion, as to elicit from each and all the touching confession of Sheba's queen, that "the half was not told me." May the Lord hasten the happy time!

We must, now, return to our solemn chapter, and, lingering a little longer over it, endeavour to gather up and bear away with us some of its salutary teaching, for truly salutary it is, in an age like the present, when there is so much "strange fire" abroad.

There is something unusually arresting and impressive in the way in which Aaron received the heavy stroke of divine judgement. "*Aaron held his peace.*" It was a solemn scene. His two sons struck dead at his aide, smitten down by the fire of divine judgement.* He had but just seen them clothed in their garments of glory and beauty — washed, robed, and anointed. They had stood with him, before the Lord, to be inaugurated into the priestly office. They had offered, in company with him, the appointed sacrifices. They had seen the beams of the divine glory darting from the shekinah, they had seen the fire of Jehovah fall upon the sacrifice and consume it. They had heard the shout of triumph issuing from an assembly of adoring worshippers. All this had but recently passed before him; and now, alas! his two sons lie at his side, in the grasp of death. The fire of the Lord which so recently fed upon an acceptable sacrifice, had, now, fallen in judgement upon them, and what could he say? Nothing. "Aaron held his peace." "I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." It was the hand of God; and although it might, in the judgement of flesh and blood, seem to be a very heavy hand, yet he had only to bow his head, in silent awe and reverent acquiescence. "*I was dumb . . . because thou didst it.*" This was the suited attitude, in the presence of the divine visitation. Aaron, doubtless, felt that the very pillars of his house were shaken by the thunder of divine judgement; and he could only stand, in silent amazement, in the midst of the soul subduing scene. A father bereaved of his two sons, and, in such a manner, and under such

circumstances, was no ordinary case. It furnished a deeply-impressive commentary upon the words of the Psalmist, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." (Psalm 89) "Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" May we learn to walk softly in the divine presence — to tread Jehovah's courts with unshod foot and reverent spirit. May our priestly censer ever bear upon it the one material, the beaten incense of Christ's manifold perfections, and may the power of the Spirit kindle up the hallowed flame. All else is not only worthless, but vile. Everything that springs from nature's energy, everything produced by the actings of the human will, the most fragrant incense of man's devising, the most intense ardour of natural devotion, will all issue in "strange fire" and evoke the solemn judgement of the Lord God Almighty. Oh! for a thoroughly truthful heart, and worshipping spirit, in the presence of our God and Father, continually!

{*Lest any reader should be troubled with a difficulty in reference to the souls of Nadab, and Abihu, I would say that no such question ought ever to be raised. In such cases as Nadab and Abihu, in Leviticus 10; Korah and his company, in Numbers 16; the whole congregation, Joshua and Caleb excepted, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, Numbers 14 and Hebrews 3; Achan and his family, Joshua 7; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5; those who were judged for abuses at the Lord's table, 1 Cor. 11. In all such cases, the question of the soul's salvation is never raised. We are simply called to see, in them, the solemn actings of God, in government in the midst of His people. This relieves the mind from all difficulty. Jehovah dwelt, of old, between the Cherubim, to judge His people in everything; and God the Holy Ghost dwells, now, in the church, to order and govern, according to the perfection of His presence. He was so really and personally present that Ananias and Sapphira could lie to Him, and He could execute judgement upon them. It was as positive and as immediate an exhibition of His actings in government as we have in the matter of Nadab and Abihu, or Achan, or any other.

This is a great truth to get hold of. God is not only for His people, but with them, and in them. He is to be counted upon, for everything, whether it be great or small. He is present to comfort

and help. He is there to chasten and judge. He is there "for exigence of every hour. He is sufficient. Let faith count upon Him. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I." (Matt. 18: 20) And, assuredly, where He is, we want no more.}

But let not any upright, though timid, heart be discouraged or alarmed. It is too often the case that those who really ought to be alarmed take no heed; while those for whom the Spirit of grace would only design a word of comfort and encouragement, apply to themselves, in a wrong way, the startling warnings of Holy Scripture. No doubt, the meek and contrite heart that trembles at the word of the Lord, is in a safe condition; but then we should remember that a father warns his child, not because he does not regard him as his child, but because he does; and one of the happiest proofs of the relationship is the disposition to receive and profit by the warning. The parental voice, even though its tone be that of solemn admonition, will reach the child's heart, but, certainly, not to raise, in that heart, a question as to its relationship with the one who speaks. If a son were to question his sonship whenever his father warns, it would be a poor affair indeed. The judgement which had just fallen upon Aaron's house did not make him doubt that he was really a priest. It merely had the effect of teaching him how to conduct himself in that high and holy position.

"And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people; but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses."

Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar, were to remain unmoved in their elevated place — their holy dignity — their position of priestly sanctity. Neither the failure, nor yet the judgement consequent thereon, was to be allowed to interfere with those who wore the priestly robes, and were anointed with "the oil of the Lord." That holy oil had placed them in a sacred enclosure where the influences of sin, of death, and of judgement could not reach them. Those who were outside, who were at a distance from the sanctuary, who were

not in the position of priests, they might "bemoan the burning;" but as for Aaron and his sons, they were to go on in the discharge of their hallowed functions, as though nothing had happened. Priests in the sanctuary were not to bemoan, but to worship. They were not to weep, as in the presence of death, but to bow their anointed heads, in presence of the divine visitation. "The fire of the Lord" might act, and do its solemn work of judgement; but, to a true priest, it mattered not what that "fire" had come to do, whether to express the divine approval, by consuming a sacrifice, or the divine displeasure, by consuming the offerers of "strange fire," he had but to Worship. That "fire" was a well-known manifestation of the divine presence, in Israel of old, and whether it acted in "mercy or in judgement," the business of all true priests was to worship. "I will sing of mercy and of judgement; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing."

There is a deep and holy lesson for the soul in all this. Those who are brought nigh to God, in the power of the blood, and by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, must move in a sphere beyond the range of nature's influences. Priestly nearness to God gives the soul such an insight into all His ways, such a sense of the rightness of all His dispensations, that one is enabled to worship in His presence, even though the stroke of His hand has removed from us the object of tender affection. It may be asked, Are we to be stoics? I ask, were Aaron and his sons stoics? Nay, they were priests. Did they not feel as men? Yes; but they worshipped as priests. This is profound. It opens up a region of thought, feeling, and experience, in which nature can never move — a region of which, with all its boasted refinement and sentimentality, nature knows absolutely nothing. We must tread the sanctuary of God, in true priestly energy, in order to enter into the depth, meaning, and power of such holy mysteries.

The Prophet Ezekiel was called, in his duty, to sit down to this difficult lesson. "Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of *men* And I did in the morning as I was commanded." (Ezek. 24: 16-18) It will

be said that all this was as "a sign" to Israel. True; but it proves that in prophetic testimony, as well as in priestly worship, we must rise superior to all the claims and influences of nature and of earth. Aaron's sons and Ezekiel's wife were cut down with a stroke; and, yet, neither the priest nor the prophet was to uncover his head or shed a tear.

Oh! my reader, how far have you and I progressed in this profound lesson? No doubt, both reader and writer have to make the same humiliating confession. Too often, alas! we "Walk as men" and "eat the bread of men." Too often are we robbed of our high priestly privileges by the workings of nature and the influences of earth. These things must be watched against. Nothing save realised priestly nearness to God can ever preserve the heart from the power of evil, or maintain its spiritual tone. All believers are priests unto God, and nothing can possibly deprive them of their position as such. But though they cannot lose their position, they may grievously fail in the discharge of their functions. These things are not sufficiently distinguished. Some there are who, while looking at the precious truth of the believer's security, forget the possibility of his failing in the discharge of his priestly functions. Others, on the contrary, looking at the failure, venture to call in question the security.

Now, I desire that my reader should keep clear of both the above errors. He should be fully established in the divine doctrine of the eternal security of every member of the true priestly house; but he should also bear in mind the possibility of failure, and the constant need of watchfulness and prayer, lest he should fail. May all those who have been brought to know the hallowed elevation of priests unto God be preserved, by His heavenly grace, from every species of failure, whether it be personal defilement, or the presentation of any of the varied forms of "strange fire" which abound so in the professing church.

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that

ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." (Ver. 8-11)

The effect of wine is to excite nature, and all natural excitement hinders that calm, well-balanced condition of soul which is essential to the proper discharge of the priestly office. So far from using any means to excite nature, we should treat it as a thing having no existence. Thus only shall we be in a moral condition to serve in the sanctuary, to form a dispassionate judgement between clean and unclean, and to expound and communicate the mind of God. It devolves upon each one to judge, for himself, what, in his special case, would act as "wine or strong drink."* The things which excite mere nature are manifold indeed — wealth, ambition, politics, the varied objects of emulation around us in the world. All these things act, with exciting power, upon nature, and entirely unfit us for every department of priestly service. If the heart be swollen with feelings of pride, covetousness, or emulation, it is utterly impossible that the pure air of the sanctuary can be enjoyed, or the sacred functions of priestly ministry discharged. Men speak of the versatility of genius, or a capacity to turn quickly from one thing to another. But the most versatile genius that was ever possessed could not enable a man to pass from an unhallowed arena of literary, commercial, or political competition, into the holy retirement of the sanctuary of the divine presence; nor could it ever adjust the eye that had become dimmed by the influence of such scenes, so as to enable it to discern, with priestly accuracy, the difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." No, my reader, God's priests must keep themselves apart from "wine and strong drink." Theirs is a path of holy separation and abstraction. They are to be raised far above the influence of earthly joy as well as earthly Sorrow. If they have ought to do with "strong wine," it is only that it may be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering, in the holy place." (Num. 28: 7) In other words, the joy of God's priests is not the joy of earth, but the joy of heaven, the joy of the sanctuary. "The joy of the Lord is their strength."

{*Some have thought that, owing to the special place which this direction about wine occupies, Nadab and Abihu must have been under the influence of strong drink, when they offered the

"strange fire." But, be this as it may, we have to be thankful for a most valuable principle, in reference to our conduct, as spiritual priests. We are to refrain from everything which would produce the same effect upon our spiritual man, as strong drink produces upon the physical man.

It needs hardly to be remarked that the Christian should be *most jealous* over himself as to the use of wine or strong drink. Timothy, as we know, needed an apostolic recommendation to induce him even to touch it, for his health's sake. (1 Tim. 5) A beautiful proof of Timothy's habitual self-denial, and of the thoughtful love of the Spirit, in the apostle. I must confess that one's moral sense is offended by seeing Christians making use of strong drink in cases where it is, very manifestly, not medicinal. I rarely, if ever, see a spiritual person indulge in such a thing. One trembles to see a Christian the mere slave of a habit, whatever that habit may be. It proves that he is not keeping his body in subjection, and he is in great danger of being "disapproved." (1 Cor. 9: 27)}

Would that all this holy instruction were more deeply pondered by us! We, surely, stand much in need of it. If our priestly responsibilities are not duly attended to, all must be deranged. When we contemplate the camp of Israel, we may observe three circles, and the innermost of these circles had its centre in the sanctuary. There was first the circle of men of war. (Num. 1, 2) Then the circle of Levites round about the tabernacle. (Num. 3, 4) And, lastly, the innermost circle of priests, ministering in the holy place. Now, let it be remembered that the believer is called to move in all those circles. He enters into conflict, as a man of war. (Eph. 6: 11-17; 1 Tim. 1: 18; 1 Tim. 6: 12; 2 Tim. 4: 7) He serves, as a Levite, in the midst of his brethren, according to his measure and sphere. (Matt. 14: 14, 15; Luke 19: 12, 13.) Finally, he sacrifices and worships, as a priest, in the holy place. (Heb. 13: 15, 16; 1 Peter 2: 5, 9) The last of these shall endure for ever. And, moreover, it is as we are enabled, now, to move aright in that holy circle, that all other relations and responsibilities are rightly discharged. Hence, every thing that incapacitates us for our priestly functions — every thing that draws us off from the centre of that innermost circle, in which it is our privilege to move — every thing, in short, that tends to

derange our priestly relation, or dim our priestly vision, must, of necessity, unfit us for the service which we are called to render, and for the warfare which we are called to wage.

These are weighty considerations. Let us dwell upon them. The heart must be kept right — the conscience pure — the eye single — the spiritual vision undimmed. The soul's business in the holy place must be faithfully and diligently attended to, else we shall go all wrong. Private communion with God must be kept up, else we shall be fruitless, as servants, and defeated, as men of war. It is vain for us to bustle about, and run hither and thither, in what we call service, or indulge in vapid words about Christian armour and Christian warfare. If we are not keeping our priestly garments unspotted, and if we are not keeping ourselves free from all that would excite nature, we shall, assuredly, break down. The *priest* must keep his heart with all diligence, else the *Levite* will fail, and the *warrior* will be defeated.

It is, let me repeat it, the business of each one to be fully aware of what it is that to him proves to be "wine and strong drink" — what it is that produces excitement — that blunts his spiritual perception, or dims his priestly vision. It may be an auction mart, a cattle-show, a newspaper. It may be the merest trifle. But no matter what it is, if it tends to excite, it will disqualify us for priestly ministry; and if we are disqualified as priests, we are unfit for everything, inasmuch as our success in every department and in every sphere must ever depend upon our cultivating a spirit of worship.

Let us, then, exercise a spirit of self-judgement — a spirit of watchfulness over our habits, our ways, and our associations; and when we, by grace, discover ought that tends, in the smallest degree, to unfit us for the elevated exercises of the sanctuary, let us put it away from us, cost what it may. Let us not suffer ourselves to be the slaves of a habit. Communion with God should be dearer to our hearts than all beside; and just in proportion as we prize that communion, shall we watch and pray against anything that would rob us of it — everything that would excite, ruffle, or unhinge.*

{*Some, perhaps, may think that the warning of Lev. 10: 9 affords a warrant for *occasional* indulgence in those things which tend to excite the natural mind, inasmuch as it is said, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation." To this we may reply, that the sanctuary is not a place which the Christian is, *occasionally*, to visit, but a place in which he is, *habitually*, to serve and worship. It is the sphere in which he should "live, and more, and have his being." The more we live in the presence of God, the less can we bear to be out of it; and no one who knows the deep joy of being there could lightly indulge in ought that would take or keep him Hence. There is not that object within the compass of earth which would, in the judgement of 3 spiritual mind, be an equivalent for one hour's fellowship with God.}

"And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy: and ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the Lord made by fire; for so I am commanded." (Ver. 12, 13)

There are few things in which we are more prone to fail than in the maintenance of the divine standard, when human failure has set in. Like David, when the Lord made a breach upon Uzza, because of his failure in putting his hand to the ark, "He was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" (1 Chr. 13: 12) It is exceedingly difficult to bow to the divine judgement, and, at the same time, to hold fast the divine ground. The temptation is to lower the standard, to come down from the lofty elevation, to take human ground. We must ever carefully guard against this evil, which is all the more dangerous as wearing the garb of modesty, self-distrust, and humility. Aaron and his sons, notwithstanding all that had occurred, were to eat the meat offering in the holy place. They were to do so, not because all had gone on in perfect order, but "because it is thy due," and "so I am commanded." Though there had been failure, yet their place was in the tabernacle; and those who were there had certain "dues" founded upon the divine commandment. Though man had failed ten thousand times

over, the word of the Lord could not fail; and that word had secured certain privileges for all true priests, which it was their place to enjoy. Were God's priests to have nothing to eat, no priestly food, because failure had set in? Were those that were left to be allowed to starve, because Nadab and Abihu had offered "strange fire?" This would never do. God is faithful, and He can never allow any one to be empty in His blessed presence. The prodigal may wander, and squander, and come to poverty; but it must ever hold good that "in my Father's house is bread enough and to spare."

"And the wave breast and the heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for they be thy due, and thy sons' due, which are *given* out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel *by a statute for ever; as the Lord hath commanded.*" (Ver. 14, 15.) What strength and stability we have here! All the members of the priestly family, "daughters" as well as "sons" — all, whatever be the measure of energy or capacity, are to feed upon "the breast" and "the shoulder," the affections and the strength of the true Peace Offering, as raised from the dead, and presented, in resurrection, before God. This precious privilege is theirs as, "given, by a statute for ever, as the Lord hath commanded." This makes all "sure and steadfast," come what may. Men may fail, and come short; strange fire may be offered, but God's priestly family must never be deprived of the rich and gracious portion which divine love has provided, and divine faithfulness secured, "by a statute for ever."

However, we must distinguish between those privileges which belonged to all the members of Aaron's family, "daughters" as well as "sons," and those which could only be enjoyed by the male portion of the family. This point has already been referred to, in the notes on the offerings. There are certain blessings which are the common portion of all believers, simply as such; and there are those which demand a higher measure of spiritual attainment and priestly energy to apprehend and enjoy. Now, it is worse than vain, yea, it is impious, to set up for the enjoyment of this higher measure, when we really have it not. It is one thing to hold fast the privileges which are "given" of God, and ran never be taken away, and quite another to assume a measure of spiritual capacity to which we have never

attained. No doubt, we ought to desire earnestly the very highest measure of priestly communion, the most elevated order of priestly privilege. But, then, desiring a thing, and assuming to have it, are very different.

This thought will throw light upon the closing paragraph of our chapter. "And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left, saying, Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord; and such things have befallen me; and if I had eaten the sin offering today, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord And when Moses heard that, he was content."

The "daughters" of Aaron were not permitted to eat of "the sin offering." This high privilege belonged only to the "sons," and it was a type of the most elevated form of priestly service. To eat of the sin offering was the expression of full identification with the offerer, and this demanded an amount of priestly capacity and energy which found its type in "the sons of Aaron." On the occasion before us, however, it is very evident that Aaron and his sons were not in a condition to rise to this high and holy ground. They ought to have been, but they were not. "Such things have befallen me," said Aaron. This, no doubt, was to be deplored; but, yet, "when Moses heard it, he was content." It is far better to be real in the confession of our failure and shortcoming, than to put forth pretensions to spiritual power which are wholly without foundation.

Thus, then, Leviticus 10 opens with positive sin, and closes with negative failure. Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire;" and Eleazar and Ithamar were unable to eat the sin offering. The former was met by divine judgement; the latter, by divine forbearance. There could be no allowance for "strange fire." It was positively flying in the face of God's plain commandment. There is, obviously,

a wide difference between a deliberate rejection of a plain command, and mere inability to rise to the height of a divine privilege. The former is open dishonour done to God; the latter is a forfeiture of one's own blessing. There should be neither the one nor the other, but the difference between the two is easily traced.

May the Lord, in His infinite grace, ever keep us abiding in the secret retirement of His holy presence, abiding in His love, and feeding upon His truth. Thus shall we be preserved from "strange fire," and "strong drink" — from false worship of every kind, and fleshly excitement, in all its forms. Thus, too, shall we be enabled to carry ourselves aright in every department of priestly ministration, and to enjoy all the privileges of our priestly position. The communion of a Christian is like a sensitive plant. It is easily hurt by the rude influences of an evil world. It will expand beneath the genial action of the air of heaven; but must firmly shut itself up from the chilling breath of time and sense. Let us remember these things, and ever seek to keep close within the sacred precincts of the divine presence. There, all is pure, safe, and happy.

Far from a world of grief and sin,

With God eternally shut in.

Leviticus 11.

The Book of Leviticus may be termed "the priest's guide book." This is very much its character. It is full of principles for the guidance of such as desire to live in the enjoyment of priestly nearness to God. Had Israel gone on with Jehovah, according to the grace in which He had brought them up, out of the land of Egypt, they should have been to Him "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19: 6) This, however, they failed to do. They put themselves at a distance. They got under law and failed to keep it. Hence, Jehovah had to take up a certain tribe, and from that tribe a certain family, and from that family a certain man, and to him and to his house, was granted the high privilege of drawing nigh, as priests unto God.

Now, the privileges of such a position were immense; but it had its heavy responsibilities, likewise. There would be the ever-recurring demand for the exercise of a discerning mind. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 2: 7) The priest was not only to bear the judgement of the congregation, before the Lord, but also to expound the ordinances of the Lord to the congregation. He was to be the ever-ready medium of communication between Jehovah and the assembly. He was not merely to know the mind of God, for himself, but be able also to interpret that mind to the people. All this would demand, of necessity, constant watching, constant waiting, constant hanging over the page of inspiration, that he might drink in, to his very soul, all the precepts, the judgements, the statutes, the laws, the commandments, and the ordinances of the God of Israel, so as to be able to instruct the congregation, in reference to "those things which ought to be done."

There was no room left for the play of fancy, the working of imagination, the introduction of man's plausible inferences, or the cunning devices of human expediency. Everything was laid down, with the divine precision and commanding authority of a "thus saith the Lord." Minute and elaborate as was the detail of sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, nothing was left for man's brain to originate. He was not even permitted to decide upon the kind of sacrifice to be

offered, upon any given occasion; nor yet as to the mode in which such sacrifice was to be presented. Jehovah took care of everything. Neither the congregation nor the priest had any authority whatsoever, to decree, enact, or suggest so much as a single item throughout all the vast array of ordinances in the Mosaic economy. *The word of the Lord settled all. Man had only to obey.*

This, to an obedient heart, was nothing short of an unspeakable mercy. It is quite impossible to overestimate the privilege of being permitted to betake oneself to the oracles of God, and there find the most ample, guidance as to all the details of one's faith and service, day by day. All that we need is a broken will, a mortified mind, a single eye. The divine guide book is as full as we can possibly desire. We want no more. To imagine, for a moment, that ought is left for man's wisdom to supply, must be regarded as a flagrant insult offered to the sacred canon. No one can read the Book of Leviticus, and not be struck with the extraordinary painstaking, on the part of Israel's God, to furnish His people with the most minute instruction upon every point connected with His service and worship. The most cursory reader of the book might, at least, bear away with him this touching and interesting lesson.

And, truly, if ever there was a time when this self-same lesson needed to be read out in the ears of the professing church, this is the time. On all hands, the divine sufficiency of Holy Scripture is called in question;. In some cases this is openly and deliberately done; in others it is, with less frankness, hinted, insinuated, implied, and inferred. The Christian mariner is told, directly, or indirectly, that the divine chart is insufficient for all the intricate details of his voyage that such changes have taken place in the ocean of life, since that chart was made, that, in many cases, it is entirely deficient for the purposes of modern navigation. He is told that the currents, tides, coasts, strands, and shores of that ocean are quite different, now, from what they were from centuries ago, and that, as a necessary consequence, he must have recourse to the aids which modern navigation supplies, in order to make up for the deficiencies in the old chart, which is, as a matter of course, admitted to have been perfect at the time it was made.

Now, I earnestly desire that the Christian reader should be able, with clearness and decision, to meet this grievous dishonour done to the precious volume of inspiration, every line of which comes to him fresh from his Father's bosom, through the pen of God the Holy Ghost. I desire that he should meet it, whether it comes before him in the shape of a bold and blasphemous statement, or a learned and plausible inference. Whatever garb it wears, it owes its origin to the enemy of Christ, the enemy of the Bible, the enemy of the soul. If, indeed, the Word of God be not sufficient, then where are we? or whither shall we turn? To whom shall we betake ourselves for aid, if our Father's book be, in any respect, defective? God says that His book can "furnish us *thoroughly* to *all* good works." (2 Tim. 3: 17) Man says, no; there are many things about which the Bible is silent, which, nevertheless, we need to know. Whom am I to believe? God or man? Our reply to any one who questions the divine sufficiency of Scripture, is just this, "either you are not a 'man of God,' or else that for which you want a warrant is not 'a good work,'" This is plain. No one can possibly think otherwise, with his eye resting on 2 Timothy 3: 17.

Oh! for a deeper sense of the fullness, majesty, and authority of the Word of God! We very much need to be braced up on this point. We want such a deep, bold, vigorous, influential, and abiding sense of the supreme authority of the divine canon, and of its absolute completeness for every age, every clime, every position, every department — personal, social, and ecclesiastical, as shall enable us to withstand every attempt of the enemy to depreciate the value of that inestimable treasure. May our hearts enter more into the spirit of those words of the Psalmist, "Thy word is true *from the beginning*: and every one of thy righteous judgements *endureth for ever*." (Psalm 119: 160)

The foregoing train of thought is awakened by the perusal of the eleventh chapter of the Book of Leviticus. Therein we find Jehovah entering, in most marvellous detail, into a description of beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, and furnishing His people with various marks by which they were to know what was clean and what was unclean. We have the summing up of the entire contents of this remarkable chapter in the two closing verses. "This is the law of the

beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth; *to make a difference* between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten."

With regard to beasts, two things were essential to render them clean, they should chew the cud and divide the hoof. "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven footed, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat." Either of these marks would, of itself, have been wholly insufficient to constitute ceremonial cleanness. The two should go together. Now, while these two marks were quite sufficient for the guidance of an Israelite, as to the cleanness or uncleanness of an animal, without any reference as to why or wherefore such marks were given, or what they meant, yet is the Christian permitted to enquire into the spiritual truth wrapped up in these ceremonial enactments.

What, then, are we to learn from those two features in a clean animal? The chewing of the cud expresses the natural process of "inwardly digesting" that which one eats; while the divided hoof sets forth the character of one's outward walk. There is, as we know, an intimate connection between the two, in the christian life. The one who feeds upon the green pastures of the Word of God, and inwardly digests what he takes in — the one who is enabled to combine calm meditation with prayerful study, will, without doubt, manifest that character of outward walk which is to the praise of Him who has graciously given us His word to form our habits and govern our ways.

It is to be feared that many who *read the Bible* do not *digest the word*. The two things are widely different. One may read chapter after chapter, book after book, and not digest so much as a single line. We may read the Bible as part of a dull and profitless routine; but, through lack of the ruminating powers — the digestive organs, we derive no profit whatsoever. This should be carefully looked into. The cattle that browse on the green may teach us a wholesome lesson. They, first, diligently gather up the refreshing pasture, and then calmly lie down to chew the cud. Striking and beautiful picture of a Christian feeding upon and inwardly digesting the precious contents of the volume of inspiration. Would that there were more of

this amongst us Were we more accustomed to betake ourselves to the Word as the necessary pasture of our souls, we should, assuredly, be in a more vigorous and healthy condition. Let us beware of reading the Bible as a dead form — a cold duty — a piece of religious routine.

The same caution is needful in reference to the public exposition of the Word. Let those who expound Scripture to their fellows, first feed and digest for themselves. Let them read and ruminate, in private, not merely for others, but for themselves. It is a poor thing for a man to be continually occupied in procuring food for other people, And he himself dying of starvation. Then, again, let those who attend upon the public ministry of the Word, see that they are not doing so mechanically, as by the force of mere religious habit, but with an earnest desire to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" what they hear. Then will both teachers and taught be well-conditioned, the spiritual life nourished and sustained, and the true character of outward walk exhibited.

But, be it remembered, that the chewing of the cud must never be separated from the divided hoof. If one but partially acquainted with the priest's guide book — unpractised in the divine ceremonial, happened to see an animal chewing the cud, he might hastily pronounce him clean. This would have been a serious error. A more careful reference to the divine directory would, at once, show that he must mark the animal's walk — that he must note the impression made by each movement — that he must look for the result of the divided hoof. "Nevertheless, these shall ye not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you," &c., &c. (Ver. 4-6)

In like manner, the divided hoof was insufficient, if not accompanied by the chewing of the cud. "The swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you." (Ver. 7) In a word, then, the two things were inseparable in the case of every clean animal; and, as to the spiritual application, it is of the very last importance, in a practical point of view. The inward life and the outward walk must go together. A man may profess to love and feed upon — to study and ruminate

over the Word of God — the pasture of the soul; but, if his footprints along the pathway of life are not such as the Word requires, he is not clean. And, on the other hand, a man may seem to walk with pharisaic blamelessness; but if his walk be not the result of the hidden life, it is worse than worthless. There must be the divine principle within which feeds upon and digests the rich pasture of God's Word, else the impression of the footstep will be of no avail. The value of each depends upon its inseparable connection with the other.

We are, here, forcibly reminded of a solemn passage in the First Epistle of John, in which the apostle furnishes us with the two marks whereby we may know those that are of God. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever *doeth not righteousness*, is not of God, neither he that *loveth not his brother*." (1 John 3: 10) Here we have the two grand characteristics of the eternal life, of which all true believers are possessed, namely, "righteousness" and "love". The outward and the inward. Both must be combined. Some professing Christians are all for love, so called; and some for righteousness. Neither can exist, in a divine way, without the other. If that which is called love exist without practical righteousness, it will, in reality, be but a lax, soft, easy-going habit of mind, which will tolerate all manner of error and evil. And, if that which is called righteousness exist without love, it will be a stern, proud, pharisaic, self-sufficient temper of soul resting upon the miserable basis of personal reputation. But where the divine life is in energy, there will ever be the inward charity combined with genuine practical righteousness. The two elements are essential in the formation of true Christian character. There must be the love that will express itself in reference to the very feeblest development of that which is of God; and, at the same time, the holiness that shrinks, with intense abhorrence, from all that is of Satan.

We shall now pass on to the consideration of that which the Levitical ceremonial taught with respect to "all that are in the waters." Here again, we find the double mark. "These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that

have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you." (Ver. 9, 10) Two things were necessary to render a fish ceremonially clean, namely, "fins and scales," which, obviously, set forth a certain fitness for the sphere and element in which the creature had to move.

But, doubtless, there was more than this. I believe it is our privilege to discern, in the natural properties with which God has endowed those creatures which move in the waters, certain spiritual qualities which belong to the Christian life. If a fish needs a "fin" to enable him to move through the waters and "scales" to resist the action thereof, so does the believer need that spiritual capacity which enables him to move onward through the scene with which he is surrounded, and, at the same time, to resist its influence — to prevent its penetrating — to keep it out. These are precious qualities. The fin and the scale are pregnant with meaning — full of practical instruction to the Christian. They exhibit to us, in ceremonial garb, two things which we specially need, namely, spiritual energy to move onward through the element which surrounds us, and the power to preserve us from its action. The one will not avail without the other. It is of no use to possess a capacity to get on, through the world, if we are not proof against the world's influence; and though we may seem to be able to keep the world out, yet if He have not the motive power, we are defective. The "fins" would not do without the "scales," nor the "scales" without the "fins" Both were required, to render a fish ceremonially clean; and we, in order to be properly equipped, require to be encased against the penetrating influence of an evil world; and, at the same time, to be furnished with a capacity to pass rapidly on.

The whole deportment of a Christian should declare him a pilgrim and a stranger here. "*Onward*" must be his motto — ever and only, onward. Let his locality and his circumstances be what they may, he is to have his eye fixed on a home beyond this perishing, passing world. He is furnished, by grace, with spiritual ability to go forward — to penetrate, energetically, through all, and carry out the earnest aspirations of his heaven-born spirit. And, while thus vigorously pushing his way onward — while "forcing his

passage to the skies," he is to keep his inward man fenced round about, and fast closed up against all external influences.

Oh! for more of the onward bent, the upward tendency! For more holy fixedness of soul, and profound retirement from this vain world! We shall have reason to bless the Lord for our meditations amid the ceremonial shadows of the Book of Leviticus, if we are led, thereby, to long more intensely after those graces which, though so dimly portrayed there, are, nevertheless, so manifestly needful for us.

From verse 13 to verse 24 of our chapter, we have the law with respect to birds. All of the carnivorous kind, that is, all that fed on flesh, were unclean. The omnivorous, or those who could eat anything, were unclean. All those which, though furnished with power to soar into the heavens, would, nevertheless, grovel upon the earth, were unclean. As to the latter class, there were some exceptional cases; (ver. 21, 22;) but the general rule, the fixed principle, the standing ordinance was as distinct as possible; "all fowls that creep, going upon all fours, shall be an abomination unto you." (Ver. 20) All this is very simple in its instruction to us. Those fowls that could feed upon flesh; those that could swallow anything or everything; and all grovelling fowls, were to be unclean to the Israel of God, because so pronounced by the God of Israel; nor can the spiritual mind have any difficulty in discerning the fitness of such an ordinance. We can not only trace in the habits of the above three classes of fowl the just ground of their being pronounced unclean; but we can also see in them the striking exhibition of that, in nature, which is to be strenuously guarded against by every true Christian. Such an one is called to refuse everything of a carnal nature. Moreover, he cannot feed, promiscuously, upon everything that comes before him. He must "try the things that differ." He must "take heed what he hears." He must exercise a discerning mind, a spiritual judgement, a heavenly taste. Finally, he must use his wings. He must rise on the pinions of faith, and find his place in the celestial sphere to which he belongs. In short, there must be nothing grovelling, nothing promiscuous, nothing unclean, for the Christian.

As to "creeping things," the following was the general rule: "And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth shall be an

abomination; it shall not be eaten." (Ver. 41) How wonderful to think of the condescending grace of Jehovah! He could stoop to give directions about a crawling reptile. He would not leave His people at a loss as to the most trivial affair. The priest's guide book contained the most simple instructions as to everything. He desired to keep His people free from the defilement consequent upon touching, tasting, or handling ought that was unclean. They were not their own, and hence they were not to do as they pleased. They belonged to Jehovah; His name was called upon them; they were identified with Him. His word was to be their grand regulating standard, in every case. From it they were to learn the ceremonial *status* of beasts, birds, fishes, and creeping things. They were not to think their own thoughts, to exercise their own reasoning powers, or be guided by their own imaginations, in such matters. *God's Word was to be their sole directory.* Other nations might eat what they pleased; but Israel enjoyed the high privilege of eating that only which was pleasing to Jehovah.

Nor was it as to the mere matter of *eating* ought that was unclean that the people of God were so jealously guarded. Bare *contact* was forbidden. (See ver. 8, 24, 26-28, 31-41) It was impossible for a member of the Israel of God to touch that which was unclean without contracting defilement. This is a principle largely unfolded, both in the law and the prophets. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, ask ye now the priests concerning the law, saying, if one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean." (Hag. 2: 11-13) Jehovah would have His people holy in all things. They were neither to eat nor touch ought that was unclean. "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby." Then follows the powerful reason for all this careful separation. "*For I am The Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the*

land of Egypt, to be *your God*: ye shall therefore be holy, *for I am holy.*" (Ver. 43-45)

It is well to see that the personal holiness of God's people — their entire separation from all manner of uncleanness, flows out of their relationship to Him. It is not upon the principle of "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou;" but simply this, "God is holy," and therefore all who are brought into association with Him must be holy, likewise. It is, in every way, worthy of God that *His* people should be holy. "Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." What else save holiness could become the house of such an One as Jehovah? If any one had asked an Israelite, of old, "Why do you shrink so from that reptile which crawls along the path?" He would have replied, "Jehovah is holy; and I belong to Him. He has said 'Touch not.'" So, also, now, if a Christian be asked why he walks apart from the ten thousand things in which the men of this world participate, his answer is simply to be, "*My Father is holy.*" This is the true foundation of personal holiness. The more we contemplate the divine character, and enter into the power of our relationship to God, in Christ, by the energy of the Holy Ghost, the holier we must, of necessity, be. There can be no progress in the condition of holiness into which the believer is introduced; but there is, and ought to be, progress in the apprehension, experience, and practical exhibition of that holiness. These things should never be confounded. All believers are in the same condition of holiness or sanctification; but their practical measure may vary to any conceivable degree. This is easily understood. The condition arises out of our *being brought nigh* to God, by the blood of the cross; the practical measure will depend upon our *keeping nigh*, by the power of the Spirit. It is not a man setting up for something superior in himself — for a greater degree of personal sanctity than is ordinarily possessed — for being, in any wise, better than his; neighbours. All such pretensions are utterly contemptible, in the judgement of every right-thinking person. But then, if God, in His exceeding grace, stoop down to our low estate, and lift us into the holy elevation of His blessed presence, in association with Christ, has He not a right to prescribe what our character is to be, as thus brought nigh? Who could think of calling in question a truth so obvious? And, further, are we not bound to aim

at the maintenance of that character which He prescribes? Are we to be accused of presumption for so doing? Was it presumption in an Israelite to refuse to touch Noy, it would have been presumption of the most daring and dangerous character to have done so. True, he might not have been able to make an uncircumcised stranger understand or appreciate the reason of his conduct; but this was not his province. Jehovah had said, "Touch not," not because an Israelite was holier in himself than a stranger; but because Jehovah was holy, and Israel belonged to Him. It needed the eye and the heart of a circumcised disciple of the law of God, in order to discern what was clean and what was not. An alien knew no difference. Thus it must ever be. It is only Wisdom's children that can justify her and approve her heavenly ways.

Ere turning from Leviticus 11, my reader might, with much spiritual profit, compare it with the tenth chapter of Acts, ver. 11-16. How strange is what must have appeared to one who had, from his earliest days, been taught in the principles of the Mosaic ritual, to see a vessel descending from heaven, "wherein were *all manner* of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and *creeping things*, and fowls of the air;" and not only to see such a vessel, so filled, but also to hear a voice, saying, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat." How wonderful. No examination of hoofs or habits! There was no need of this. The vessel and its contents had come from heaven. This was enough. The Jew might ensconce himself behind the narrow enclosures of the Jewish ritual, and exclaim, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean;" but, then, the tide of divine grace was rising, majestically, above all such enclosures, in order to embrace, in its mighty compass, "all manner" of objects, and bear them upward to heaven, in the power and on the authority of those precious words, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." It mattered not what was in the vessel, if God had cleansed it. The Author of the Book of Leviticus was about to raise the thoughts of His servant above the barriers which that book had erected, into all the magnificence of heaven's grace. He would teach him that true cleanness — the cleanness which heaven demanded, was no longer to consist in chewing the cud, dividing the hoof, or any such ceremonial marks, but in being washed in the blood of the

Lamb, which cleanseth from all sin, and renders the believer clean enough to tread the sapphire pavement of the heavenly courts.

This was a noble lesson for a Jew to learn. It was a divine lesson, before the light of which the shadows of the old economy must pass away. The hand of sovereign grace has thrown open the door of the kingdom; but not to admit ought that is unclean. This could not be. Nothing unclean can enter heaven. But, then, a cloven hoof was no longer to be the criterion; but "*what God hath cleansed.*" When God cleanses a man, he must needs be clean. Peter was about to be sent to open the kingdom to the Gentiles, as he had already opened it to the Jews; and his Jewish heart needed to be enlarged. He needed to get above the dark shadows of a by-gone age, into the meridian light that was shining from an open heaven, in virtue of a completed sacrifice. He needed to get out of the narrow current of Jewish prejudices, should be borne upon the bosom of that mighty tide of grace which was about to roll through the length and breadth of a lost world. He had to learn, too, that the standard by which true cleanness must be regulated, was no longer carnal, ceremonial, and earthly, but spiritual, moral, and heavenly. Assuredly, we may say, these were noble lessons for the apostle of the circumcision to learn upon the housetop of Simon the tanner. They were eminently calculated to soften, to expand, and elevate a mind which had been trained amid the contracting influences of the Jewish system. We bless the Lord for these precious lessons. We bless Him for the large and wealthy place in which He has set us, by the blood of the cross. We bless Him that we are no longer hemmed round about by "touch not this; taste not that; handle not the other thing; but that His Lord assures us that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. 4: 4, 5)

Leviticus 12.

This brief section reads out to us, after its own peculiar fashion, the double lesson of "man's ruin and God's remedy." But though the fashion is peculiar, the lesson is most distinct and impressive. It is, at once, deeply humbling and divinely comforting. The effect of all scripture, when interpreted to one's own soul, directly, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is to lead us out of self to Christ. wherever we see our fallen nature — at whatever stage of its history we contemplate it, whether in its conception, at its birth, or at any point along its whole career, from the womb to the coffin, it wears the double stamp of iniquity and defilement. This is, sometimes, forgotten amid the glitter and glare, the pomp and fashion, the wealth and splendour of human life. The mind of man is fruitful in devices to cover his humiliation. In various ways he seeks to ornament and gild, and put on an appearance of strength and glory; but it is all vain. He has only to be seen as he enters this world, a poor helpless creature; or, as he passes away from it, to take his place with the clod of the valley, in order to have a most convincing proof of the hollowness of all his pride, the vanity of all his glory. Those whose path through this world has been brightened by what man calls glory, have entered in nakedness and helplessness, and retreated amid disease and death.

Nor is this all. It is not merely helplessness that belongs to man — that characterises him as he enters this life. There is defilement also. "Behold," says the psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51: 5) "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25: 4) In the chapter before us, we are taught that the conception and birth of "a man child," involved "seven days" of ceremonial defilement to the mother, together with thirty-three days of separation from the sanctuary; and these periods were doubled in the case of "a maid child." Has this no voice? Can we not read, herein, an humbling lesson? Does it not declare to us, in language not to be misunderstood, that man is "an unclean thing," and that he needs the blood of atonement to cleanse him? Truly so. Man may imagine that he can work out a righteousness of his own. He may vainly boast of the dignity of human nature. He may put on a lofty air, and assume a

haughty bearing, as he moves across the stage of life; but if he would just retire for a few moments, and ponder over the short section of our book which now lies open before us, his pride, pomp, dignity, and righteousness would speedily vanish; and, instead thereof, he might find the solid basis of all true dignity, as well as the ground of divine righteousness, in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The shadow of this cross passes before us in a double way in our chapter; first, in the circumcision of the "man child," whereby he became enrolled as a member of the Israel of God; and, secondly, in the burnt offering and sin offering, whereby the mother was restored from every defiling influence, rendered fit, once more, to approach the sanctuary, and to come in contact with holy things. "And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle dove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest; who shall offer it before the Lord, and make, an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female." (Ver. 6, 7) The death of Christ, in its two grand aspects, is here introduced to our thoughts, as the only thing which could possibly meet, and perfectly remove, the defilement connected with man's natural birth. The burnt offering presents the death of Christ, according to the divine estimate thereof; the sin offering, on the other hand, presents the death of Christ, as bearing upon the sinner's need.

"And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." Nothing but blood-shedding could impart cleanness. The cross is the only remedy for man's infirmity, and man's defilement. Wherever that glorious work is apprehended, by faith, there is perfect cleanness enjoyed. Now, the apprehension may be feeble — the faith may be but wavering — the experience may be shallow; but, let the reader remember, for his soul's joy and comfort, that it is not the depth of his experience, the stability of his faith, or the strength of his apprehension, but the divine value, the

changeless efficacy of the blood of Jesus. This gives great rest to the heart. The sacrifice of the cross is the same to every member of the Israel of God, whatever be his status in the assembly. The tender considerateness of our ever gracious God is seen in the fact that the blood of a turtle dove was as efficacious for the poor, as the blood of a bullock for the rich. The full value of the atoning work was alike maintained and exhibited in each. Had it not been so, the humble Israelite, if involved in ceremonial defilement, might, as she gazed upon the well-stocked pastures of some wealthy neighbour, exclaim, "Alas! what shall I do? How shall I be cleansed? How shall I get back to my place and privilege in the assembly? I have neither flock nor herd. I am poor and needy." But, blessed be God, the case of such an one was fully met. A pigeon or turtle dove was quite sufficient. The same perfect and beautiful grace shines forth, in the case of the leper, in Lev. 14: "*And if he be poor and cannot get so much, then he shall take, &c And he shall offer the one of the turtle doves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get; even such as he is able to get*" This is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, *whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing.*" (Ver. 21, 30-32)

Grace meets the needy one just where he is, and as he is. The atoning blood is brought within the reach of the very lowest, the very poorest, the very feeblest. All who need it can have it. "If he be poor" — what then? Let him be cast aside? Ah no; Israel's God could never so deal with the poor and needy. There is ample provision for all such in the gracious expression, "Such as he can get; even such as he is able to get." Most exquisite grace! "To the poor the Gospel is preached." None can say, "the blood of Jesus was beyond me." Each can be challenged with the inquiry, "how near would you have it brought to you?" "I bring near my righteousness." How "near?" So near, that it is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." (Rom. 4: 5) Again, "the word is *nigh* thee." How "nigh?" "So nigh "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10: 9) So also that most touching and beautiful invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and *he that hath no money.*" (Isa. 55: 1)

What matchless grace shines in the expressions, "to him that *worketh not*," and, "he that hath *no money*!" They are as like God as they are unlike man. Salvation is as free as the air we breathe. Did we create the air? Did we mingle its component parts? No; but we enjoy it, and, by enjoying it, get power to live and act by Him who made it. So is it in the matter of salvation. We get it without a fraction, without an effort. We feed upon the wealth of another; we rest in the work finished by another; and, moreover, it is by so feeding and resting, that we are enabled to work for Him on whose wealth we feed, and in whose work we rest. This is a grand Gospel paradox, perfectly inexplicable to legality, but beautifully plain to faith. Divine grace delights in making provision for those who are "not able" to make provision for themselves.

But, there is another invaluable lesson furnished by this twelfth chapter of Leviticus. We not only read, herein, the grace of God to the poor, but, by comparing its closing verse with Luke 2: 24, we learn the amazing depth to which God stooped in order to manifest that grace. The Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, the pure and spotless Lamb, the Holy One, who knew no Sin, was "made of a woman," and that woman — wondrous mystery! — having borne in her womb, and brought forth, that pure and perfect, that holy and spotless human body, had to undergo the usual ceremonial, and accomplish the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses. And not only do we read divine grace in the fact of her having thus to purify herself, but also the mode in which this was accomplished. "And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, *a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons*." From this simple circumstance we learn that the reputed parents of our blessed Lord Jesus were so poor, as to be obliged to take advantage of the gracious provision made for those whose means did not afford "a lamb for a burnt offering." What a thought! The Lord of Glory, the most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth, the One to whom pertained "the cattle upon a thousand hills" — yea, the wealth of the universe — appeared in the world which His hands had made, in the narrow circumstances of humble life. The Levitical economy had made provision for the poor, and the mother of Jesus availed herself thereof. Truly, there is a profound lesson in this for the human heart. The Lord Jesus did

not make his appearance, in this world, in connection with the great or the noble. He was pre-eminently a poor man. He took His place with the poor. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8: 9)

May it ever be our joy to feed upon this precious grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which we have been made rich for time and for eternity. He emptied Himself of all that love could give, that we might be filled. He stripped Himself, that we might be clothed. He died, that we might live. He, in the greatness of His grace, travelled down from the height of divine wealth into the depth of human poverty, in order that we might be raised from the dunghill of nature's ruin, to take our place amid the princes of His people, for ever. Oh! that the sense of this grace, wrought in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, may constrain us to a more unreserved surrender of ourselves to Him, to whom we owe our present and everlasting felicity, our riches, our life, our all!

Leviticus 13-14.

Of all the functions which, according to the Mosaic ritual, the priest had to discharge, none demanded more patient attention, or more strict adherence to the divine guide-book, than the discernment and proper treatment of leprosy. This fact must be obvious to every one who studies, with any measure of care, the very extensive and important section of our book at which we have now arrived.

There were two things which claimed the priest's vigilant care, namely, the purity of the assembly, and the grace which could not admit of the exclusion of any member, save on the most clearly-established grounds. Holiness could not permit any one to remain in who ought to be out; and, on the other hand, grace would not have any one out who ought to be in. Hence, therefore, there was the most urgent need, on the part of the priest, of watchfulness, calmness, wisdom, patience, tenderness, and enlarged experience. Things might seem trifling which, in reality, were serious; and things might look like leprosy which were not it at all. The greatest care and coolness were needed. Judgement rashly formed, a conclusion hastily arrived at, might involve the most serious consequences, either as regards the assembly or some individual member thereof.

This will account for the frequent occurrence of such expressions as the following, namely, "The priest shall look;" — "The, priest shall shut up him that hath the plague *seven days*;" — "And the priest shall look on him the seventh day;" — "Then the priest shall shut him up *seven days more*" — "And the priest *shall look on him again* the seventh day;" — "And the priest shall *see him*;" — "Then the priest shall *consider*." No case was to be hastily judged, or rashly decided. No opinion was to be formed from mere hearsay. Personal observation, priestly discernment, calm reflection, strict adherence to the written word — the holy, infallible guide book — all these things were imperatively demanded of the priest, if he would form a sound judgement of each case. He was not to be guided by his own thoughts, his own feelings, his own wisdom, in any thing. He had ample guidance in the word, if only he was subject thereto. Every point, every feature, every movement, every variation, every shade and character, every peculiar symptom and

affection — all was provided for, with divine fullness and forethought; so that the priest only needed to be acquainted with, and subject to, the word in all things, in order to be preserved from ten thousand mistakes.

Thus much as to the priest and his holy responsibilities.

We shall now consider the disease of leprosy, as developed in a person, in a garment, or in a house.

Looking at this disease in a physical point of view, nothing can possibly be more loathsome; and being, so far as man is concerned, totally incurable, it furnishes a most vivid and appalling picture of sin — sin in one's natures — in his circumstances — sin in an assembly. What a lesson for the soul in the fact that such a vile and humiliating disease should be used as a type of moral evil, whether in a member of God's assembly, in the circumstances of any member, or in the assembly itself!

1. And first, then, as to leprosy in a person; or, in other words, the working of moral evil, or of that which might seem to be evil, in any member of the assembly. This is a matter of grave and solemn import — a matter demanding the utmost vigilance and care on the part of all who are concerned in the good of souls and in the glory of God, as involved in the well-being and purity of His assembly as a whole, or of each individual member thereof.

It is important to see that, while the broad principles of leprosy and its cleansing apply, in a secondary sense, to any sinner, yet, in the scripture now before us, the matter is presented in connection with those who were God's recognised people. The person who is here seen as the subject of priestly examination, is a member of the assembly of God. It is well to apprehend this. God's assembly must be kept pure, because it is His dwelling-place. No leper can be allowed to remain within the hallowed precincts of Jehovah's habitation.

But, then, mark the care, the vigilance, the perfect patience, inculcated upon the priest, lest ought that was not leprosy might be treated as such, or lest ought that really was leprosy might be

suffered to escape. Many things might appear "in the skin" — the place of manifestation" — like the plague of leprosy," which, upon patient, priestly investigation, would be found to be merely superficial. This was to be carefully attended to. Some blemish might make its appearance, upon the surface, which, though demanding the jealous care of the one who had to act for God, was not, in reality, defiling. And, yet, that which seemed but a superficial blemish might prove to be something deeper than the skin, something below the surface, something affecting the hidden springs of the constitution. All this claimed the most intense care on the part of the priest. (See ver. 2-11) Some slight neglect, some trifling oversight, might lead to disastrous consequences. It might lead to the defilement of the assembly, by the presence of a confirmed leper, or to the expulsion, for some superficial blemish, of a genuine member of the Israel of God.

Now, there is a rich fund of instruction in all this for the people of God. There is a difference between personal infirmity and the positive energy of evil — between mere defects and blemishes in the outward character, and the activity of sin in the members. No doubt, it is important to watch against our infirmities; for, if not watched, judged, and guarded against, they may become the source of positive evil. (See ver. 14-25) Everything of nature must be judged and kept down. We must not make any allowance for personal infirmity, *in ourselves*, though we should make ample allowance for it *in others*. Take, for example, the matter of an irritable temper. I should judge it in myself; I should make allowance for it in another. It may, like "the burning boil," in the case of an Israelite, (ver. 19, 20,) prove the source of real defilement — the ground of exclusion from the assembly. Every form of weakness must be watched, lest it become an occasion of sin. "A bald forehead" was not leprosy, but it was that in which leprosy might appear, and, hence, it had to be watched. There may be a hundred things which are not, in themselves, sinful, but which may become the occasion of sin, if not diligently looked after. Nor is it merely a question of what, in our estimation, may be termed Blots, blemishes, and personal infirmities, but even of what our hearts might feel disposed to boast of. Wit, humour, vivacity of spirit and temper; all these may become the source and centre of defilement.

Each one has something to guard against — something to keep him ever upon the watch-tower. How happy it is that we have a Father's heart to come to and count on, with respect to all such things. We have the precious privilege of coming, at all times, into the presence of unrebuking, unupbraiding love, there to tell out all, and obtain grace to help in all, and full victory over all. We need not be discouraged, so long as we see such a motto inscribed on the door of our Father's treasury, "He giveth more grace." Precious motto! It has no limit. It is bottomless and boundless.

We shall now proceed to inquire what was done in every case in which the plague of leprosy was unquestionably and unmistakably defined. The God of Israel could bear with infirmity, blemish, and failure; but the moment it became a case of defilement, whether in the head, the beard, the forehead, or any other part, it could not be tolerated in the holy assembly. "The leper, in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." (Ver. 45, 46) Here was the leper's condition — the leper's occupation — the leper's place. With rent garments, bare head, and covered lip; crying, Unclean, unclean; and dwelling outside, in the dreary solitude, the dismal desert waste. What could be more humiliating, what more depressing than this? "He shall dwell alone." He was unfit for communion or companionship. He was excluded from the only spot, in all the world, in which Jehovah's presence was known or enjoyed.

Reader, behold, in the poor, solitary leper, a vivid type of one in whom sin is working. This is really what it means. It is not, as we shall see presently, a helpless, ruined, guilty, convicted sinner, whose guilt and misery have come thoroughly out, and who is, therefore, a fit subject for the love of God, and the blood of Christ. No; we see in the excluded leper, one in whom sin is actually working — one in whom there is the positive energy of evil. This is what defiles and shuts out from the enjoyment of the divine presence and the communion of saints. So long as sin is working, there can be no fellowship with God, or with His people. "He shall dwell alone;

without the camp shall his habitation be." How long? "All the days wherein the *plague* shall be *in* him." This is a great practical truth. The energy of evil is the death-blow to communion. There may be the outward appearance, the mere form, the hollow profession; but communion there can be none, so long as the energy of evil is there. It matters not what the character or amount of the evil may be, if it were but the weight of a feather, if it were but some foolish thought, so long as it continues to work, it must hinder communion, it must cause a suspension of fellowship. It is when it rises to a head, when it comes to the surface, when it is brought thoroughly out, that it can be perfectly met and put away by the grace of God and by the blood of the Lamb.

This leads us to a deeply-interesting point in connection with the leper — a point which must prove a complete paradox to all save those who understand God's mode of dealing with sinners. "And if a leprosy break; out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy be covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean." (Lev. 13: 12, 13) The moment a sinner is in his true place before God, the whole question is settled. Directly his real character is fully brought out, there is no further difficulty. He may have to pass through much painful exercise, ere he reaches this point — exercise consequent upon his refusal to take his true place — to bring out "all the truth," with respect to what he is; but the moment he is brought to say, from his heart, "*just as I am,*" the free grace of God flows down to him. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." (Ps. 32: 3, 4) How long did this painful exercise continue? Until the whole truth was brought out — until all that which was working inwardly came fully to the surface. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ver. 5)

It is deeply interesting to mark the progress of the Lord's dealing with the leprous man, from the moment that the suspicion is raised, by certain features in the place of manifestation, until the disease covers the whole man, "from the crown of the head unto the sole of the foot." There was no haste, and no indifference. God ever enters the place of judgement with a slow and measured pace; but when He does enter, He must act according to the claims of His nature. He can patiently investigate. He can wait for "seven days;" and should there be the slightest variation in the symptoms, He can wait for "seven days more;" but, the moment it is found to be the positive working of leprosy, there can be no toleration. "Without the camp shall his habitation be." How long? Until the disease comes fully to the surface. "If the leprosy have covered *all* his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean." This is a most precious and interesting point. The very smallest speck of leprosy was intolerable to God; and yet, when the whole man was covered, from head to foot, he was pronounced clean — that is, he was a proper subject for the grace of God and the blood of atonement.

Thus is it, in every case, with the sinner. God is "Of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity;" (Hab. 1: 13;) and yet, the moment a sinner takes his true place, as one thoroughly lost guilty, and undone — as one in whom there is not so much as a single point on which the eye of Infinite Holiness can rest with complacency — as one who is so bad, that he cannot, possibly, be worse, there is an immediate, a perfect, a divine settlement of the entire matter. The grace of God deals with sinners; and when I know myself to be a sinner, I know myself to be one whom Christ came to save. The more clearly any one can prove me to be a sinner, the more clearly he establishes my title to the love of God, and the work of Christ. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3: 18) Now, if I am "unjust;" I am one of those very people for whom Christ died, and I am entitled to all the benefits of His death. "There is not a just man upon earth;" and, inasmuch as I am "Upon earth," it is plain that I am "unjust;" and it is equally plain that Christ died for me — that he suffered for my sins. Since, therefore, Christ died for me, it is my happy privilege to enter into the immediate enjoyment of the fruits of His sacrifice. This is as plain as plainness itself. It demands no

effort whatsoever. I am not called to be anything but just what I am. I am not called to feel, to experience, to realise anything. The word of God assures me that Christ died for me just as I am; and if He died for me I am as safe as He is Himself. There is nothing against me. Christ met all. He not only suffered for my "*sins*," but He "*made an end of sin*." He abolished the entire system in which, as a child of the first Adam, I stood, and He has introduced me into a new position, in association with Himself, and there I stand, before God, free from all charge of sin, and all fear of judgement.

Just as I am — without one plea,

But that thy blood was shed for me,

And that thou bidst me come to thee,

O Lamb of God, I come!

How do I know that His blood was shed for me? By the Scriptures. Blessed, solid, eternal ground of knowledge! Christ suffered for sins. I have gotten sins. Christ died "the just for the unjust." I am unjust. Wherefore, the death of Christ appropriates itself to me, as fully, as immediately, and as divinely, as though I were the only sinner upon earth. It is not a question of my appropriation, realisation, or experience. Many souls harass themselves about this. How often has one heard such language as the following, "Oh! I believe that Christ died for sinners, but I cannot *realise* that my sins are forgiven. I cannot apply, I cannot appropriate, I do not experience the benefit of Christ's death." All this is self and not Christ. It is feeling and not Scripture. If we search from cover to cover of the blessed volume, we shall not find a syllable about being saved by realisation, experience, or appropriation. The Gospel applies itself to all who are on the ground of being lost. Christ died for sinners. That is just what I am. Wherefore, He died for me. How do I know this? Is it because I feel it? By no means. How then? By the word of God. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4) Thus it is all "according to the Scriptures." If it were according to our feelings, we should be in a deplorable way, for our feelings are

hardly the same for the length of a day; but the scriptures are ever the same. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name

No doubt, it is a very happy thing to realise. to feel, and to experience; but, if we put these things in the place of Christ, we shall neither have them nor the Christ that yields them. If I am occupied with Christ, I shall realise; but if I put my realisation in place of Christ, I shall have neither the one nor the other. This is the sad condition of thousands. Instead of resting on the stable authority of "the Scriptures," they are ever looking into their own hearts, and, hence, they are always uncertain and, as a consequence, always unhappy. A condition of doubt is a condition of torture. But how can I get rid of my doubt? Simply by relying on the divine authority of "the Scriptures." Of what do the Scriptures testify? Of Christ. (John 5) They declare that Christ died for our sins, and that He was raised again for our justification. (Rom. 4) This settles everything. The self-same authority that tells me I am unjust, tells me also that Christ died for me. Nothing can be plainer than this. If I were ought else than unjust, the death of Christ could not be for me at all, but being unjust, it is divinely fitted, divinely intended, and divinely applied to me. If I am occupied with anything in, of, or about myself, it is plain I have not entered into the full spiritual application of Lev. 13: 12, 13. I have not come to the Lamb of God, "*just as I am.*" It is when the leper is covered from head to foot that he is on the true ground. It is there and there alone that grace can meet him. "Then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean." Precious truth! "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." So long as I think there is a single spot which is not covered with the direful disease, I have not come to, the end of myself. It is when my true condition is fully disclosed to my view, that I really understand the meaning of salvation by grace.

The force of all this will be more fully apprehended when we come to consider the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper, in Lev. 14. We shall, now, briefly enter upon the question of leprosy in a garment, as presented in Lev. 13: 47-59.

2. The garment or skin suggests to the mind the idea of a man's circumstances or habits. This is a deeply practical point. We are to watch against the working of evil in our ways just as carefully as against evil in ourselves. The same patient investigation is observable with respect to, a garment as in the case of a person. There is no haste; neither is there any indifference. "The priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague seven days." There must be no indifference, no indolence, no carelessness. Evil may creep into our habits and circumstances, in numberless ways; and, hence, the moment we perceive ought of a suspicious nature, it must be submitted to a calm, patient process of priestly investigation. It must be "shut up seven days," in order that it may have full time to develop itself perfectly.

"And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day: if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin, the plague is a fretting leprosy; it is unclean. He shall therefore burn that garment." The wrong habit must be given up, the moment I discover it. If I find myself in a thoroughly wrong position, I must abandon it. The burning of the garment expresses the act of judgement upon evil, whether in a man's habits or circumstances. There must be no trifling with evil. In certain cases the garment was to be "washed," which expresses the action of the Word of God upon a man's habits. "Then the priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up *seven days more*." There is to be patient waiting in order to ascertain the effect of the Word. "And the priest shall look on the plague, after that it is washed; and, behold, if the plague have not changed . . . thou shalt burn it in the fire." When there is any thing radically and irremediably bad in one's position or habits, the whole thing is to be given up. "And if the priest look, and, behold, the plague be somewhat dark: after the washing of it; then he shall rend it out of the garment." The Word may produce such an effect as that the wrong features in a man's character, or the wrong points in his position, shall be given up, and the evil be got rid of; but if the evil continue, after all, the whole thing must be condemned and set aside.

There is a rich mine of practical instruction in all this. We must look well to the position which we occupy, the circumstances in which we stand, the habits we adopt, the character we wear. There is special need of watchfulness. Every suspicious symptom and trait must be sedulously guarded, lest it should prove, in the sequel, to be "a fretting "or "spreading leprosy," whereby we ourselves and many others may be defiled. We may be placed in a position attached to which there are certain wrong things which can be given up, without entirely abandoning the position; and, on the other hand, we may find ourselves in a situation in which it is impossible to "abide with God." Where the eye is single, the path will be plain. Where the one desire of the heart is to enjoy the divine presence, we shall easily discover those things which tend to deprive us of that unspeakable blessing.

May our hearts be tender and sensitive. May we cultivate a deeper, closer walk with God; and may we carefully guard against every form of defilement, whether in person, in habit, or in association!

We shall, now, proceed to consider the beautiful and significant ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper, in which we shall find some of the most precious truths of the gospel presented to us.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought unto the priest: and the priest shall go forth out of the camp." (Lev. 14: 1-3) We have already seen the place which the leper occupied. He was outside the camp, in the place of moral distance from God — from His sanctuary and His assembly. Moreover, he dwelt in dreary solitude, in a condition of uncleanness. He was beyond the reach of human aid; and, as for himself, he could only communicate defilement to every one and every thing he touched. It was, therefore, obviously impossible that he could do ought to cleanse himself. If, indeed, he could only defile by his very touch, how could he possibly cleanse himself? How could he contribute towards, or co-operate in, his cleansing? Impossible. As an unclean leper, he could not do so much as a single thing for himself; *all* had to be done *for* him. He could not make his way to God, but God could

make His way to him. He was shut up to God. There was no help for him, either in himself or in his fellow-man. It is clear that one leper could not cleanse another; and it is equally clear that if a leper touched a clean person he rendered him unclean. His *only* resource was in God. He was to be a debtor to grace for everything.

Hence we read, "The priest shall go forth out of the camp. It is not said, "the leper shall go." this was wholly out of the question. It was of no use talking to the leper about going or doing. He was consigned to dreary solitude; whither could he go? He was involved in helpless defilement; what could he do? He might long for fellowship and long to be clean; but his longings were those of a lonely helpless leper. He might make efforts after cleansing; but his efforts could but prove him unclean, and tend to spread defilement. Before ever he could be pronounced "clean," a work; had to be wrought for him — a work which he could neither do nor help to do — a work which had to be wholly accomplished by another. The leper was called to "stand still," and behold the priest doing a work in virtue of which the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed. The priest accomplished *all*. The leper did *nothing*.

"Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds, alive and clean, and cedarwood, and scarlet, and hyssop. and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water." In the priest going forth from the camp — forth from God's dwelling place — we behold the blessed Lord Jesus coming down from the bosom of the Father, His eternal dwelling-place, into this polluted world of ours, where He beheld us sunk in the polluting leprosy of sin. He, like the good Samaritan, "came where we were." He did not come half-way, merely. He did not come nine-tenths of the way. He came all the way. This was indispensable. He could not, consistently with the holy claims of the throne of God, have bidden our leprosy to depart had He remained in the bosom. He could call worlds into existence by the word of His mouth; but when leprous sinners had to be cleansed, something more was needed. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." When worlds were to be framed, God had but to speak, When sinners had to be saved, He had to give His Son. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because

that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4: 9, 10)

But there was far more to be accomplished than the mission and incarnation of the Son. It would have availed the leper but little indeed, had the priest merely gone forth from the camp and looked upon his low and forlorn condition. Blood shedding was essentially necessary ere leprosy could be removed. The death of a spotless victim was needed. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22) And, be it observed, that the shedding of blood was the real basis of the leper's cleansing. It was not a mere circumstance which, in conjunction with others, contributed to the leper's cleansing. By no means. the giving up of the life was the grand and all-important fact. when this was accomplished the way was open; every barrier was removed; God could deal in perfect grace with the leper. this point should be distinctly laid hold of, if my reader would fully enter into the glorious doctrine of the blood.

"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water." Here we have the acknowledged type of the death of Christ, "who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." "He was crucified in weakness." (Heb. 9; 2 Cor. 13) The greatest, the mightiest, the most glorious, the most momentous work that ever was accomplished, throughout the wide universe of God, was wrought "in weakness." Oh! my reader, how terrible a thing must sin be, in the judgement of God, when His own beloved Son had to come down from heaven, and hang upon yonder cursed tree, a spectacle to men, to angels, and to devils, in order that you and I might be forgiven! And what a type of sin have we in leprosy! Who would have thought that that little "bright spot" appearing on the person of some member of the congregation was a matter of such grave consequence? But, ah! that little "bright spot" was nothing less than the energy of evil, in the place of manifestation. It was the index of the dreadful working of sin in the nature; and ere that person could be fitted for a place in the assembly, or for the enjoyment of communion with a holy God, the Son of God had to leave those bright heavens, and descend into the

lowest parts of the earth, in order to make a full atonement for that which exhibited itself merely in the form of a little "bright spot." Let us remember this. Sin is a dreadful thing in the estimation of God. He cannot tolerate so much as a single sinful thought. Before one such thought could be forgiven, Christ had to die upon the cross. The most trifling sin, if any sin can be called trifling, demanded nothing less than the death of God's Eternal and Co-equal Son. But, eternal praise be to God, what sin demanded, redeeming love freely gave; and now God is infinitely more glorified in the forgiveness of sins than He could have been had Adam maintained his original innocency. God is more glorified in the salvation, the pardon, the justification, the preservation, and final glorification of guilty man, than He could have been in maintaining an innocent man in the enjoyment of creation blessings. Such is the precious mystery of redemption. May our hearts enter, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into the living and profound depths of this wondrous mystery!

"As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." The blood being shed, the priest can enter directly and fully upon his work. Up to this, we read, "the priest shall command;" but now he acts immediately himself. The death of Christ is the basis of His priestly ministration. Having entered with His own blood into the holy place, He acts as our Great High Priest, applying to our souls all the precious results of His atoning work, and maintaining us in the full and divine integrity of the position into which His sacrifice has introduced us. "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth he should not be a priest." (Heb. 8: 3, 4)

We could hardly have a more perfect type of the resurrection of Christ than that presented in "the living bird let loose into the open field." It was not let go until after the death of its companion; for the two birds typify one Christ, in two stages of His blessed work, namely, death and resurrection. Ten thousand birds let loose

would not have availed for the leper. It was that living bird, mounting upward into the open heavens, bearing upon his wing that significant token of accomplished atonement — it was that which told out the great fact that the work was done — the ground cleared, the foundation laid. Thus is it in reference to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection declares the glorious triumph of redemption. "He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." "He was raised again for our justification." It is this that sets the burdened heart free, and liberates the struggling conscience. The scripture assures me that Jesus was nailed to the cross under the weight of my sins; but the same Scriptures assure me that He rose from the grave without one of those sins upon Him. Nor is this all. The same Scriptures assure me that all who put their trust in Jesus are as free from all charge of guilt as He is; that there is no more wrath or condemnation for them than for Him; that they are in Him, one with Him, accepted in Him; co-quickened, co-raised, co-seated with Him. Such is the peace giving testimony of the Scriptures of truth — such, the record of God who cannot lie. (See Rom. 6: 6-11; Rom. 8: 1-4; 2 Cor, 5: 21; Eph. 2: 5, 6; Col. 2: 10-15, 1 John 4: 17)

But we have another most important truth set before us in ver 6 of our chapter. We not only see our full deliverance from guilt and condemnation, as beautifully exhibited in the living bird let loose, but we see also our entire deliverance from all the attractions of earth and all the influences of nature. "The scarlet" would be the apt expression of the former, while "the cedar wood and hyssop" would set forth the latter. The cross is the end of all this world's glory. God presents it as such, and the believer recognises it as such. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6: 14)

Then, as to the "cedar wood and hyssop," they present to us, as it were, the two extremes of nature's wide range. Solomon "spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." (1 Kings 4: 33) From the lofty cedar which crowns the sides of Lebanon, down to the lowly hyssop — the wide extremes and all that lies between — nature, in all its departments, is brought under the power of the cross; so that the

believer sees, in the death of Christ, the end of all his guilt, the end of all earth's glory, and the end of the whole system of nature — the entire old creation. And with what is he to be occupied? With Him who is the Antitype of that living bird, with blood-stained feathers, ascending into the open heavens. Precious, glorious, soul-satisfying object! A risen, ascended, triumphant, glorified Christ, who has passed into the heavens, bearing in His sacred Person the marks of an accomplished atonement. It is with Him we have to do. We are shut up to Him. He is God's exclusive object. He is the centre of heaven's joy, the theme of angels' song. We want none of earth's glory, none of nature's attractions. We can behold them all, together with our sin and guilt, for ever set aside by the death of Christ. We can well afford to dispense with earth and nature, inasmuch as we have gotten, instead thereof "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

"And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the bird loose into the open field." The more deeply we ponder over the contents of Lev. 13 the more clearly we shall see how utterly impossible it was for the leper to do ought towards his own cleansing. All he could do was to "put a covering upon his upper lip;" and all he could say was, "Unclean, unclean." It belonged to God, and to Him alone, to devise and accomplish a work whereby the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed; and, further, it belonged to God, and to Him alone, to pronounce the leper "clean." Hence it is written, "the priest shall sprinkle;" and "he shall pronounce him clean." It is not said, "the leper shall sprinkle, and pronounce, or imagine himself, clean." This would never do. God was the Judge — God was the Healer — God was the Cleanser. He alone knew what leprosy was, how it could be put away, and when to pronounce the leper clean. The leper might have gone on all his days covered with leprosy, and yet be wholly ignorant of what was wrong with him. It was the word of God — the Scriptures of truth — the divine Record, that declared the full truth as to leprosy; and nothing short of the self-same authority could pronounce the leper clean, and that, moreover, only, on the solid and indisputable ground of death and resurrection. There is the most precious connection between the three things in verse 7: the blood is sprinkled, the leper pronounced clean, and the living bird let loose. There is not so much as a single

syllable about what the leper was to do, to say, to think, or to feel. It was enough that he was a leper; a fully revealed, a thoroughly judged leper, covered from head to foot. this sufficed for him; all the rest pertained to God.

It is of all importance, for the anxious inquirer after peace, to enter into the truth unfolded in this branch of our subject. So many are tried by the question of *feeling, realising, and appropriating*, instead of seeing, as in the leper's case, that the sprinkling of the blood was as independent and as divine as the shedding of it. It is not said, "The leper shall apply, appropriate, or realise, and then he shall be clean." By no means. The plan of deliverance was divine; the provision of the sacrifice was divine; the shedding of the blood was divine; the sprinkling of the blood as divine; the record as to the result was divine: in short, it was all divine.

It is not that we should undervalue realisation, or, to speak more correctly, communion, through the Holy Ghost, with all the precious results of Christ's work for us. Far from it: we shall see, presently, the place assigned thereto, in the divine economy. But then, we are no more saved by realisation, than the leper was cleansed by it. The gospel, by which we are saved, is that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." There is nothing about realisation here. No doubt, it is happy to realise. It is a very happy thing for one, who was just on the point of being drowned, to realise himself in a life-boat; but, clearly, he is saved by the boat and not by his realisation. So it is with the sinner that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is saved by death and resurrection. Is it because he realises it? No; but because God says it. It is "according to the Scriptures." Christ died and rose again; and, on that ground, God pronounces him clean.

"No condemnation, O, my soul!

'Tis God that speaks the word...

This gives immense peace to the soul. I have to do with God's plain record, which nothing can ever shake. That record has reference to God's own work. It is He Himself, who has wrought all

that was needful, in order to my being pronounced clean in His sight. My pardon no more depends upon my realisation than upon any "works of righteousness that I have done;" and it no more depends upon my works of righteousness than it does upon my crimes. In a word, it depends, exclusively, upon the death and resurrection of Christ. How do I know it? God tells me. It is "according to the scriptures."

There are, perhaps, few things which disclose the deep-seated legality of our hearts, more strikingly, than this oft-raised question of realisation. We *will* have in something of self, and thus so sadly mar our peace and liberty in Christ. It is mainly because of this that I dwell, at such length, upon the beautiful ordinance of The cleansing of the leper, and especially on the truth unfolded in Lev. 14: 7. It was the priest that sprinkled the blood; and it was the priest that pronounced the leper clean. Thus it is in the case of the sinner. The moment he is on his true ground, the blood of Christ and the word of God apply themselves without any further question or difficulty whatever. But the moment this harassing question of realisation is raised, the peace is disturbed, the heart depressed, and the mind bewildered. the more thoroughly I get done with self, and become occupied with Christ, as presented in "the Scriptures," the more settled my peace will be. If the leper had looked at himself, when the priest pronounced him clean, would he have found any basis for the declaration? Surely not. The sprinkled blood was the basis of the divine record, and not anything in, or connected with, the leper. The leper was not asked how he felt, or what he thought. He was not questioned as to whether he had a deep sense of the vileness of his disease. He was an acknowledged leper; that was enough. It was for such an one the blood was shed; and that blood made him clean. How did he know this? Was it because he felt it? No; but because the priest, on God's behalf, and by His authority told him so. The leper was pronounced clean on the very same ground that the living bird was let loose. The same blood which stained the feathers of that living bird was sprinkled upon the leper. This was a perfect settlement of the whole affair, and that, too, in a manner entirely independent of the leper, the leper's thoughts, his feelings, and his realisation. Such is the type. had when we look from the type to the Antitype, we see that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ entered heaven,

and laid on the throne of God the eternal record of an accomplished work, in virtue of which the believer enters also. This is a most glorious truth, divinely calculated to dispel from the heart of the anxious inquirer every doubt, every fear, every bewildering thought, and every harassing question. A risen Christ is God's exclusive object, and He sees every believer in Him. May every awakened soul find abiding repose in this emancipating truth.

"And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days." (Ver. 8) The leper, being pronounced clean, can begin to do what he could not even have attempted to do before, namely, to cleanse himself, cleanse his habits, shave off all his hair; and, having done so, he is privileged to take his place in the camp — the place of ostensible, recognised, public relationship with the God of Israel, whose presence in that camp it was which rendered the expulsion of the leper needful. The blood having been applied in its expiating virtue, there is the washing of water, which expresses the action of the word on the character, the habits, the ways, so as to render the person, not only in God's view, but also in the view of the congregation, morally and practically fit for a place in the public assembly.

But, be it observed, the man, though sprinkled with blood and washed with water, and thus entitled to a position in the public assembly, was not permitted to enter his own tent. He was not permitted to enter upon the full enjoyment of those private, personal privileges, which belonged to his own peculiar place in the camp. In other words, though knowing redemption through the shed and sprinkled blood, and owning the word as the rule, according to which his person and all his habits should be cleansed and regulated, he had yet to be brought, in the power of the Spirit, into full, intelligent communion with his own special place, portion, and privileges in Christ.

I speak according to the doctrine of the type; and I feel it to be of importance to apprehend the truth unfolded therein. It is too often overlooked. There are many, who own the blood of Christ as the alone ground of pardon, and the word of God as that whereby alone

their habits, ways, and associations are to be cleansed and ordered, who, nevertheless, are far from entering, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into communion with the preciousness and excellency of that One, Whose blood has put away their sins, and whose word is to cleanse their practical habits. They are in the place of ostensible and actual relationship; but not in the power of personal communion. It is perfectly true, that all believers are in Christ, and, as such, entitled to communion with the very highest truths. Moreover, they have the Holy Ghost, as the power of communion. All this is divinely true; but, then, there is not that entire setting aside of all that pertains to nature, which is really essential to the power of communion with Christ, in all the aspects of His character and work. In point of fact, this latter will not be fully known to any until "the eighth day" — the day of resurrection-glory, when we shall know even as we are known. Then, indeed, each one for himself, and all together, shall enter into the full, unhindered Power of communion with Christ, in all the precious phases of His Person, and features of His character, unfolded from verse 10 to 20 of our chapter. Such is the hope set before us; but, even now, in proportion as we enter, by faith, through the mighty energy of the indwelling Spirit, into the death of nature and all pertaining thereto, we can feed upon and rejoice in Christ as the portion of our souls, in the place of individual communion.

"But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head, and his beard, and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean." (Ver. 9.) Now, it is clear, that the leper was just as clean, in God's judgement, on the first day, when the blood was sprinkled upon him, in its sevenfold or perfect efficacy, as he was on the seventh day. Wherein, then, was the difference? Not in his actual standing and condition, but in his personal intelligence and communion. On the seventh day, he was called to enter into the full and complete abolition of all that pertained to nature. He was called to apprehend that, not merely was nature's leprosy to be put away, but nature's ornaments — yea, all that was natural — all that belonged to the old condition.

It is one thing to know, as a doctrine, that God sees my nature to be dead, and it is quite another thing for me to "reckon" myself as

dead — to put off, practically, the old man and his deeds — to mortify my members which are on the earth. This, probably, is what many godly persons mean when they speak of progressive sanctification. They mean a right thing, though they do not put it exactly as the Scriptures do. The leper was pronounced clean, the moment the blood was sprinkled upon Him; and yet he had to cleanse himself. How was this? In the former case, he was clean, in the judgement of God; in the latter, he was to be clean practically, in his own personal intelligence, and in his manifested character. Thus it is with the believer. He is, as one with Christ, "washed, sanctified, and justified" — "accepted" — "complete." (1 Cor. 6: 11; Eph. 1: 6; Col 2: 10) Such is his unalterable standing and condition before God. He is as perfectly sanctified as he is justified, for Christ is the measure of both the one and the other, according to God's judgement and view of the case. But, then, the believer's apprehension of all this, in his own soul, and his exhibition thereof in his habits and ways, open up quite another line of things. Hence it is we read, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us *cleans*e ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7: 1) It is because Christ has cleansed us by His precious blood that therefore we are called to "cleanse ourselves" by the application of the word, through the Spirit. "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness. because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (1 John 5: 6-8) Here we have atonement by the blood, cleansing by the word, and power by the Spirit, all founded upon the death of Christ, and all vividly foreshadowed in the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper.

"And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the

Lord." (Ver. 10-12) The entire range of offerings is here introduced; but it is the trespass offering which is first killed, inasmuch as the leper is viewed as an actual trespasser. This is true in every case. As those, who have trespassed against God, we need Christ as the one who atoned, on the cross, for those trespasses. "Himself bare our *sins* in his own body on the tree." The first view which the sinner gets of Christ is as the Antitype of the trespass offering.

"And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." "The ear" — that guilty member which had so frequently proved a channel of communication for vanity, folly, and even uncleanness — that ear must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. "*The right hand*," which had, so frequently, been stretched forth for the execution of deeds of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven, according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. "*The foot*," which had so often run in the way of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must now be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering, so that all the guilt, which I have ever contracted by that member, is forgiven, according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. Yes; *all, all, all* is forgiven — all is cancelled — all forgotten — all sunk as lead in the mighty waters of eternal oblivion. Who shall bring it up again? Shall angel, man, or devil, be able to plunge into those unfathomed and unfathomable waters, to bring up from thence those trespasses of "foot," "hand," or "ear," which redeeming love has cast thereinto? Oh! no; blessed be God, they are gone, and gone for ever. I am better off, by far, than if Adam had never sinned. Precious truth! To be washed in the blood is better far than to be clothed in innocence.

But God could not rest satisfied with the mere blotting out of trespasses, by the atoning blood of Jesus. This, in itself, is a great thing; but there is something greater still.

"And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord. And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering; and the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord." (Ver. 15-18)

Thus, not only are our members cleansed by the blood of Christ, but also consecrated to God, in the power of the Spirit. God's work is not only negative, but positive. The ear is no longer to be the vehicle for communicating defilement, but to be "swift to hear" the voice of the Good Shepherd. The hand is no longer to be used as the instrument of unrighteousness, but to be stretched forth in acts of righteousness, grace, and true holiness. The foot is no longer to tread in folly's paths, but to run in the way of God's holy commandments. And, finally, the whole man is to be dedicated to God in the energy of the Holy Ghost.

It is deeply interesting to see that "the oil" was put upon the blood of the trespass offering." The blood of Christ is the divine basis of the operations of the Holy Ghost. The blood and the oil go together. As sinners we could know nothing of the latter save on the ground of the former. The oil could not have been put upon the leper until the blood of the trespass offering had first been applied. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise." The divine accuracy of the type evokes the acclamation of the renewed mind. The more closely we scrutinise it — the more of the light of Scripture we concentrate upon it — the more its beauty, force, and precision, are perceived and enjoyed. All, as might justly be expected, is in the most lovely harmony with the entire analogy of the word of God. There is no need for any effort of the mind. Take Christ as the key to unlock the rich treasury of the types; explore the precious contents by the light of Inspiration's heavenly lamp; let the Holy Ghost be your interpreter; and you cannot fail to be edified, enlightened, and blessed.

"And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness." Here we have a type of Christ, not only as the bearer of our trespasses, but also as the One, who made an end of sin, root and branch; the One, who destroyed the entire system of sin — "The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." "The propitiation for the whole world." As the trespass offering, Christ put away all my trespasses. As the sin offering, He met the great root from whence those trespasses emanated. He met all; but it is as the trespass offering I first know Him, because it is as such I first need Him. It is the "conscience of sins" that first troubles me. This is divinely met by my precious Trespass Offering. Then, as I get on, I find that all these sins had a root, a parent stem, and what root or stem I find within me. This, likewise, is divinely met by my precious Sin Offering. The order, as presented in the leper's case, is perfect. It is precisely the order which we can trace in the actual experience of every soul. The trespass offering comes first, and then the sin offering.

"And afterward he shall kill the burnt offering." This offering presents the highest possible aspect of the death of Christ. It is Christ offering Himself without spot to God, without special reference to either trespasses or sin. It is Christ in voluntary devotedness, walking to the cross, and there offering Himself as a sweet savour to God.

"And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean." (ver. 20.) The meat offering typifies "the man Christ Jesus" in His perfect human life. It is intimately associated, in the case of the cleansed leper, with the burnt offering; and so it is in the experience of every saved sinner. It is when we know our *trespasses* are forgiven, and the root or principle of *sin* judged, that we can, according to our measure, by the power of the Spirit, enjoy communion with God about that blessed One, who lived a perfect human life, down here, and then offered Himself without spot to God on the cross. Thus, the four classes of offerings are brought before us in their divine order, in the cleansing of the leper — namely, the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt

offering, and the meet offering, each exhibiting its own specific aspect of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Here closes the record of the Lord's dealings with the leprous man; and, oh! what a marvellous record it is! What an unfolding of the exceeding hatefulness of sin, the grace and holiness of God, the preciousness of Christ's Person, and the efficacy of His work! Nothing can be more interesting than to mark the footprints of divine grace forth from the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary, to the defiled place where the leper stood, with bare head, covered lip, and rent garments. God visited the leper where he was; but He did not leave him there. He went forth prepared to accomplish a work, in virtue of which he could bring the leper into a higher place, and higher communion than ever he had known before. On the ground of this work, the leper was conducted from his Place of defilement and loneliness to the very door of the tabernacle of the congregation, the priestly place, to enjoy priestly privileges. (Comp. Ex. 29: 20, 21, 32) How could he ever have climbed to such an elevation! Impossible For ought he could do, he might have languished and died in his leprosy, had not the sovereign grace of the God of Israel stooped to lift him from the dunghill, to set him among the princes of His people. If ever there was a case in which the question of human effort, human merit, and human righteousness, could be fully tried and perfectly settled, the leper is, unquestionably, that case. Indeed it were a sad loss of time to discuss such a question in the presence of such a case. It must be obvious, to the most cursory reader, that nought but free grace, reigning through righteousness, could meet the leper's condition and the leper's need. And how gloriously and triumphantly did that grace act! It travelled down into the deepest depths, that it might raise the leper to the loftiest heights. See what the leper lost, and see what he gained! He lost all that pertained to nature, and he gained the blood of atonement and the grace of the Spirit. I mean typically. Truly, he was a gainer, to an incalculable amount. He was infinitely better off than if he had never been thrust forth from the camp. Such is the grace of God! Such the power And value, the virtue and efficacy, of the blood of Jesus!

How forcibly does all this remind us of the prodigal, in Luke 15! In him, too, leprosy had wrought and risen to a head. He had been afar off in the defiled place, where his own sins and the intense selfishness of the far country had created a solitude around him. But, blessed for ever be a Father's deep and tender love, we know how it ended. The prodigal found a higher place, and tasted higher communion than ever he had known before. "The fatted calf" had never been slain for him before. "The best robe" had never been on him before. And how was this? Was it a question of the prodigal's merit? Oh! no; it was simply a question of the Father's love.

Dear reader, let me ask, can you ponder over the record of God's dealings with the leper, in Leviticus 14, or the Father's dealings with the prodigal, in Luke 15, and not have an enlarged sense of the love that dwells in the bosom of God, that flows through the Person and work of Christ, that is recorded in the Scriptures of truth, and brought home to the heart by the Holy Ghost? Lord grant us a deeper and more abiding fellowship with Himself!

From verse 21 to 32 we have "the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing." This refers to the sacrifices of "the eighth day," and not to the "two birds alive and clean." These latter could not be dispensed with in any case, because they set forth the death and resurrection of Christ as the alone ground on which God can receive a sinner back to Himself. On the other hand, the sacrifices of "the eighth day," being connected with the soul's communion, must, in some degree, be affected by the measure of the soul's apprehension. But, whatever that measure may be, the grace of God can meet it with those peculiarly touching words, "*such as he is able to get.*" And, not only so, but "the two turtle doves" conferred the same privileges on the "poor," as the two lambs conferred upon the rich, inasmuch as both the one and the other pointed to "the precious blood of Christ," which is of infinite, changeless, and eternal efficacy in the judgement of God. All stand before God on the ground of death and resurrection. All are brought into the same place of nearness; but all do not enjoy the same measure of communion — all have not the same measure of

apprehension of the preciousness of Christ in all the aspects of His work. They might, if they would; but they allow themselves to be hindered, in various ways. Earth and nature, with their respective influences, act prejudicially; The Spirit is grieved, and Christ is not enjoyed as He might be. It is utterly vain to expect that, if we are living in the region of nature, we can be feeding upon Christ. No; there must be self emptiness, self-denial, self-judgement, if we would habitually feed upon Christ. It is not a question of salvation. It is not a question of the leper introduced into the camp — the place of recognised relationship. By no means. It is only a question of the soul's communion, of its enjoyment of Christ. As to this, the largest measure lies open to us. We may have communion with the very highest truths; but, if our measure be small, the unupbraiding grace of our Father's heart breathes in the sweet words, "*such as he is able to get.*" The title of all is the same, however our capacity may vary; and, blessed be God, when we get into His presence, all the desires of the new nature, in their utmost intensity, are satisfied; all the powers of the new nature, in their fullest range, are occupied. May we prove these things in our souls' happy experience, day by day!

We shall close this section with a brief reference to the subject of leprosy in a house.

3. The reader will observe, that a case of leprosy, in a person, or in a garment, might occur in the wilderness; but, in the matter of a house, it was, of necessity, confined to the land of Canaan. "When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession,then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house. And he shall look on the plague; and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall; then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days."

Looking at the house as the type of an assembly, we have some weighty principles presented to us as to the divine method of dealing with moral evil, or suspicion of evil, in a congregation. We

observe the same holy calmness and perfect patience with respect to the house, as we have already seen, in reference to the person or the garment. There was no haste, and no indifference, either as regards the house, the garment, or the individual. The man who had an interest in the house was not to treat with indifference any suspicious symptoms appearing in the wall thereof; neither was he to pronounce judgement himself upon such symptoms. It belonged to the priest to investigate and to judge. The moment that ought of a questionable nature made its appearance, the priest assumed a judicial attitude with respect to the house. The house was under judgement, though not condemned. The perfect period was to be allowed to run its course, ere any decision could be arrived at. The symptoms might prove to be merely superficial, in which case there would be no demand for any action whatever.

"And the priest shall *come again The seventh day*, and shall *look*: and, behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city." The whole house was not to be condemned. The removal of the leprous stones was first to be tried.

"And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after that he hath scraped the house, and after that it is plastered; then the priest shall come and look; and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house. it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. And he shall break; down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place." The case was hopeless, the evil irremediable, the whole building was annihilated.

"Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the even. And he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes; and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes." This is a solemn truth. *Contact defiles!* Let us remember this. It was a principle largely inculcated under the Levitical economy; and, surely, it is not less applicable now.

"And if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plastered; then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed." The removal of the defiled stones, &c., had arrested the progress of the evil, and rendered all further judgement needless. The house was no longer to be viewed as in a judicial place; but, being cleansed by the application of the blood, it was again fit for occupation.

And, now, as to the moral of all this. It is, at once, interesting, solemn, and practical. Look, for example, at the church at Corinth. It was a spiritual house, composed of spiritual stones; but, alas! the eagle eye of the apostle discerned upon its walls certain symptoms of a most suspicious nature. Was he indifferent? Surely not. He had imbibed far too much of the spirit of the Master of the house to admit, for one moment, of any such thing. But he was no more hasty than indifferent. He commanded the leprous stone to be removed, and gave the house a thorough scraping. Having acted thus faithfully, he patiently awaited the result. And what was that result? All that the heart could desire. "Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more *In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*" (Comp. 1 Cor. 5 with 2 Cor. 7: 11) This is a lovely instance. The zealous care of the apostle was amply rewarded; the plague was stayed, and the assembly delivered from the defiling influence of unjudged moral evil.

Take another solemn example. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: These things saith he that hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and

to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, Which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." (Rev. 2: 12-16.) Here the divine Priest stands in a judicial attitude with respect to His house at Pergamos. He could not be indifferent to symptoms so alarming; but He patiently and graciously gives time to repent. If reproof or warning, and discipline, prove unavailing, judgement must take its course.

These things are full of practical teaching as to the doctrine of the assembly. The seven churches of Asia afford various striking illustrations of the house under priestly judgement. We should ponder them deeply and prayerfully. They are of immense value. We should never sit down, at ease, so long as ought of a suspicious nature is making its appearance in the assembly. We may be tempted to say, "It is none of my business;" but it is the business of every one who loves the Master of the house to have a jealous, godly care, for the purity of that house; and if we shrink; from the due exercise of this care, it will not be for our honour or profit, in the day of the Lord.

I shall not pursue this subject any further in these pages and shall merely remark, in closing this section, that I do not doubt, in the least, that this whole subject of leprosy has a great dispensational bearing, not only upon the house of Israel, but also upon the professing church.

Leviticus 15

This chapter treats of a variety of ceremonial uncleannesses of a much less serious nature than leprosy. This latter would seem to be presented as the expression of the deep-seated energy of nature's evil; whereas, chap. 15 details a number of things which are merely unavoidable infirmities, but which, as being, in any measure the outflow of nature, were defiling, and needed the provisions of divine grace. The divine presence in the assembly demanded a high order of holiness and moral purity. Every movement of nature had to be counteracted. Even things which, so far as man was concerned, might seem to be unavoidable weaknesses, had a defiling influence, and required cleaning, because Jehovah was in the camp. Nothing offensive, nothing unsightly, nothing in any way uncomely, should be suffered within the pure, unsullied and sacred precincts of the presence of the God of Israel. The uncircumcised nations around would have understood nothing of such holy ordinances; but Jehovah would have Israel holy, because He was Israel's God. If they were to be privileged and distinguished by having the presence of a holy God, they would need to be a holy people.

Nothing can be more calculated to elicit the soul's admiration than the jealous care of Jehovah over all the habits and practices of His people. At home and abroad, asleep and awake, by day and by night, He guarded them. He attended to their food, He attended to their clothing, He attended to their most minute and private concerns. If some trifling spot appeared upon the person, it had to be instantly and carefully looked into. In a word, nothing was overlooked which could, in any wise, affect the well-being or purity of those with whom Jehovah had associated Himself, and in whose midst He dwelt. He took an interest in their most trivial affairs. He carefully attended to everything connected with them, whether publicly, socially, or privately.

This, to an uncircumcised person, would have proved an intolerable burden. For such an one to have a God of infinite holiness about his path, by day, and about his bed, by night, would have involved an amount of restraint beyond all power of endurance; but to a true lover of holiness, a lover of God, nothing;

could be more delightful. Such an one rejoices in the sweet assurance that God is always near; and he delights in the holiness which is, at once, demanded and secured by the presence of God.

Reader, say, is it thus with you? Do you love the divine presence and the holiness which that presence demands? are you indulging in anything incompatible with the holiness of God's presence? Are your habits of thought, feeling, and action, such as comport with the purity and elevation of the sanctuary? remember, when you read this fifteenth chapter of Leviticus, that it was written for your learning. You are to read it in the Spirit, for to you it has a spiritual application. To read it in any other way is to wrest it to your own destruction, or, to use a ceremonial phrase, "to seethe a kid in its mother's milk."

Do you ask, "what am I to learn from such a section of Scripture? What is its application to me?" In the first place, let me ask, do you not admit that it was written for your learning? This, I imagine, you will not question, seeing the inspired apostle so expressly declare that, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." (Rom. 15: 4) Many seem to forget this important statement, at least, in so far as the book of Leviticus is concerned. They cannot conceive it possible, that they are to learn ought from the rites and ceremonies of a by-gone age, and particularly from such rites and ceremonies as the fifteenth of Leviticus records. But, when we remember, that God the Holy Ghost has written this very chapter — that every paragraph, every verse, every line of it "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," it should lead us to inquire what it means. Surely, what God has written His child should read. No doubt, there is need of spiritual power to know *how*, and spiritual wisdom to know *when*, to read such a chapter; but the same holds good with respect to any chapter. One thing is certain, if we were sufficiently spiritual, sufficiently heavenly, sufficiently abstracted from nature, and elevated above earth, we should deduce nought but purely spiritual principles and ideas from this and kindred chapters. If an angel from heaven were to read such sections, how should he regard them? Only in a spiritual and heavenly light; only as the depositories of the purest and highest morality. And why should not we do the same? I believe

we are not aware of what positive contempt we pour upon the sacred Volume by suffering any portion of it to be so grossly neglected as the book of Leviticus has been. If this book ought not to be read, surely it ought not to have been written. If it be not "profitable," surely it ought not to have had a place assigned it in the canon of divine inspiration; but, inasmuch as it hath pleased "the only wise God" to write this book, it surely ought to please His children to read it.

No doubt, spiritual wisdom, holy discernment, and that refined moral sense, which only communion with God can impart — all these things would be needed in order to form a judgement as to when such scripture ought to be read. We should feel strongly disposed to question the sound judgement and refined taste of a man, who could stand up and read the fifteenth of Leviticus, in the midst of an ordinary congregation. But why? Is it because it is not "divinely inspired," and, as such, "profitable?" By no means; but because the generality of persons are not sufficiently spiritual to enter into its pure and holy lessons.

What, then, are we to learn from the chapter before us? In the first place, we learn to watch, with holy jealousy, everything that emanates from nature. Every movement of, and every emanation from, nature is defiling. Fallen human nature is an impure fountain, and all its streams are polluting. It cannot send forth ought that is pure, holy, or good. This is a lesson frequently inculcated in the Book of Leviticus, and it is impressively taught in this chapter.

But, blessed be the grace that has made such ample provision for nature's defilement! This provision is presented under two distinct forms, throughout the entire of the book of God, and throughout this section of it in particular — namely, "water and blood." Both these are founded upon the death of Christ. The blood that expiates and the water that cleanses flowed from the pierced side of a crucified Christ. (Comp. John 19: 34, with 1 John 5: 6) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7) And the word of God cleanseth our practical habits and ways. (Ps. 119: 9; Eph. 5: 26) Thus, we are maintained in fitness for communion and worship, though passing through a scene where all

is defiling, and carrying with us a nature, every movement of which leaves a soil behind.

It has been already remarked that our chapter treats of a class of ceremonial defilement's less serious than leprosy. This will account for the fact that atonement is here foreshadowed, not by a bullock or a lamb, but by the lowest order of sacrifice — namely, "two turtle doves." But, on the other hand, the cleansing virtue of the Word is continually introduced, in the ceremonial actions of "washing," "bathing," and "rinsing." "Wherewithal shall a young man *cleanse* his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy *word*." "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might *sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*." Water held a most important place in the Levitical system of purification, and, as a type of the Word, nothing can be more interesting or instructive.

Thus we can gather up the most valuable points from this fifteenth chapter of Leviticus. We learn, in a very striking manner, the intense holiness of the divine presence. Not a soil, not a stain, not a speck can be tolerated, for a moment, in that thrice-hallowed region. "Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them." (Ver. 31.)

Again, we learn that human nature is the overflowing fountain of uncleanness. It is hopelessly defiled; and not only defiled, but defiling. Awake or asleep, sitting, standing, or lying, nature is defiled and defiling. Its very touch conveys pollution. This is a deeply-humbling lesson for proud humanity; but thus it is. The Book of Leviticus holds up a, faithful mirror to nature. It leaves "flesh" nothing to glory in. Men may boast of their refinement, their moral sense, their dignity. Let them study the third book of Moses, and there they will see what it is all really worth, in God's estimation.

Finally, we learn, afresh, the expiatory value of the blood of Christ, and the cleansing, purifying, sanctifying virtues of the precious word of God. When we think of the unsullied purity of the sanctuary, and then reflect upon nature's irremediable defilement, and ask the question, "However can we enter and dwell there?" the

answer is found in" the blood and water" which flowed from the side of a crucified Christ — a Christ who gave up His life unto death for us, that we might live by Him. "There are three that bear record in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and," blessed be God," these three agree in one." The Spirit does not convey to our ears a message diverse from that which we find in the Word; and both the Word and the Spirit declare to us the preciousness and efficacy of the blood.

Can we not, therefore, say that the fifteenth chapter of Leviticus was "written for our learning?" Has it not its own distinct place in the divine canon Assuredly. There would be a blank were it omitted. We learn in it what we could not learn in the same way, anywhere else. True, all Scripture teaches us the holiness of God, the vileness of nature, the efficacy of the blood, the value of the Word but the chapter upon which we have been pondering presents these great truths to our notice, and presses them upon our hearts in a manner quite peculiar to itself.

May *every section* of our Father's Volume be precious to our hearts. May *every one* of His testimonies be sweeter to us than honey and the honeycomb, and may "*every one* of his righteous judgements" have its due place in our souls.

Leviticus 16.

This chapter unfolds some of the weightiest principles of truth which can possibly engage the renewed mind. It presents the doctrine of atonement with uncommon fullness and power. In short, we must rank the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus amongst the most precious and important sections of Inspiration; if indeed it be allowable to make comparisons where all is divine.

Looking at this chapter, historically, it furnished a record of the transactions of the great day of atonement in Israel, whereby Jehovah's relationship with the assembly was established and maintained, and all the sins, failures, and infirmities of the people fully atoned for, so that the Lord God might dwell among them. The blood which was shed upon this solemn day formed the basis of Jehovah's throne in the midst of the congregation. In virtue of it, a holy God could take up His abode in the midst of the people, notwithstanding all their uncleanness. "The tenth day of the seventh month" was a unique day in Israel. There was no other day in the year like it. The sacrifices of this one day formed the ground of God's dealing in grace, mercy, patience, and forbearance.

Furthermore, we learn from this portion of inspired history, "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." God was hidden behind a veil and man was at a distance. "And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times unto the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."

The way was not open for man to approach, at all times, into the divine presence, nor was there any provision, in the entire range of the Mosaic ritual, for his abiding there continually. God was shut in from man; and man was shut out from God, nor could "the blood of bulls and goats" open a permanent meeting place; "A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood" was needed to accomplish this. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they

offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Heb. 10: 1-4) Neither the Levitical priesthood nor the Levitical sacrifices, could yield perfection. Insufficiency was stamped on the latter, infirmity on the former, imperfection on both. An imperfect man could not be a perfect priest; nor could an imperfect sacrifice give a perfect conscience. Aaron was not competent or entitled to take his seat within the veil, nor could the sacrifices which he offered rend that veil.

Thus much as to our chapter, historically. Let us now look at it typically.

"Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a *sin* offering, and a ram for a *burnt* offering." (Ver. 3) Here, we have the two grand aspects of Christ's atoning work, as that which perfectly maintains the divine glory, and perfectly meets man's deepest need. There is no mention, throughout all the services of this unique and solemn day, of a meat offering, or a peace offering. The perfect human life of our blessed Lord is not foreshadowed, here, nor is the communion of the soul with God, consequent upon His accomplished work, unfolded. In a word, the one grand subject is "atonement," and that in a double way namely, first, as meeting all the claims of God — the claims of His nature — the claims of His character — the claims of His throne; and, secondly, as perfectly meeting all man's guilt and all his necessities. We must bear these two points in mind, if we would have a clear understanding of the truth presented in this chapter, or of the doctrine of the great day of atonement. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place," with atonement, as securing the glory of God, in every possible way, whether as respects His counsels of redeeming love toward the church, toward Israel, and toward the whole creation, or in reference to all the claims of His moral administration; and with atonement as fully meeting man's guilty and needy condition. These two aspects of the atonement will continually present themselves to our view as we ponder the

precious contents of our chapter. Their importance cannot possibly be overestimated.

"He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his Flesh, and he shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. (Ver. 4) Aaron's person, washed in pure water, and robed in the white linen garments, furnishes a lovely and impressive type of Christ entering upon the work of atonement. He is seen to be *personally and characteristically* pure and spotless. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 19) It is peculiarly precious to be called, as it were, to gaze upon the Person of our divine Priest, in all His essential holiness. The Holy Ghost delights in every thing that unfolds Christ to the view of His people; and wherever we behold Him, we see Him to be the same spotless, perfect, glorious, precious, peerless Jesus, "the fairest among ten thousand, yea, altogether lovely." He did not need to *do* or to *wear* anything, in order to be pure and spotless. He needed no pure water, no fine linen. He was, intrinsically and practically, "the holy One of God." What Aaron *did*, and what he *wore* — the washing and the robing, are but the faint shadows of what Christ *is*. The law had only a "shadow," and "not the very image of good things to come." Blessed be God, we have not merely the shadow, but the eternal and divine reality — Christ Himself.

"And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, Which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house." (Ver. 5, 6) Aaron and his house represent the Church, not indeed as the "one body," but as a priestly house. It is not the Church as we find it developed in Ephesians and Colossians, but rather as we find it in the First Epistle of Peter, in the following well-known passage: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a *spiritual house*, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2: 5) So also in Hebrews: "But Christ as a Son over His own house; *whose house are we*, if we hold fast the

confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. 3: 6) We must ever remember that there is no revelation of the mystery of the Church in the Old Testament. Types and shadows there are, but no revelation. That wondrous mystery of Jew and Gentile forming "one body," "one new man," and united to a glorified Christ in heaven, could not, as is obvious, be revealed until Christ had taken His place above. Of this mystery Paul was, pre-eminently, made a steward and a minister, as he tells us in Ephesians 3: 1-12, a passage which I would commend to the prayerful attention of the Christian reader.

"And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." (Ver. 7-10) In these two goats, we have the two aspects of atonement already referred to. "The Lord's lot fell upon one; and the people's lot fell upon the other. In the case of the former, it was not a question of the persons or the sins which were to be forgiven, nor of God's counsels of grace toward His elect. These things, I need hardly say, are of infinite moment; but they are not involved in the case of "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell." This latter typifies the death of Christ as that wherein God has been perfectly glorified, with respect to sin in general. This great truth is fully set forth in the remarkable expression, "the Lord's lot." God has a peculiar portion in the death of Christ — a portion quite distinct — a portion which would hold eternally good even though no sinner were ever to be saved. In order to see the force of this, it is needful to bear in mind how God has been dishonoured in this world. His truth has been despised. His authority has been contemned. His majesty has been slighted. His law has been broken. His claims have been disregarded. His name has been blasphemed. His character has been traduced.

Now, the death of Christ has made provision for all this. It has perfectly glorified God in the very place where all these things have

been done. It has perfectly vindicated the majesty, the truth, the holiness, the character of God. It has divinely met all the claims of His throne. It has atoned for sin. It has furnished a divine remedy for all the mischief which sin introduced into the universe. It affords a ground on which the blessed God can act in Grace, mercy, and forbearance toward all. It furnishes a warrant for the eternal expulsion and perdition of the prince of this world. It forms the imperishable foundation of God's moral government. In virtue of the cross, God can act according to His own sovereignty. He can display the matchless glories of His character, and the adorable attributes of His nature. He might, in the exercise of inflexible justice, have consigned the human family to the lake of fire, together with the devil and his angels. But, in that case, where would be His love, His grace, His mercy, His kindness, His long-suffering, His compassion, His patience, His perfect goodness?

Then, on the other hand, had these precious attributes been exercised, in the absence of atonement, where were the justice, the truth, the majesty, the holiness, the righteousness, the governmental claims, yea, the entire moral glory of God! How could "mercy and truth meet together?" or "righteousness and peace kiss each other" How could "truth spring out of the earth" or "righteousness look down from heaven?" Impossible. Nought save the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ could have fully glorified God; but that has glorified Him. It has reflected the full glory of the divine character, as it never could have been reflected amid the brightest splendours of an unfallen creation. By means of that atonement, in prospect and retrospect, God has been exercising forbearance toward this world, for well nigh six thousand years. In virtue of that atonement, the most wicked, daring, and blasphemous of the sons of men "live, move, and have their being;" eat, drink, and sleep. The very morsel which yonder open blaspheming infidel puts into his mouth, he owes to the atonement which he knows not, but impiously ridicules. The sunbeams and showers which fertilise the fields of the atheist, reach him in virtue of the atonement of Christ. Yea, the very breath which the infidel and the atheist spend in blaspheming God's revelation, or denying His existence, they owe to the atonement of Christ. Were it not for that precious atonement, instead of blaspheming upon earth, they would be weltering in hell.

Let not my reader misunderstand me, I speak not here of the forgiveness or salvation of persons. This is quite another thing, and stands connected, as every true Christian knows, with the confession of the name of Jesus, and the hearty belief that God raised Him from the dead. (Rom. 10) This is plain enough, and fully understood; but it is in no wise involved in that aspect of the atonement which we are, et present, contemplating, and which is so strikingly foreshadowed by "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell." God's pardoning and accepting a sinner is one thing; His bearing with that man, and showering temporal blessings upon him, is quite another. Both are in virtue of the cross, but in a totally different aspect and application thereof.

Nor is this distinction, by any means, unimportant. Quite the opposite. Indeed, so important is it that where it is overlooked, there must be confusion as to the full doctrine of atonement. Nor is this all. A clear understanding of God's ways in government, whether in the past, the present, or the future, will be found involved in this profoundly interesting point. And, finally, in it will be found the key wherewith to expound a number of texts in which many Christians find considerable difficulty. I shall just adduce two or three of these passages as examples.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1: 29) With this we may connect a kindred passage in John's first epistle, in which the Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of as "the propitiation for the whole world." (1 John 2: 2)* In both these passages the Lord Jesus is referred to as the One who has perfectly glorified God with respect to "*Sin*" and "*the world*," in their broadest acceptation. He is here seen as the great Antitype of "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell." This gives us a most precious view of the atonement of Christ, and one which is too much overlooked, or not clearly apprehended. Whenever the question of *persons* and the forgiveness of *sins* is raised, in connection with these and kindred passages of scripture, the mind is sure to get involved in insuperable difficulties.

{*The reader will observe, in the above passage, that the words "the sins of" are introduced by the translators, and are not inspired. The divine accuracy of the passage is completely lost by

retaining those uninspired words. The doctrine laid down is surely this — in the first clause of the verse Christ is set forth as the propitiation For His people's actual sins; but in the last clause, it is not a question of *sins* or of *persons* at all, but of *sin* and the *world* in general. In fact, the whole verse presents Christ as the Antitype of the two goats, as the One who has borne His people's sins; and, also, as the One who has perfectly glorified God with respect to sin in general, and made provision for dealing in grace with the world at large, and for the final deliverance and blessing of the whole creation. }

So, also, with respect to all those passages in which God's grace to the world at large is presented. They are founded upon that special aspect of the atonement with which we are more immediately occupied. "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel *to every creature*." (Mark 16) "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life, For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn *the world* ; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3: 16, 17) "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for *all men*; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a *ransom for all*, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2: 1-6) "For the *grace of God* that bringeth salvation hath appeared *to all men*," (Titus 2: 11) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by *the grace of God* should taste death *for every man*. (Heb. 2: 9) "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3: 9)

There is no need whatsoever for seeking to avoid the plain sense of the above and similar passages. They bear a clear and unequivocal testimony to divine grace toward all, without the

slightest reference to man's responsibility, on the one hand, or to God's eternal counsels, on the other. These things are just as clearly, just as fully, just as unequivocally, taught in the word. Man is responsible, and God is sovereign. All who bow to Scripture admit these things. But, at the same time, it is of the very last importance to recognise the wide aspect of the grace of God, and of the cross of Christ. It glorifies God and leaves man *wholly* without excuse. Men argue about God's decrees and man's incompetency to believe without divine influence. Their arguments prove that they do not want God; for did they only want Him, He is near enough to be found of them. The grace of God, and the atonement of Christ, are as wide as they could desire. "*Any*" — "*every*" — "*whosoever*" — and "*all*," are God's own words; and I should like to know who is shut out. If God sends a message of salvation to a man, He surely intends it for him; and what can be more wicked and impious than to reject God's grace, and make Him a liar, and then give His secret decrees as a reason for so doing. It would be, in a certain sense, honest for a man to say at once, "The fact is, I do not believe God's word, and I do not want His grace or His salvation." One could understand this; but for men to cover their hatred of God and His truth with the drapery of a false because one-sided theology, is the very highest character of wickedness. It is such as to make us feel, of a truth, that the devil is never more diabolical than when he appears with the Bible in his hand.

If it be true that men are prevented, by God's secret decrees and counsels, from receiving the gospel which He has commanded to be preached to them, then on what principle of righteousness will they be "punished with everlasting destruction" for not obeying that gospel? (2 Thess. 1: 6-10) Is there a single soul throughout all the gloomy regions of the lost who blames God's counsels for his being there? Not one. Oh! no; God has made such ample provision in the atonement of Christ, not only for the salvation of those that believe, but also for the aspect of His grace toward those that reject the gospel, that there is no excuse. It is not because a man *cannot*, but because he *will not* believe that he "shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Never was there a more fatal mistake than for a man to ensconce himself behind God's decrees while deliberately and intelligently refusing God's grace; and this is all the

more dangerous, because supported by the dogmas of a one-sided theology. God's grace is free to all; and if we ask, How is this? the answer is, "Jehovah's lot" fell upon the true victim, in order that He might be perfectly glorified as to sin, in its widest aspect, and be free to act in grace toward all, and "preach the gospel to every creature." This grace and this preaching must have a solid basis, and that basis is found in the atonement; and though man should reject, God is glorified in the exercise of grace, and in the offer of salvation, because of the basis on which both the one and the other repose. He *is* glorified, and He *shall be* glorified, throughout eternity's countless ages. ("Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again Now is the judgement of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." (John 12: 27-32.)

Thus far we have been occupied only with one special point, namely, "the goat on which the Lord's lot fell;" and a cursory reader might suppose that the next thing in order would be the scape-goat, which gives us the other great aspect of the death of Christ, or its application to the sins of the people. But no: ere we come to that, we have the fullest confirmation of that precious line of truth which has been before us, in the fact that the blood of the slain goat, together with the blood of the bullock, was sprinkled upon, and before, Jehovah's throne, in order to show that all the claims of that throne were answered in the blood of atonement, and full provision made for all the demands of God's moral administration.

"And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." Here we have a most vivid and striking presentation indeed.

The blood of atonement is carried in within the veil, into the holiest of all, and there sprinkled upon the throne of the God of Israel. The cloud of the divine presence was there; and in order that Aaron might appear in the immediate presence of the glory, and not die, "the cloud of incense" ascends and "covers the mercy-seat," on which the blood of atonement was to be sprinkled "seven times." The "*sweet incense beaten small*" expresses the fragrance of Christ's Person — the sweet odour of His most precious sacrifice.

"And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the Blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat." (Ver. 14, 15.) "Seven" is the perfect number; and in the sprinkling of the blood seven times before the mercy-seat we learn that whatever be the application of the atonement of Christ, whether as to things, to places, or to persons, it is perfectly estimated in the divine presence. The blood which secures the salvation of the Church — the "house" of the true Aaron; the blood which secures the salvation of the "congregation" of Israel; the blood which secures the final restoration and blessedness of the whole creation — that blood has been presented before God, sprinkled and accepted according to all the perfectness, fragrance, and preciousness of Christ. In the power of that blood God can accomplish all His eternal counsels of grace. He can save the Church, and raise it into the very loftiest heights of glory and dignity, despite of all the power of sin and Satan. He can restore Israel's scattered tribes — He can unite Judah and Ephraim — He can accomplish all the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He can save and bless untold millions of the Gentiles. He can restore and bless the wide creation. He can allow the beams of His glory to lighten up the universe for ever. He can display, in the view of angels, men, and devils, His own eternal glory — the glory of His character — the glory of His nature — the glory of His works — the glory of His government. All this He can do, and will do; but the one solitary pedestal upon which the stupendous fabric of glory shall rest, for ever, is the blood of the cross — that precious blood, dear Christian reader, which has

spoken peace, divine and everlasting peace, to your heart and conscience, in the presence of Infinite Holiness. The blood which is sprinkled upon the believer's conscience has been sprinkled" seven times" before the throne of God. The nearer we get to God, the more importance and value we find attached to the blood of Jesus. If we look at the brazen altar, we find the blood there; if we look at the brazen laver, we find the blood there; if we look at the golden altar, we find the blood there; if we look at the veil of the tabernacle, we find the blood there: but in no place do we find so much about the blood, as within the veil, before Jehovah's throne, in the immediate presence of the divine glory.

In heaven His blood for ever speaks,

In God the Father's ears."

"And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." The same truth meets us all along. The claims of the sanctuary must be provided for. Jehovah's courts, as well as His throne, must bear witness to the value of the blood. The tabernacle, in the midst of Israel's uncleanness, must be fenced round about by the divine provisions of atonement. Jehovah provided, in all things, for His own glory. The priests and their priestly service, the place of worship, and all therein, must stand in the power of the blood. The Holy One could not have remained, for a moment, in the midst of the congregation, were it not for the power of the blood! It was that which left Him free to dwell, and act, and rule, in the midst of an erring people.

"And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." (Ver. 17) Aaron needed to offer up sacrifice for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. He could only enter into the sanctuary in the power of the blood. We have, in verse 17, a type of the atonement of Christ in its application both to the church and to the

congregation of Israel. The church now enters into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus. (Heb. 10) As to Israel, the veil is still on their hearts. (2 Cor. 3) They are still at a distance, although full provision has been made in the cross for their forgiveness and restoration when they shall turn to the Lord. This entire period is, properly speaking, the day of atonement. The true Aaron is gone in with His own blood, into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. By and by, He will come forth to lead the congregation of Israel into the full results of His accomplished work. Meanwhile, His house, that is to say, all true believers, are associated with Him, having boldness to enter into the holiest, being brought nigh by the blood of Jesus.

"And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." (Ver. 18, 19) Thus the atoning blood was sprinkled everywhere, from the throne of God within the veil, to the altar which stood in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world (at the end of everything earthly, everything human) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." (Heb. 9: 23-28)

There is but one way into the holiest of all, and that is a blood-sprinkled way. It is vain to strive to enter by any other. Men may attempt to work themselves in, to pray themselves in, to buy themselves in, to get in by a pathway of ordinances, or it may be of

half-ordinances, half-Christ; but it is of no use. God speaks of one way, and but one, and that way has been thrown open through the rent veil of the Saviour's flesh. Along that way have the millions of the saved passed, from age to age. Patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, saints in every age, from Abel downwards, have trod that blessed way, and found thereby sure and undisputed access. The one sacrifice of the Cross is divinely sufficient for all. God asks no more, and He can take no less. To add ought thereto is to cast dishonour upon that with which God has declared himself well pleased, yea, in which He is infinitely glorified. To diminish ought therefrom is to deny man's guilt and ruin, and offer an indignity to the justice and majesty of the eternal Trinity.

"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and The altar, he shall bring the live goat. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him *all* the iniquities of the children of Israel, and *all* their transgressions in *all* their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

Here, then, we have the other grand idea attached to the death of Christ — namely, the full and final forgiveness of the people. If the death of Christ forms the foundation of the glory of God, it also forms the foundation of the perfect forgiveness of sins to all who put their trust in it. This latter, blessed be God, is but a secondary, an inferior application of the atonement, though our foolish hearts would fain regard it as the very highest possible view of the cross to see in it that which puts away all our sins. This is a mistake. God's glory is the first thing; our salvation is the second. To maintain God's glory was the chief, the darling object of the heart of Christ. This object He pursued from first to last, with an undeviating purpose and unflinching fidelity. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." (John 10: 17) "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John 13: 31, 32) "Listen, O isles, unto

me; and hearken, ye people from far: the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft: in his quiver hath He hid me; and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom *I will be glorified.*" (Isaiah 49. 1-3)

Thus, the glory of God was the paramount object of the Lord Jesus Christ, in life and in death. He lived and died to glorify His Father's name. Does the Church lose ought by this? Nay. Does Israel Nay. Do the Gentiles? Nay. In no way could their salvation and blessedness be so perfectly provided for as by being made subsidiary to the glory of God. Harken to the divine response to Christ, the true Israel, in the sublime passage just quoted. "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth."

And is it not a blessed thing to know that God is glorified in the putting away of our sins? We may ask, Where are our sins? Put away. By what? By that act of Christ upon the cross in which God has been eternally glorified. Thus it is. The two goats, on the day of atonement, give the double aspect of the one act. In the one, we see God's glory maintained; in the other, sins put away. The one is as perfect as the other. We are as perfectly forgiven as God is perfectly glorified, by the death of Christ. Was there one single point in which God was not glorified in the cross? Not one. Neither is there one single point in which we are not perfectly forgiven. I say we;" for albeit the congregation of Israel is the primary object contemplated in the beautiful and impressive ordinance of the scape-goat; yet does it hold good, in the fullest way, with respect to every soul that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is as perfectly forgiven as God is perfectly glorified, by the atonement of the cross. How many of the sins of Israel did the scape-goat bear away? "*All.*" Precious word! Not one left behind. and whither did he bear them? "Into a land not inhabited" — a land where they could never be found, because there was no one there to look for them. Could any type be more perfect? Could we possibly have a more graphic picture of

Christ's accomplished sacrifice, in its primary and secondary aspects? Impossible. We can hang with intense admiration over such a picture, and, as we gaze, exclaim, "Of a truth, the pencil of the Master is here! "

Reader, pause here, and say, do you know that all your sins are forgiven, according to the perfection of Christ's sacrifice? If you simply Believe on His name they are so. They are all gone, and gone for ever. Say not, as so many anxious souls do, "I fear I do not *realise*." There is no such word as "realise" in the entire gospel. We are not saved by realisation, but by Christ; and the way to get Christ in all His fullness and preciousness is to believe" *only believe!*" And what will be the result? "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins." Observe this. "No more Conscience of sins." this must be the result, inasmuch as Christ's sacrifice is perfect-so perfect, that God is glorified therein. Now, it must be obvious to you that Christ's work does not need your realisation to be added to it to make it perfect. This could not be. We might as well say that the work of creation was not complete until Adam realised it in the garden of Eden. True, he did realise; but what did he realise? A perfect work. Thus let it be with your precious soul this moment, if it has never been so before. May you, now and evermore, repose, in artless simplicity, upon the One who has, by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified! And how are they sanctified? Is it by realisation? By no means. How then? By the perfect work of Christ.

Having sought — alas! most feebly — to unfold the doctrine of this marvellous chapter, so far as God has given me light upon it, there is just one point further to which I shall merely call my reader's attention, ere I close this section. It is contained in the following quotation: "and this shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins *before the Lord*. It shall be a *Sabbath of rest* and ye shall *afflict your souls*, by a statute for ever." (Ver. 29-31)

This shall have its full accomplishment in the saved remnant of Israel by and by, as foretold by the prophet Zechariah: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. *In that day* shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon *In that day* there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. and it shall come to pass *in that day* that the light shall not be clear (in one place) and dark: (in another:) but it shall be one day, (the true and long-expected Sabbath,) which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be *in that day*. that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH: *in that day* shall there be one Lord, and his name one *In that day* shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD And *in that day* there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 12 - 14)

What a day that will be! No marvel that it should be so frequently and so emphatically introduced in the above glowing passage. It will be a bright and blessed "Sabbath of rest" when the mourning remnant shall gather, in the spirit of true penitence, round the open fountain, and enter into the full and final results of the great day of atonement. They shall "afflict their souls," no doubt; for how could they do otherwise, while fixing their repentant gaze "upon him whom they have pierced?" But, oh! what a Sabbath they will have! Jerusalem will have a brimming cup of salvation, after her long and dreary night of sorrow. Her former desolations shall be forgotten, and her children, restored to their long-lost dwellings, shall take down their harps from the willows, and sing once more the sweet songs of Zion beneath the peaceful shade of the vine And fig tree.

Blessed be God, the time is at hand. Every setting sun brings us nearer to that blissful Sabbath. The word is, "Surely, I come quickly;" and all around seems to tell us that "the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision." May we be "sober, and watch unto prayer!" May we keep ourselves unspotted from the world; and thus, in the spirit of our minds, the affections of our hearts, and the experience of our souls, be ready to meet the heavenly Bridegroom! Our place for the present is outside the camp. Thank God that it is so! It would be an unspeakable loss to be inside. The same cross which has brought us inside the veil has cast us outside the camp. Christ was cast out thither, and we are with Him there; but He has been received up into heaven, and we are with Him there. Is it not a mercy to be outside of all that which has rejected our blessed Lord and Master? Truly so; and the more we know of Jesus, and the more we know of this present evil world, the more thankful we shall be to find our place outside of it all *with Him*.

Leviticus 17.

In this chapter the reader will find two special points, namely — first, that life belongs to Jehovah; and, secondly, that the power of atonement is in the blood. The Lord attached peculiar importance to both these things. He would have them impressed upon every member of the congregation.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, saying, What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the Lord, before the tabernacle of the Lord; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people." This was a most solemn matter; and we may ask what was involved in offering a sacrifice otherwise than in the manner here prescribed? It was nothing less than robbing Jehovah of His rights, and presenting to Satan that which was due to God. A man might say, "Can I not offer a sacrifice in one place as well as another?" The answer is, "Life belongs to God, and His claim thereto must be recognised in the place which He has appointed — before the tabernacle of the Lord." That was the only meeting place between God and man. To offer elsewhere proved that the heart did not want God.

The moral of this is plain. There is one place where God has appointed to meet the sinner, and that is the cross — the antitype of the brazen altar. There and there alone has God's claim upon the life been duly recognised. To reject this meeting-place is to bring down judgement upon oneself — it is to trample under foot the just claims of God, and to arrogate to oneself a right to life which all have forfeited. It is important to see this.

"And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the Lord." The blood and the fat belonged to God. The blessed Jesus fully recognised this. He surrendered His life to God, and all his hidden enemies were

devoted to Him likewise. He voluntarily walked to the altar and there gave up His precious life; and the fragrant odour of His intrinsic excellency ascended to the throne of God. Blessed Jesus! it is sweet, at every step of our way, to be reminded of Thee.

The second point above referred to is clearly stated in verse 11. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKETH AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL." The connection between the two points is deeply interesting. When man duly takes his place as one possessing no title whatsoever to life — when he fully recognises God's claims upon him, then the divine record is, "I have given you the life to make an atonement for your soul." Yes; atonement is God's gift to man; and, be it carefully noted, that this atonement is in the blood, and *only* in the blood. "It is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul." It is not the blood and something else. The word is most explicit. It attributes atonement exclusively to the *blood*. "Without shedding of *blood* there is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22) It was the *death* of Christ that rent the veil. It is "by *the blood* of Jesus" we have "boldness to enter into the holiest." "We have redemption through his *blood*, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. 1: 7; Col. 1: 14) "Having made peace by *the blood* of his cross." "Ye who were afar off are made nigh by *the blood* of his cross." "*The blood* of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7) "They washed their robes and made them white in *the blood* of the Lamb." (Rev. 7) "They overcame him by *the blood* of the Lamb." (Rev. 12)

I would desire to call my reader's earnest attention to the precious and vital doctrine of the blood. I am anxious that he should see its true place. The blood of Christ is the foundation of everything. It is the ground of God's righteousness in justifying an ungodly sinner that believes on the name of the Son of God; and it is the ground of the sinner's confidence in drawing nigh to a holy God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil. God would be just in the condemnation of the sinner; but, through the death of Christ, He can be just And the justifier of him that believeth — a just God and a Saviour. The righteousness of God is His consistency with Himself — His acting in harmony with His revealed character. Hence, were

it not for the cross, His consistency with Himself would, of necessity, demand the death and judgement of the sinner; but in the cross that death and judgement were borne by the sinner's Surety, so that the same divine consistency is perfectly maintained while a holy God justifies an ungodly sinner through faith. *It is all through the blood of Jesus* — nothing less — nothing more — nothing different. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. This is conclusive. This is God's simple plan of justification. Man's plan is much more cumbrous, much more roundabout. And not only is it cumbrous and roundabout, but it attributes righteousness to something quite different from what I find in the word. If I look from Genesis 3 down to the close of Revelation, I find the blood of Christ put forward as the alone ground of righteousness. We get pardon, peace, life, righteousness, all by the blood, and nothing but the blood. The entire book of Leviticus, and particularly the chapter upon which we have just been meditating, is a commentary upon the doctrine of the blood. It seems strange to have to insist upon a fact so obvious to every dispassionate teachable student of holy Scripture. Yet so it is. Our minds are prone to slip away from the plain testimony of the word. We are ready to adopt opinions without ever calmly investigating them in the light of the divine testimonies. In this way we get into confusion, darkness, and error.

May we all learn to give the blood of Christ its due Place! It is so precious in God's sight that He will not suffer ought else to be added to or mingled with it. "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for *it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*"

Leviticus 18 - 20.

This section sets before us, in a very remarkable manner, the personal sanctity and moral propriety which Jehovah looked for, on the part of those whom He had graciously introduced into relationship with Himself and, at the same time, it presents a most humiliating picture of the enormities of which human nature is capable.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *I am the Lord your God.*" Here we have the foundation of the entire superstructure of moral conduct which these chapters present. Israel's actings were to take their character from the fact that Jehovah was their God. They were called to comport themselves in a manner worthy of so high and holy a position. It was God's prerogative to set forth the special character and line of conduct becoming a people with whom He was pleased to associate His name. Hence the frequency of the expressions — "I am the Lord." "I Am the Lord your God." "I the Lord your God am holy." Jehovah was their God, and He was holy; hence, therefore, they were called to be holy likewise. His name was invoked in their character and acting.

This is the true principle of holiness for the people of God in all ages. They are to be governed and characterised by the revelation which He has made of Himself. Their conduct is to be founded upon what He is, not upon what they are in themselves. This entirely sets aside the principle expressed in the words, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou;" a principle so justly repudiated by every sensitive mind. It is not a comparison of one man with another; but a simple statement of the line of conduct which God looks for in those who belong to Him. "after the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances." The Egyptians and the Canaanites were all wrong. How was Israel to know this? Who told them? How came they to be right, and all besides wrong? These are interesting inquiries; and the answer is as simple as the questions are interesting. Jehovah's word was the standard by which all questions of right and wrong were to

be definitely settled in the judgement of every member of the Israel of God. It was not, by any means, the judgement of an Israelite in opposition to the judgement of an Egyptian or of a Canaanite; but it was the judgement of God above *all*. Egypt might have her practices and her opinions, and so might Canaan; but Israel were to have the opinions and practices laid down in the word of God. "Ye shall do my judgements, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgements; which, if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord."

It will be well for my reader to get a clear, deep, full, practical sense of this truth. The word of God must settle every question and govern every conscience. There must be no appeal from its solemn and weighty decision. When God speaks, every heart must bow. Men may form and hold their opinions; they may adopt and defend their practices; but one of the finest traits in the character of "the Israel of God" is profound reverence for, and implicit subjection to, "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." The exhibition of this valuable feature may, perhaps, lay them open to the charge of dogmatism, superciliousness, and self-sufficiency, on the part of those who have never duly weighed the matter; but, in truth, nothing can be more unlike dogmatism than simple subjection to the plain truth of God; nothing more unlike superciliousness than reverence for the statements of inspiration; nothing more unlike self-sufficiency than subjection to the divine authority of holy scripture.

True, there will ever be the need of carefulness as to the tone and manner in which we set forth the authority for our convictions and our conduct. It must be made manifest, so far as it may be, that we are wholly governed, not by our own opinions, but by the word of God. There is great danger of attaching an importance to an opinion merely because we have adopted it. This must be carefully guarded against. *Self* may creep in and display its deformity in the defence of our opinions as much as in anything else; but we must disallow it, in every shape and form, and be governed, in all things, by "Thus saith the Lord."

But, then, we are not to expect that everyone will be ready to admit the full force of the divine statutes and judgements. It is as

persons walk in the integrity and energy of the divine nature that the word of God will be owned, appreciated, and revered. An Egyptian or a Canaanite would have been wholly unable to enter into the meaning or estimate the value of these statutes and judgements, which were to govern the conduct of the circumcised people of God; but that did not, in any wise, affect the question of Israel's obedience. They were brought into a certain relationship with Jehovah, and that relationship had its distinctive privileges and responsibilities. "I am the Lord *your* God." This was to be the ground of their conduct. They were to act in a way worthy of the One who had become *their* God, and made them *His* people. It was not that they were a whit better than other people. By no means. The Egyptians or Canaanites might have considered that the Israelites were setting themselves up as something superior in refusing to adopt the habits of either nation. But, no; the foundation of their peculiar line of conduct and tone of morality was laid in these words, "I am the Lord *your* God."

In this great and practically-important fact, Jehovah set before His people a ground of conduct which was immovable, and a standard of morality which was as elevated, and as enduring, as the eternal throne itself. The moment He entered into a relationship with a people, their ethics were to assume a character and tone worthy of Him. It was no longer a question as to what they were, either in themselves or in comparison with others; but of what God was in comparison with all. This makes a material difference. To make *self* the ground of action or the standard of ethics is not only presumptuous folly, but it is sure to set one upon a descending scale of action. If self be my object, I must, of necessity, sink lower and lower every day; but if, on the other hand, I set the Lord before me, I shall rise higher and higher as, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I grow in conformity to that perfect model which is unfolded to the gaze of faith in the sacred pages of inspiration. I shall, undoubtedly, have to prostrate myself in the dust, under a sense of how infinitely short I come of the mark set before me; but, then, I can never consent to the setting up of a lower standard, nor can I ever be satisfied until I am conformed in all things to Him who was my substitute on the cross, and is my Model in the glory.

Having said thus much on the main principle of the section before us — a principle of unspeakable importance to Christians, in a practical point of view — I feel it needless to enter into anything like a detailed exposition of statutes which speak for themselves in most obvious terms. I would merely remark that those statutes range themselves under two distinct heads, namely, first, those which set forth the shameful enormities which the human heart is capable of devising; and, secondly, those which exhibit the exquisite tenderness and considerate care of the God of Israel.

As to the first, it is manifest that the Spirit of God could never enact laws for the purpose of preventing evils that have no existence. He does not construct a dam where there is no flood to be resisted. He does not deal with abstract ideas, but with positive realities. Man is, in very deed, capable of perpetrating each and every one of the shameful crimes referred to in this most faithful section of the book of Leviticus. If he were not, Why should he be told not to do so. Such a code would be wholly unsuitable for angels, inasmuch as they are incapable of committing the sins referred to; but it suits man, because he has gotten the seeds of those sins in his nature. This is deeply humbling. It is a fresh declaration of the truth that man is a total wreck. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, there is not so much as a single speck of moral soundness, as looked at in the light of the divine presence. The being for whom Jehovah thought it needful to write Leviticus 18 - 20 must be a vile sinner; but that being is man — the writer and reader of these lines. How plain it is, therefore, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. 8) Thank God, the believer is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." He has been taken completely out of his old creation standing, and introduced into the new creation, in which the moral evils aimed at in this our section can have no existence. True, he has gotten the old nature; but it is his happy privilege to "reckon" it as a dead thing, and to walk in the abiding power of the new creation, wherein "all things are of God." This is Christian liberty — even liberty to walk up and down in that fair creation where no trace of evil can ever be found; hallowed liberty to walk in holiness and purity before God and man; liberty to tread those lofty walks of personal sanctity whereon the beams of the divine countenance ever pour themselves in living lustre. Reader, this is Christian liberty. It

is liberty, not to commit sin, but to taste the celestial sweets of a life of true holiness and moral elevation. May we prize more highly than we have ever done this precious boon of heaven — Christian liberty!

And, now, one word as to the second class of statutes contained in our section — namely, those which so touchingly bring out divine tenderness and care. Take the following: "and when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; *thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger*: I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 19: 9, 10) This ordinance will meet us again in Lev. 23, but there we shall see it in its dispensational bearing. Here, we contemplate it morally, as unfolding the precious grace of Israel's God. He would think of "the poor and stranger;" and He would have His people think of them likewise. When the golden sheaves were being reaped, and the mellow clusters gathered, "the poor and stranger" were to be remembered by the Israel of God, because Jehovah was the God of Israel. The reaper and the grape-gatherer were not to be governed by a spirit of grasping covetousness, which would bare the corners of the field and strip the branches of the vine, but rather by a spirit of large-hearted, genuine benevolence, which would leave a sheaf and a cluster "for the poor and stranger," that they, too, might rejoice in the unbounded goodness of Him whose paths drop fatness, and on whose open hand all the sons of want may confidently wait.

The Book of Ruth furnishes a fine example of one who fully acted out this most benevolent statute. "And Boaz said unto her, (Ruth,) At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." (Ruth 2: 14-16) Most touching and beautiful grace! Truly, it is good for our poor selfish hearts to be brought in contact with such principles and such practices. Nothing can surpass the exquisite refinement of the

words, *"let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her."* It was, evidently, the desire of this noble Israelite that "the stranger" might have abundance, and have it, too, rather as the fruit of her own gleaning than of his benevolence. This was the very essence of refinement. It was putting her in immediate connection with, and dependence upon, the God of Israel, who had fully recognised and provided for "the gleaner." Boaz was merely acting out that gracious ordinance of which Ruth was reaping the benefit. The same grace that had given him the field gave her the gleanings. They were both debtors to grace. She was the happy recipient of Jehovah's goodness. He was the honoured exponent of Jehovah's most gracious institution. All was in most lovely moral order. The creature was blessed and God was glorified. Who would not own that it is good for us to 'be allowed to breathe such an atmosphere?

Let us now turn to another statute of our section. "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob Him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." (Lev. 19: 13) What tender care is here! The High and Mighty One that inhabiteth eternity can take knowledge of the thoughts and feelings that spring up in the heart of a poor labourer. He knows and takes into account the expectations of such an one in reference to the fruit of his day's toil. The wages will, naturally, be looked for. The labourer's heart counts upon them; the family meal depends upon them. Oh! let them not be held back. Send not the labourer home with a heavy heart, to make the heart of his wife and family heavy likewise. By all means, give him that for which He has wrought, to which he has a right, and on which his heart is set. He is a husband, he is a father; and he has borne the burden and heat of the day that his wife and children may not go hungry to bed. Disappoint him not. Give him his due. Thus does our God take notice of the very throbbings of the labourer's heart, And make provision for his rising expectations. Precious grace! Most tender, thoughtful, touching, condescending love! The bare contemplation of such statutes is sufficient to throw one into a flood of tenderness. Could any one read such passages and not be melted? Could any one read them and thoughtlessly dismiss a poor labourer, not knowing whether he and his family have wherewithal to meet the cravings of hunger?

Nothing can be more painful to a tender heart than the lack of kindly consideration for the poor, so often manifested by the rich. These latter can sit down to their sumptuous repast after dismissing from their door some poor industrious creature who had come seeking the just reward of his honest labour. They think not of the aching heart with which that man returns to his family, to tell them of the disappointment to himself and to them. Oh! it is terrible. It is most offensive to God, and to all who have drunk, in any measure, into His grace. If we would know what God thinks of such acting, we have only to hearken to the following accents of holy indignation: "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them that have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." (James 5: 4) "The Lord of Sabaoth" hears the cry of the aggrieved and disappointed labourer. His tender love tells itself forth in the institutions of His moral government; and even though the heart should not be melted by the grace of those institutions, the conduct should, at least, be governed by the righteousness thereof. God will not suffer the claims of the poor to be heartlessly tossed aside by those who are so hardened by the influence of wealth as to be insensible to the appeals of tenderness, and who are so far removed beyond the region of personal need as to be incapable of feeling for those whose lot it is to spend their days amid exhausting toil or pinching poverty. The poor are the special objects of God's care. Again and again He makes provision for them in the statutes of His moral administration; and it is particularly declared of Him who shall, ere long, assume, in manifested glory, the reins of government, that "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight." (Psalm 72: 12-14)

May we profit by the review of those precious and deeply practical truths! May our hearts be affected, and our conduct influenced by them. We live in a heartless world; and there is a vast amount of selfishness in our own hearts. We are not sufficiently affected by the thought of the need of others. We are apt to forget the poor in the midst of our abundance. We often forget that the very

persons whose labour ministers to our personal comfort are living, it may be, in the deepest poverty. Let us think of these things. Let us beware of "grinding the faces of the poor." If the Jews of old were taught by the statutes and ordinances of the Mosaic economy, to entertain kindly feelings toward the poor, and to deal tenderly and graciously with the sons of toil, how much more ought the higher and more spiritual ethics of the Gospel dispensation produce in the hearts and lives of Christians a large-hearted benevolence toward every form of human need.

True, there is an urgent need of prudence and caution, lest we take a man out of the honourable position in which he was designed and fitted to move — namely, a position of dependence upon the fruits, the precious and fragrant fruits, of honest industry. This would be a grievous injury instead of a benefit. The example of Boaz should instruct in this matter. He allowed Ruth to glean; but he took care to make her gleaning profitable. This is a very safe and a very simple principle. God intends that man should work at something or another, and we run counter to Him when we draw our fellow out of the place of dependence upon the results of patient industry, into that of dependence upon the results of false benevolence. The former is as honourable and elevating as the latter is contemptible and demoralising. There is no bread so sweet to the taste as that which is nobly earned; but then those who earn their bread should get enough. A man will feed and care his horses; how much more his fellow, who yields him the labour of his hands from Monday morning till Saturday night.

But, some will say, "There are two sides to this question." Unquestionably there are; and, no doubt, one meets with a great deal amongst the poor which is calculated to, dry up the springs of benevolence and genuine sympathy. There is much which tends to steel the heart, and close the hand; but, one thing is certain — it is better to be deceived in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred than to shut up the bowels of compassion against a single worthy object. Your heavenly Father causes His sun to shine upon the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust. The sure sunbeams that gladden the heart of some devoted servant of Christ are poured upon the path of some ungodly sinner; and the

self-same shower that falls upon the tillage of a true believer, enriches also the furrows of some blaspheming infidel. This is to be our model. "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5: 48) It is only as we set the Lord before us, and walk in the power of His grace, that we shall be able to go on, from day to day, meeting with a tender heart and an open hand every possible form of human misery. It is only as we ourselves are drinking at the exhaustless fountain of divine love and tenderness, that we shall be able to go on ministering to human need unchecked by the oft-repeated manifestation of human depravity. Our tiny springs would soon be dried up were they not maintained in unbroken connection with that ever-gushing source.

The statute which next presents itself for our consideration, exemplifies, most touchingly, the tender care of the God of Israel. "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord." (Ver. 14) Here, a barrier is erected to stem the rising tide of irritability with which uncontrolled nature would be almost sure to meet the personal infirmity of deafness. How well we can understand this! Nature does not like to be called upon to repeat its words, again and again, in order to meet the deaf man's infirmity. Jehovah thought of this, and provided for it. And what is the provision? "Thou shalt fear thy God." When tried by a deaf person, remember the Lord, and look to Him for Grace to enable you to govern your temper.

The second part of this statute reveals a most humiliating amount of wickedness in human nature. The idea of laying a stumbling-block in the way of the blind, is about the most wanton cruelty imaginable; and yet man is capable of it, else he would not be warned against it. No doubt, this, as well as many other statutes, admits of a spiritual application; but that in nowise interferes with the plain literal principle set forth in it. Man is capable of placing a stumbling block in the way of a fellow-creature afflicted with blindness. Such is man! Truly, the Lord knew what was in man when He wrote the statutes and judgements of the Book of Leviticus.

I shall leave my reader to meditate alone upon the remainder of our section. He will find that each statute teaches a double lesson

— namely, a lesson with respect to nature's evil tendencies, and also a lesson as to Jehovah's tender care.*

{*Verses 16 and 17 demand special attention. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people." This is a most seasonable admonition for the people of God, in every age. A talebearer is sure to do incalculable mischief. It has been well remarked that a talebearer injures three persons — he injures himself, he injures his hearer, and he injures the subject of his tale. this he does directly; and as to the indirect consequences, who can recount them? Let us carefully guard against this horrible evil. May we never suffer a tale to, pass our lips; and let us never stand to hearken to a talebearer. May we always know how to drive away a backbiting tongue with an angry countenance, as the north wind driveth away rain.

In verse 17, we learn what ought to take the place of tale bearing. "thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." In place of carrying to another a tale about my neighbour, I am called upon to go directly to himself and rebuke him, if there is anything wrong. This is the divine method. Satan's method is to act the talebearer. }

Leviticus 21 - 22.

These chapters unfold, with great minuteness of detail, the divine requirements in reference to those who were privileged to draw near as priests to "offer the bread of their God." In this, as in the preceding section, we have conduct as the *result*, not the procuring *cause* of the relationship. This should be carefully borne in mind. The sons of Aaron were, in virtue of their birth, priests unto God. They all stood in this relationship, one as well as another. It was not a matter of attainment, a question of progress, something which one had, and another had not. All the sons of Aaron were priests. They were born into a priestly place. Their capacity to understand and enjoy their position and its attendant privileges was, obviously, a different thing altogether. One might be a babe; and another might have reached the point of mature and vigorous manhood. The former would, of necessity, be unable to eat of the priestly food, being a babe for whom "milk" and not "strong meat" was adapted: but he was as truly a member of the priestly house as the man who could tread, with firm step, the courts of the Lord's house, and feed upon "the wave breast" and "heave shoulder" of the sacrifice.

This distinction is easily understood in the case of the sons of Aaron, and, hence, it will serve to illustrate, in a very simple manner, the truth as to the members of the true priestly house over which our Great High Priest presides, and to which all true believers belong. (Heb. 3: 6) Every child of God is a priest. He is enrolled as a member of Christ's priestly house. He may be very ignorant; but his position, as a priest, is not founded upon knowledge, but upon life. His experience may be very shallow; but his place as a priest does not depend upon experience, but upon life. His capacity may be very limited; but his relationship as a priest does not rest upon an enlarged capacity, but upon life. He was born into the position and relationship of a priest. He did not work himself thereinto. It was not by any efforts of his own that he became a priest. He became a priest by birth. The spiritual priesthood, together with all the spiritual functions attaching thereunto, is the necessary appendage to spiritual birth. The capacity to enjoy the privileges and to discharge the functions of a position must not be confounded with the position

itself. They must ever be kept distinct. relationship is one thing; capacity is quite another.

Furthermore, in looking at the family of Aaron, we see that nothing could break the relationship between him and his sons. There were many things which would interfere with the full enjoyment of the privileges attaching to the relationship, A son of Aaron might "defile himself by the dead." He might defile himself by forming an unholy alliance. He might have some bodily "blemish." He might be "blind or lame." He might be "a dwarf." Any of these things would have interfered, very materially, with his enjoyment of the privileges, and his discharge of the functions pertaining to his relationship, as we read, "No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish: he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and the holy; only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them." (Lev. 21: 21-23) But none of these things could possibly touch the fact of a relationship founded upon the established principles of human nature. Though a son of Aaron were a dwarf, that dwarf was a son of Aaron. True, he was, as a dwarf, shorn of many precious privileges and lofty dignities pertaining to the priesthood; but he was a son of Aaron all the while. He could neither enjoy the same measure or character of communion, nor yet discharge the same elevated functions of priestly Service, as one who had reached to manhood's appointed stature; but he was a member of the priestly house, and, as such, permitted to "eat the bread of his God." The relationship was genuine, though the development was so defective.

The spiritual application of all this is as simple as it is practical. To be a child of God, is one thing; to be in the enjoyment of priestly communion and priestly worship, is quite another. The latter is, alas! interfered with by many things. Circumstances and associations are allowed to act upon us by their defiling influence. We are not to suppose that all Christians enjoy the same elevation of walk, the same intimacy of fellowship, the same felt nearness to Christ. Alas! alas! they do not. Many of us have to mourn over our

spiritual defects. There is lameness of walk, defective vision, stunted growth; or we show ourselves to be defiled by contact with evil, and to be weakened and hindered by unhallowed associations. In a word, as the sons of Aaron, though being priests by birth, were, nevertheless, deprived of many privileges through ceremonial defilement and physical defects; so we, though being priests unto God, by spiritual birth, are deprived of many of the high and holy privileges of our position, by moral defilement and spiritual defects. We are shorn of many of our dignities through defective spiritual development. We lack; singleness of eye, spiritual vigour, whole-hearted devotedness. Saved we are, through the free grace of God, on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice. "We are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus;" but, then, salvation is one thing; communion is quite another. Sonship is one thing; obedience is quite another.

These things should be carefully distinguished. The section before us illustrates the distinction with great force and clearness. If one of the sons of Aaron happened to be "broken-footed, or broken-handed," was he deprived of his sonship? Assuredly not. Was he deprived of his priestly position? By no means. It was distinctly declared, "He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy." What, then, did he lose by his physical blemish? He was forbidden to tread some of the higher walks of priestly service and worship. "Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar." These were very serious privations; and though it may be objected that a man could not help many of these physical defects, that did not alter the matter. Jehovah could not have a blemished priest at His altar, or a blemished sacrifice thereon. Both the priest and the sacrifice should be perfect. "No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire." (Lev. 21: 22) "But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer; for it shall not be acceptable for you." (Lev. 22: 20)

Now, we have both the perfect priest, and the perfect sacrifice, in the Person of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He, having "offered himself without spot to God," passed into the heavens, as our great High Priest, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. The

Epistle to the Hebrews dwells elaborately upon these two points. It throws into vivid contrast the sacrifice and priesthood of the Mosaic system and the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Christ. In Him we have divine perfectness, whether as the Victim or as the Priest. We have all that God could require, and all that man could need. His precious blood has put away all our sins; and His all-prevailing intercession ever maintains us in all the perfectness of the place into which His blood has introduced us. "We are complete in him;" (Col. 2); and yet, so feeble and so faltering are we in ourselves; so full of failure and infirmity; so prone to err and stumble in our onward way, that we could not stand for a moment, were it not that "He ever lives to make intercession for us." These things have been dwelt upon in the earlier chapters of this volume; and it is, therefore, needless to enter further upon them here. Those who have anything like correct apprehensions of the grand foundation truths of Christianity, and any measure of experience in the Christian life, will be able to understand how it is that, though "complete in him who is the head of all principality and power, they, nevertheless, need, while down here amid the infirmities, conflicts, and buffetings of earth, the powerful advocacy of their adorable and divine High Priest. The believer is "washed, sanctified, and justified. (1 Cor. 6) He is "accepted in the beloved." (Eph. 1. 6) He can never come into judgement, as regards his person. (See John 5: 24, where the word is *krisin* and not *katakrisin*) Death and judgement are behind him, because he is united to Christ who has passed through them both, on his behalf and in his stead. All these things are divinely true of the very weakest, most unlettered, and inexperienced member of the family of God; but yet, inasmuch as he carries about with him a nature so incorrigibly bad, and so irremediably ruined, that no discipline can correct it, and no medicine cure it, inasmuch as he is the tenant of a body of sin and death — as he is surrounded, on all sides, by hostile influences — as he is called to cope, perpetually, with the combined forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil — he could never keep his ground, much less make progress, were he not upheld by the all-prevailing intercession of his great High Priest, who bears the names of His people upon His breast and upon His shoulder.

Some, I am aware, have found great difficulty in reconciling the idea of the believer's perfect standing in Christ with the need of priesthood. "If," it is argued, "he is perfect, what need has he of a priest?" The two things are as distinctly taught in the word as they are compatible one with another, and understood in the experience of every rightly-instructed Christian. It is of the very last importance to apprehend, with clearness and accuracy, the perfect harmony between these two points. The believer is perfect in Christ; but, in himself, he is a poor feeble creature, ever liable to fall. Hence, the unspeakable blessedness of having One who can manage all his affairs for him, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens — One who upholds him continually by the right hand of His righteousness — One who will never let him go — One who is able to save to the uttermost — One who is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever" — One who will bear him triumphantly through all the difficulties and dangers which surround him; and, finally, "present him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Blessed for ever be the grace that has made such ample provision for all our need in the blood of a Spotless Victim and the intercession of a divine High Priest!

Dear christian reader, let it be our care so to walk, so to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world," so to stand apart from all unhallowed associations, that we may enjoy the highest privileges and discharge the most elevated functions of our position as members of the priestly house of which Christ is the Head. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest, through the blood of Jesus" — "we have a great High Priest over the house of God." (Heb. 10) Nothing can ever rob us of these privileges. But, then, our communion may be marred — our worship may be hindered — our holy functions may remain undischarged. Those ceremonial matters against which the sons of Aaron were warned, in the section before us, have their antitypes in the Christian economy. Had they to be warned against unholy contact? So have we. Had they to be warned against unholy alliance? So have we. Had they to be warned against all manner of ceremonial uncleanness? So have we to be warned against "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." (1 Cor. 7) Were they shorn of many of their loftiest priestly privileges by bodily blemish

and imperfect natural growth! So are we, by moral blemish, and imperfect spiritual growth.

Will any one venture to call in question the practical importance of such principles as these? Is it not obvious that the more highly we estimate the blessings which attach to that priestly house of which we have been constituted members, in virtue of our spiritual birth, the more carefully shall we guard against everything which might tend in any wise, to rob us of their enjoyment? Undoubtedly. And this it is which renders the close study of our section so pre-eminently practical. May we feel its power, through the application of God the Holy Ghost! Then shall we enjoy our priestly place. Then shall we faithfully discharge our priestly functions. We shall be able "to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." (Rom. 12: 1) We shall be able to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13: 15) We shall be able, as members of the "spiritual house" and the "holy priesthood," to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2: 5) We shall be able, in some small degree, to anticipate that blissful time when, from a redeemed creation, the hallelujahs of intelligent and fervent praise shall ascend to the throne of God and the Lamb throughout the everlasting ages.

Leviticus 23.

One of the most profound and comprehensive chapters in the inspired volume now lies open before us, and claims our prayerful study. It contains the record of the seven great feasts or periodical solemnities into which Israel's year was divided. In other words, it furnishes us with a perfect view of God's dealings with Israel, during the entire period of their most eventful history.

Looking at the feasts separately, we have the Sabbath, the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the first-fruits, Pentecost, the feast of trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. This would make eight, altogether; but it is very obvious that the Sabbath occupies quite a unique and independent place. It is first presented, and its proper characteristics and attendant circumstances fully set forth; and then, we read "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons." (Ver. 4) so that, strictly speaking, as the attentive reader will observe, Israel's *first* great feast was the Passover, and their *seventh* was the feast of tabernacles. That is to say, divesting them of their typical dress, we have, full, redemption; and, last of all, we have the millennial glory. The paschal lamb typified the death of Christ; (1 Cor. 5: 7;) and the feast of tabernacles typified "the times of the restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began." (Acts 3: 21)

Such was the opening and such the closing feast of the Jewish year. Atonement is the foundation, glory the top-stone; while, between these two points, we have the resurrection of Christ, (ver. 10-14,) the gathering of the Church, (ver 15-21,) the waking up of Israel to a sense of their long-lost glory, (ver. 24-25) their repentance and hearty reception of their Messiah. (Ver. 27-32.) And that not one feature might be lacking in this grand typical representation, we have provision made for the Gentiles to come in at the close of the harvest, and glean in Israel's fields. (Ver. 22.) All this renders the picture divinely perfect, and evokes from the heart of every lover of Scripture the most intense admiration. What could be more complete? The blood of the Lamb and practical holiness

founded thereon — the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and His ascension into heaven — the descent of the Holy Ghost, in Pentecostal power, to form the Church — the awakening of the remnant — their repentance and restoration — the blessing of "the poor and the stranger" — the manifestation of the glory — the rest and blessedness of the kingdom. Such are the contents of this truly marvellous chapter, which we shall, now, proceed to examine in detail. May God the Holy Ghost be our Teacher!

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." The place which the Sabbath here gets is full of interest. The Lord is about to furnish a type of all His dealings in grace with His people; and, ere He does so, He sets forth the Sabbath as the significant expression of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. It was an actual solemnity, to be observed by Israel; but it was also a type of what is yet to be, when all that great and glorious work which this chapter foreshadows shall have been accomplished. It is God's rest, into which all who believe can enter now in spirit; but which, as to its full and actual accomplishment, yet remains. (Heb. 4) we work now. We shall rest by and by. In one sense, the believer enters into rest; in another sense, he labours to enter into it. He has found his rest in Christ; he labours to enter into his rest in glory. He has found his full mental repose in what Christ has wrought for him, and his eye rests on that everlasting Sabbath upon which he shall enter when all his desert toils and conflicts are over. He cannot rest in the midst of a scene of sin and wretchedness. "He rests in Christ, the Son of God, who took the servant's form." And, while thus resting, he is called to labour as a worker together with God, in the full assurance that, when all his toil is over, he shall enjoy unbroken, eternal repose in those mansions of unfading light and unalloyed blessedness where labour and sorrow can never enter. Blessed prospect! May it brighten more and more each hour in the vision of faith! May we labour all the more earnestly and faithfully, as being sure of this most precious rest at the end! True, there are foretastes of the eternal

Sabbath; but these foretastes only cause us to long more ardently for the blessed reality — that Sabbath which shall never be broken — that "holy convocation" which shall never be dissolved.

We have already remarked that the Sabbath occupies quite a unique and independent place in this chapter. This is evident from the wording of the fourth verse, where the Lord seems to begin afresh with the expression, "These are the feasts of the Lord," as if to leave the Sabbath quite distinct from the seven feasts which follow, though it be, in reality, the type of that rest to which those feasts so blessedly introduce the soul.

"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover." (Ver. 4, 5) Here, then, we have the first of the seven periodical solemnities — the offering of that paschal lamb whose blood it was that screened the Israel of God from the sword of the destroying angel, on that terrible night when Egypt's firstborn were laid low. This is the acknowledged type of the death of Christ; and, hence, its place in this chapter is divinely appropriate. It forms the foundation of all. We can know nothing of rest, nothing of holiness, nothing of fellowship, save on the ground of the death of Christ. It is peculiarly striking, significant, and beautiful to observe that, directly God's rest is spoken of, the next thing introduced is the blood of the paschal lamb. As much as to say, "There is the *rest*, but here is your *title*." No doubt, labour will *capacitate* us, but it is the blood that *entitles* us to enjoy the rest.

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." (Ver. 6-8.) The people are here assembled round Jehovah, in that practical holiness which is founded upon accomplished redemption; and, while thus assembled, the fragrant odour of the sacrifice ascends from the altar of Israel to the throne of Israel's God. This gives us a fine view of that holiness which God looks for in the life of His redeemed. It is based upon the sacrifice, and it ascends in immediate connection with the acceptable

fragrance of the Person of Christ. "Ye shall do no *servile work* therein. But ye shall offer *an offering made by fire.*" What a contrast! The servile work of man's hands, and the sweet savour of Christ's sacrifice! The practical holiness of God's people is not servile labour. It is the living unfolding of Christ, through them, by the power of the Holy Ghost. "To me to live is Christ." This is the true idea. Christ is our life; and every exhibition of that life is, in the divine judgement, redolent with all the fragrance of Christ. It may be a very trifling matter, in man's judgement; but, in so far as it is the outflow of Christ our life, it is unspeakably precious to God. It ascends to Him and can never be forgotten. "The fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ" are produced in the life of the believer, and no power of earth or hell can prevent their fragrance ascending to the throne of God.

It is needful to ponder deeply the contrast between "servile work," and the outflow of the life of Christ. The type is very vivid. There was a total cessation of manual labour throughout the whole assembly; but the sweet savour of the burnt offering ascended to God. These were to be the two grand characteristics of the feast of unleavened bread. Man's labour ceased, and the odour of the sacrifice ascended; and this was the type of a believer's life of practical holiness. What a triumphant answer is here to the legalist, on the one side, and the antinomian on the other! The former is silenced by the words, "no servile work;" and the latter is confounded by the words, "Ye shall offer an offering made by fire." The most elaborate works of man's hands are "servile;" "but the smallest cluster of "the fruits of righteousness" is to the glory and praise of God. Throughout the entire period of the believer's life, there must be no servile work; nothing of the hateful and degrading element of legality. There should be only the continual presentation of the life of Christ, brought out and exhibited by the power of the Holy Ghost. Throughout the "seven days" of Israel's second great periodical solemnity, there was to be "no leaven;" but, instead thereof, the sweet savour of "an offering made by fire" was to be presented to the Lord. May we fully enter into the practical teaching of this most striking and instructive type!

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and ye shall wave the sheaf Before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, an the lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt offering unto the Lord. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings." (Ver. 9-14)

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept." (1 Cor. 15: 20) The beautiful ordinance of the presentation of the sheaf of first fruits typify the resurrection of Christ, who, "at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," rose triumphant from the tomb, having accomplished the glorious work of redemption. His was a "resurrection *from among* the dead;" and, in it, we have, at once, the earnest and the type of the resurrection of His people. "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." When Christ comes, His people will be raised from among the dead;" (*ek nekron*) that is those of them that sleep in Jesus. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20: 5) When, immediately after the transfiguration, our blessed Lord spoke of His rising "*from among the dead*," the disciples questioned among themselves what that could mean. (See Mark 9) Every orthodox Jew believed in the doctrine of the "resurrection of the dead," (*anastasis nekron*) But the idea of a "resurrection from among the dead," (*anastasis ek nekron*) was what the disciples were unable to grasp and, no doubt, many disciples since then have felt considerable difficulty with respect to a mystery so profound.

However, if my reader will prayerfully study and compare 1 Cor. 15 with 1 Thess. 4: 13-18, he will get much precious instruction

upon this most interesting and practical truth. He can also look at Romans 8: 11, in connection. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead (*ek nekron*) dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." From all these passages it will be seen that the resurrection of the Church will be upon precisely the same principle as the resurrection of Christ. Both the Head and the body are shown to be raised "from among the dead." The first sheaf and all the sheaves that follow after are morally connected.

It must be evident to any one who carefully ponders the subject, in the light of scripture, that there is a very material difference between the resurrection of the believer and the resurrection of the unbeliever. Both shall be raised; but Revelation 20: 5, proves that there will be a thousand years between the two, so that they differ both as to the principle, and as to the time. Some have found difficulty, in reference to this subject, from the fact that, in John 5: 28, our Lord speaks of "the *hour* in the which *all* that are in the graves shall hear his voice." "How," it may be asked, "can there be a thousand years between the two resurrections when both are spoken of as occurring in an 'hour'?" The answer is very simple. In verse 28, the quickening of dead souls is spoken of as occurring in an "hour;" and this work has been going on for over eighteen hundred years. Now, if a period of nearly two thousand years can be represented by the word "hour," what objection can there be to the idea of one thousand years being represented in the same way? Surely, none whatever, especially when it is expressly stated that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

But, furthermore, when we find mention made of "a *first* resurrection," is it not evident that all are not to be raised together? Why speak of a "first" if there is but the one? It may be said that "the first resurrection" refers to the soul; but where is the scripture warrant for such a statement? The solemn fact is this: when the "shout of the archangel and the trump of God" shall be heard, the redeemed who sleep in Jesus will be raised to meet Him in the glory. The wicked dead, whoever they be, from the days of Cain down, will remain in their graves, during the thousand years of millennial

blessedness; and, at the close of that bright and blissful period, they shall come forth and stand before "the great white throne," there to be "judged every man according to his works," and to pass from the throne of judgement into the lake of fire. Appalling thought!

Oh! reader, how is it in reference to your precious soul Have you seen, by the eye of faith, the blood of the paschal Lamb shed to screen you from this terrible hour? Have you seen the precious sheaf of firstfruits reaped and gathered into the heavenly garner, as the earnest of your being gathered in due time? These are solemn questions, deeply solemn. Do not put them aside. See that you are, now, under the cover of the blood of Jesus. Remember, you cannot glean so much as a single ear in the fields of redemption until you have seen the true sheaf waved before the Lord. "Ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until *the self-same day* that ye have brought an offering unto your God." The harvest could not be touched until the sheaf of first fruits had been presented, and, with the sheaf, a burnt offering and a meat offering.

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves, of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked *with leaven*; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord." (Ver. 15-17) This is the feast of Pentecost — the type of God's people, gathered by the Holy Ghost, and presented before Him, in connection with all the preciousness of Christ. In the Passover, we have the death of Christ; in the sheaf of first fruits, we have the resurrection of Christ; and in the feast of Pentecost, we have the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the Church. All this is divinely perfect. The death and resurrection of Christ had to be accomplished, ere the Church could be formed. The sheaf was offered and then the loaves were baked.

And, observe, "They shall be baked *with leaven*." Why was this? Because they were intended to foreshadow those who, though filled with the Holy Ghost, and adorned with His gifts and graces, had, nevertheless, *evil* dwelling in them. The assembly, on the day

of Pentecost, stood in the full value of the blood of Christ, was crowned with the gifts of the Holy ghost; but there was leaven there also. No power of the Spirit could do away with the fact that there was evil dwelling in the people of God. It might be suppressed and kept out of view; but it was there. This fact is foreshadowed in the type, by the leaven in the two loaves; and it is set forth in the actual history of the Church; for, albeit God the Holy Ghost was present in the assembly, the flesh was there likewise to lie unto Him. Flesh is flesh, nor can it ever be made ought else than flesh. The Holy Ghost did not come down, on the day of Pentecost, to improve nature or do away with the fact of its incurable evil, but to baptise believers into one body, and connect them with their living Head in heaven.

Allusion has already been made, in the chapter on the peace offering, to the fact that leaven was permitted in connection therewith. It was the divine recognition of the evil in the worshipper. Thus is it also in the ordinance of the "two wave loaves;" they were to be "baken with *leaven*," because of the *evil* in the antitype.

But, blessed be God, the evil which was divinely recognised was divinely provided for. This gives great rest and comfort to the heart. It is a comfort to be assured that God knows the worst of us; and, moreover, that He has made provision according to *His* knowledge, and not merely according to *ours*. "And ye shall offer *with the bread*, seven lambs *without blemish*, of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams; they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. (Ver. 18) Here, then, we have, in immediate connection with the leavened loaves, the presentation of an unblemished sacrifice, typifying the great and all-important truth that it is Christ's perfectness and not our sinfulness that is ever before the view of God. Observe, particularly, the words, "ye shall offer *with the bread*, seven lambs *without blemish*." Precious truth! Deeply precious, though clothed in typical dress! May the reader be enabled to enter into it, to make his own of it, to stay his conscience upon it, to feed and refresh his heart with it, to delight his whole soul in it. Not I, but Christ.

It may, however, be objected that the fact of Christ's being a spotless lamb is not sufficient to roll the burden of guilt from a sin-stained conscience — a sweet-savour offering would not, of itself, avail for a guilty sinner. This objection might be urged; but our type fully meets and entirely removes it. It is quite true that a burnt offering would not have been sufficient where "leaven" was in question; and hence we read, "Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a *sin offering*, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings." (Ver. 19) The "sin offering" was the answer to the "leaven" in the loaves — "peace" was established, so that communion could be enjoyed, and all went up in immediate connection with the "sweet savour" of the "burnt offering" unto the Lord.

Thus, on the day of Pentecost, the church was presented, in all the value and excellency of Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Though having in itself the leaven of the old nature, that leaven was not reckoned, because the divine Sin Offering had perfectly answered for it. The power of the Holy Ghost did not remove the leaven, but the blood of the Lamb had atoned for it. This is a most interesting and important distinction. The work of the Spirit in the believer does not remove indwelling evil. It enables him to detect, judge, and subdue the evil; but no amount of spiritual power can do away with the fact that the evil is there — though, blessed be God, the conscience is at perfect ease, inasmuch as the blood of our Sin Offering has eternally settled the whole question; and, therefore, instead of our evil being under the eye of God, it has been put out of sight for ever, and we are accepted in all the acceptableness of Christ, who offered Himself to God as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, that He might perfectly glorify Him in all things, and be the food of His people for ever.

Thus much as to Pentecost — after which a long; period is entered to roll on ere we have any movement amongst the people. there is, however, the notice of "the poor and stranger" in that beautiful ordinance which has already been referred to in its moral aspect. Here we may look at it in a dispensational point of view. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither

shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the Lord your God." (Ver. 22) Provision is here made for the stranger to glean in Israel's fields. The Gentile is to be brought in to participate in the overflowing goodness of God. When Israel's storehouse and winepress have been fully furnished, there will be precious sheaves and rich clusters for the Gentile to gather.

We are not, however, to suppose that the spiritual blessings with which the Church is endowed in the heavenlies with Christ are set forth under the figure of a stranger gleaning in Israel's fields. These blessings are as new to the seed of Abraham as they are to the Gentile. They are not the gleanings of Canaan, but the glories of heaven — the glories of Christ. The Church is not merely blessed by Christ, but with and in Christ. The bride of Christ will not be sent forth to gather up, as a stranger, the sheaves and clusters in the corners of Israel's fields, and from the branches of Israel's vines. No; she tastes of higher blessings, richer joys, nobler dignities, than ought that Israel ever knew. She is not to glean as a stranger on earth, but to enjoy her own wealthy and happy home in heaven to which she belongs. This is the "better thing" which God hath, in His manifold wisdom and grace, "reserved" for her. No doubt, it will be a gracious privilege for "the stranger" to be permitted to glean after Israel's harvest is reaped; but the church's portion is incomparably higher, even to be the bride of Israel's king, the partner of His throne, the sharer of His joys, His dignities, and His glories; to be like Him, and with Him, for ever. The eternal mansions of the Father's house on high, and not the ungleaned corners of Israel's fields below, are to be the church's portion. May we ever bear this in mind, and live, in some small degree, worthy of such a holy and elevated destination!

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord." (Ver. 23-25) A new subject is introduced here, by the words, "the Lord spake unto Moses," which, let me remark in passing, affords an interesting help

in classifying the subjects of the entire chapter. Thus, the Sabbath, the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, are given under the first communication. The wave sheaf, the wave loaves, and the ungleaned corners, are given under the second; after which we have a long unnoticed interval, and then comes the soul-stirring feast of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month. This ordinance leads us on to the time, now fast approaching, when the remnant of Israel shall "blow up the trumpet" for a memorial, calling to remembrance their long-lost glory, and stirring up themselves to seek the Lord.

The feast of trumpets is intimately connected with another great solemnity, namely, "the day of atonement." "*Also* on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God it shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." (Ver. 27-32) Thus, after the blowing of the trumpets, an interval of eight days elapses, and then we have the day of atonement, with which these things are connected, namely, affliction of soul, atonement for sin, and rest from labour. All these things will find their due place in the experience of the Jewish remnant, by and by. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer. 8: 20) such will be the pathetic lament of the remnant when the Spirit of God shall have begun to touch their heart and conscience. "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall Be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for her firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart," &c. (Zech. 12: 10-14)

What deep mourning, what intense affliction, what genuine penitence there will be, when, under the mighty action of the Holy Ghost, the conscience of the remnant shall recall the sins of the past, the neglect of the Sabbath, the breach of the law, the stoning of the prophets, the piercing of the Son, the resistance of the Spirit! All

these things will come in array on the tablets of an enlightened and exercised conscience, and produce keen affliction of soul.

But the blood of atonement will meet all. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13: 1) They will be made to feel their guilt and be afflicted, and they will also be led to see the efficacy of the blood and perfect peace — a sabbath of rest unto their souls.

Now, when such results shall have been reached, in the experience of Israel, in the latter day, for what should we look? Surely, THE GLORY. When the "blindness" is removed, and The veil is taken away, when the heart of the remnant is turned to Jehovah, then shall the bright beams of the "Sun of righteousness" fall, in healing, restoring, and saving power upon a truly penitent, afflicted, and poor people. To enter elaborately upon this subject would demand a volume in itself. The exercises, the experiences, the conflicts, the trials, the difficulties, and the ultimate blessings of the Jewish remnant are fully detailed throughout the Psalms and Prophets. The existence of such a body must be clearly seen, ere the Psalms and Prophets can be studied with intelligence and satisfaction. Not but that we may learn much from those portions of inspiration, for "all scripture is profitable." But the surest way to make a right use of any portion of the Word of God, is to understand its primary application. If, then, we apply scriptures to the Church or heavenly body which belong, strictly speaking, to the Jewish remnant or earthly body, we must be involved in serious error as to both the one and the other. In point of fact, it happens, in many cases, that the existence of such a body as the remnant is completely ignored, and the true position and hope of the Church are entirely lost sight of. These are grave errors which my reader should sedulously seek to avoid. Let him not suppose, for a moment, that they are mere speculations fitted only to engage the attention of the curious, and possessing no practical power whatever. There could not be a more erroneous supposition. What! is it of no practical value to us to know whether we belong to earth or heaven? Is it of no real moment to us to know whether we shall be at rest in the mansions above, or passing through the apocalyptic judgements

down here? Who could admit ought so unreasonable? The truth is, it would be difficult to fix on any line of truth more practical than that which unfolds the distinctive destinies of the earthly remnant and the heavenly Church. I shall not pursue the subject further, here; but the reader will find it well worthy of his calm and prayerful study. We shall close this section with a view of the feast of tabernacles — the last solemnity of the Jewish year.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days: all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." (Ver. 33-43)

This feast points us forward to the time of Israel's glory in the latter day, and, therefore, it forms a most lovely and appropriate close to the whole series of feasts. The harvest was gathered in, all was done, the storehouses were amply furnished, and Jehovah would have His people to give expression to their festive joy. But, alas! they seem to have had but little heart to enter into the divine thought in reference to this most delightful ordinance. They lost sight of the fact that they had been strangers and pilgrims, and hence their long neglect of this feast. From the days of Joshua down to the time of Nehemiah, the feast of tabernacles had never once been celebrated. It was reserved for the feeble remnant that returned from the Babylonish captivity to do what had not been done even in the bright days of Solomon. "And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the

booths: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun, unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so. and there was very great gladness." (Neh. 8: 17) How refreshing it must have been to those who had hung their harps on the willows of Babylon, to find themselves beneath the shade of the willows of Canaan! It was a sweet foretaste of that time of which the feast of tabernacles was the type, when Israel's restored tribes shall repose within those millennial bowers which the faithful hand of Jehovah will erect for them in the land which He swore to give unto Abraham and to his seed for ever. Thrice happy moment when the heavenly and the earthly shall meet, as intimated, in "the first day" and "the eighth day" of the feast of tabernacles! "The heavens shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."

There is a fine passage in the last chapter of Zechariah which goes to prove, very distinctly, that the true celebration of the feast of tabernacles belongs to the glory of the latter day. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Lev. 14: 16) What a scene! Who would seek to rob it of its characteristic beauty by a vague system of interpretation falsely called spiritualizing? Surely, Jerusalem means Jerusalem; nations mean nations; and the feast of tabernacles means the feast of tabernacles. Is there anything incredible in this? Surely, nothing save to man's reason which rejects all that lies beyond its narrow range. The feast of tabernacles shall yet be celebrated in the land of Canaan, and the nations of the saved shall go up thither to participate in its glorious and hallowed festivities. Jerusalem's warfare shall then be accomplished, the roar of battle shall cease. The sword and the spear shall be transformed into the implements of peaceful agriculture; Israel shall repose beneath the refreshing shade of their vines and fig-trees; and all the earth shall rejoice in the government of "the Prince of Peace." Such is the prospect presented in the unerring pages of inspiration. The types foreshadow it; the prophets prophesy of it; faith believes it; and hope anticipates it.

NOTE. — At the close of our chapter we read, "And Moses declared unto the children of Israel *the feasts of the Lord.*" This was their true character, their original title; but in the Gospel of John, they are called "*feasts of the Jews.*" They had long ceased to be Jehovah's feasts. He was shut out. They did not want Him; and, hence, in John 7, when Jesus was asked to go up to "*the Jews' feast of tabernacles,*" He answered, "My time is not yet come;" and when He did go up it was "privately," to take His place outside of the whole thing, and to call upon every thirsty soul to come unto Him and drink. There is a solemn lesson in this. Divine institutions are speedily marred in the hands of man; but, oh! how deeply blessed to know that the thirsty soul that feels the barrenness and drought connected with a scene of empty religious formality, has only to flee to Jesus and drink freely of His exhaustless springs, and so become a channel of blessing to others.

Leviticus 24.

There is very much to interest the spiritual mind in this brief section. We have seen in chapter 23. the history of the dealings of God with Israel, from the offering up of the Pascal Lamb, until the rest and glory of the millennial Kingdom. In the chapter now before us, we have two grand ideas — namely, first, the unfailing record and memorial of the twelve tribes, maintained before God, by the power of the Spirit, and the efficacy of Christ's priesthood; and, secondly, the apostasy of Israel after the flesh, and divine judgement executed thereon. It is the clear apprehension of the former that will enable us to contemplate the latter.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee *pure* oil olive, *beaten* for the light, to cause the lamps to burn *continually*. Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it *from the evening unto the morning* before the Lord *continually*; it shall be a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord *continually*." (Ver. 1-4) The "pure oil" represents the grace of the Holy Spirit, founded upon the work of Christ, as exhibited by the candlestick of "beaten gold." The "olive" was *pressed* to yield the "oil," and the gold was "*beaten*" to form the candlestick. In other words, the grace and light of the Spirit are founded upon the death of Christ, and maintained, in clearness and power, by the priesthood of Christ. The golden lamp diffused its light throughout the precincts of the sanctuary, during the dreary hours of night, when darkness brooded over the nation and all were wrapped in slumber. In all this we have a vivid presentation of God's faithfulness to His people whatever might be their outward condition. Darkness and slumber might settle down upon them, but the lamp was to burn "continually." The high priest was responsible to keep the steady light of testimony burning during the tedious hours of the night. "Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually." The maintenance of this light was not left dependent upon Israel. God had provided one whose office it was to look after it and order it continually.

But, further, we read, "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two-tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord *continually*, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, by a perpetual statute." (Ver. 5-9) There is no mention of leaven in these loaves. They represent, I doubt not, Christ in immediate connection with "the twelve tribes of Israel." They were laid up in the sanctuary before the Lord, on the pure table, for seven days, after which they became the food of Aaron and his sons, furnishing another striking figure of Israel's condition in the view of Jehovah, whatever might be their outward aspect. The twelve tribes are ever before Him. Their memorial can never perish. They are ranged in divine order in the sanctuary, covered with the fragrant incense of Christ, and reflected from the pure table whereon they rest beneath the bright beams of that golden lamp which shines, with undimmed lustre, through the darkest hour of the nation's moral night.

Now, it is well to see that we are not sacrificing sound judgement or divine truth on the altar of fancy, when we venture to interpret, after such a fashion, the mystic furniture of the sanctuary. We are taught, in Hebrews 9, that all these things were "the patterns of things in the heavens;" and again, in Hebrews 10: 1, that they were "a shadow of good things to come." We are, therefore, warranted in believing that there are "things in the heavens" answering to the "patterns" — that there is a substance answering to the "shadow". In a word, we are warranted in believing that there is that "in the heavens" which answers to "the seven lamps," "the pure table," and the "twelve loaves." This is not human imagination, but divine truth on which faith has fed, in all ages. What was the meaning of Elijah's altar of "twelve stones," on the top of Carmel? It was nothing else than the expression of his faith in that truth of which the "twelve loaves" were "the pattern" or "the shadow." He believed in the unbroken unity of the nation, maintained before God

in the eternal stability of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whatever might be the external condition of the nation. Man might look in vain for the manifested unity of the twelve tribes; but faith could always look within the hallowed enclosure of the sanctuary, and there see the twelve loaves, covered with pure frankincense, ranged in divine order on the pure table; and even though all without were wrapped in midnight's gloomy shades, yet could faith discern, by the light of the seven golden lamps, the same grand truth foreshadowed — namely, the indissoluble unity of Israel's twelve tribes.

Thus it was then; and thus it is now. The night is dark and gloomy. There is not, in all this lower world, so much as a single ray by which the human eye can trace the unity of Israel's tribes. They are scattered among the nations, and lost to man's vision. But their memorial is before the Lord. Faith owns this, because it knows that "all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus." It sees in the upper sanctuary, by the Spirit's perfect light, the twelve tribes faithfully memorialised. Harken to the following noble accents of faith:" And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise *our twelve tribes*, instantly serving God night and day, (*nukta kai emeran*) hope to come." (Acts 26: 6, 7) Now, if King Agrippa had asked Paul, "Where are the twelve tribes?" could he have shown them to him? No. But why not? Was it because they were not to be seen? No; but because Agrippa had not eyes to see them. The twelve tribes lay far beyond the range of Agrippa's vision. It needed the eye of faith and the gracious light of the Spirit of God to be able to discern the twelve loaves, ordered upon the pure table in the sanctuary of God. There they were, and Paul saw them there; though the moment in which he gave utterance to his sublime conviction was as dark as it well could be, Faith is not governed by appearances. It takes its stand upon the lofty rock of God's eternal word, and, in all the calmness and certainty of that holy elevation, feeds upon the immutable word of Him who cannot lie. Unbelief may stupidly stare about and ask, Where are the twelve tribes? or, How can they be found and restored? It is impossible to give an answer. Not because there is no answer to be given; But because unbelief is utterly incapable of rising to the elevated point from which the answer can

be seen. Faith is as sure that the memorial of the twelve tribes of Israel is before the eye of Israel's God, as it is that the twelve loaves were laid on the golden table every Sabbath day. But who can convince the sceptic or the infidel of this? Who can secure credence for such a truth from those who are governed, in all things, by reason or sense, and know nothing of what it is to hope against hope? Faith finds divine certainties and eternal realities in the midst of a scene where reason and sense can find nothing. Oh! for a more profound faith! May we grasp, with more intense earnestness, every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, and feed upon it in all the artless simplicity of a little child.

We shall now turn to the second point in our chapter — namely, the apostasy of Israel, after the flesh, and the divine judgement thereon.

"And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel and this son of an Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp. And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses And they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be showed them. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses." (Ver. 10-23)

The peculiar place assigned by the inspired penman to this narrative is striking and interesting. I have no doubt whatever but that it is designed to give us the opposite side of the picture presented in the opening verses of the chapter. Israel after the flesh has grievously failed and sinned against Jehovah. The name of the Lord has been blasphemed amongst the Gentiles. Wrath has come upon the nation. The judgements of an offended God have fallen upon them. But the day is coming when the dark and heavy cloud of judgement shall roll away; and then shall the twelve tribes, in their unbroken unity, stand forth before all the nations as the amazing monument of Jehovah's faithfulness and loving-kindness, "And in

that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call Upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (Isa. 12) "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed in your mercy, that they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. 11. 25-36)

Passages might be multiplied to prove that though Israel is suffering the divine judgement because of sin, yet "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" — that though the blasphemer is being stoned without the camp, the twelve loaves are undisturbed within the sanctuary. "The voices of the prophets" declare, and the voices of apostles re-echo the glorious truth that "all Israel shall be saved;" not because they have not sinned, but because "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Let Christians

beware how they tamper with "the promises made unto the fathers." If these promises be explained away or misapplied, it must, necessarily, weaken our moral sense of the divine integrity and accuracy of Scripture, as a whole. If one part may be explained away, so may another.

If one passage may be vaguely interpreted, so may another; and thus it would come to pass that we should be deprived of all that blessed certainty which constitutes the foundation of our repose in reference to all that the Lord hath spoken. But more of this as we dwell upon the remaining chapters of our book.

Leviticus 25.

The intelligent reader will discern a strong moral link between this and the preceding chapter. In Lev. 24 we learn that the house of Israel is preserved for the land of Canaan. In chapter 25 we learn that the land of Canaan is preserved for the house of Israel. Taking both together, we have the record of a truth which no power of earth or hell can obliterate. "All Israel shall be saved," and "the land shall not be sold forever." The former of these statements enunciates a principle which has stood like a rock amid the ocean of conflicting interpretations; while the latter declares a fact which many nations of the uncircumcised have sought in vain to ignore.

The reader will, I doubt not, observe the peculiar way in which our chapter opens. "And! the Lord spake unto Moses in *Mount Sinai*." The principal part of the communications contained in the Book of Leviticus is characterised by the fact of its emanating "from the tabernacle of the congregation." This is easily accounted for. Those communications have special reference to the service, communion, and worship of the priests, or to the moral condition of the people, and hence they are issued, as might be expected, from "the tabernacle of the congregation," that grand centre of all that appertained, in any way, to priestly service. Here, however, the communication is made from quite a different point. "The Lord spake unto Moses in *Mount Sinai*." Now, we know that every expression in Scripture has its own special meaning, and we are justified in expecting a different line of communication from "mount Sinai" from that which reaches us from "the tabernacle of the congregation." And so it is. The chapter at which we have now arrived treats of Jehovah's claims as Lord of all the earth. It is not the worship and communion of a priestly house, or the internal ordering of the nation; but the claims of God in government, His right to give a certain portion of the earth to a certain people to hold as tenants under Him. In a word, it is not to Jehovah in "the tabernacle" — the place of *worship*; but Jehovah in "Mount Sinai" — the place of *government*.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come

into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the Sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, and for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat." (Ver. 1-7)

Here, then, we have the special feature of the Lord's land. He would have it to enjoy a sabbatical year, and in that year there was to be the evidence of the rich profusion with which He would bless those who held as tenants under Him. Happy, highly privileged tenantry! What an honour to hold immediately under Jehovah! No rent! No taxes! No burdens! Well might it be said, "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah." We know, alas! that Israel failed to take full possession of that wealthy land of which Jehovah made them a present, He had given it *all*. He had given it *forever*. They took but *a part*, and that for *a time*. Still, there it is, The property is there, though the tenants are ejected for the present. "the land shall not be sold *for ever*: for *the land is mine*; for ye are strangers and sojourners *with me*." What does this mean, but that Canaan belongs specially to Jehovah, and that He will hold it through the tribes of Israel? True, "the earth is the Lord's," but that is quite another thing. It is plain that He has been pleased, for His own unsearchable purposes, to take special possession of the land of Canaan, and to submit that land to a peculiar line of treatment, to mark it off from all other lands, by calling it His own, and to distinguish it by judgements, and ordinances, and periodical solemnities, the mere contemplation of which enlightens the understanding: and affects the heart. Where, throughout all the earth, do we read of a land enjoying a year of unbroken repose — a year of richest abundance? The rationalist may ask, "How can these things be" The sceptic may doubt if they could be; but faith finds a satisfying answer from the lips of Jehovah:

"And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store." (Ver. 20-22) Nature might say, "What shall we do for *our sowing*?" Gods answer is, "I will command *My blessing*." God's "blessing" is better far than man's "sowing." He was not going to let them starve in His sabbatic year. They were to feed upon the fruits of His blessing, while they celebrated His year of rest — a year which pointed forward to that eternal Sabbath that remains for the people of God.

"And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." (Ver. 8, 9) It is peculiarly interesting to note the various methods in which the millennial rest was held up to view, in the Jewish economy. Every seventh day was a sabbatical day; every seventh year was a sabbatical year; and every seven times seven years there was a jubilee. Each and all of these typical solemnities held up to the vision of faith the blessed prospect of a time when labour and sorrow should cease; when "the sweat of the brow" would no longer be needed to satisfy the cravings of hunger; but when a millennial earth, enriched by the copious showers of divine grace, and fertilised by the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness, should pour its abundance into the storehouse and winepress of the people of God. Happy time! Happy people! How blessed to be assured that these things are not the pencillings of imagination, or the flights of fancy, but the substantial verities of divine revelation, to be enjoyed by faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Of all the Jewish solemnities the jubilee would seem to have been the most soul-stirring and enrapturing. It stood immediately connected with the great day of atonement. It was when the blood of the victim was shed, that the emancipating sound of the jubilee

trump was heard through the hills and valleys of the land of Canaan. That longed-for note was designed to wake up the nation from the very centre of its moral being, to stir the deepest depths of the soul, and to send a shining river of divine and ineffable joy through the length and breadth of the land. "In the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. Not a corner was to remain unvisited by "the joyful sound." The aspect of the jubilee was as wide as the aspect of the atonement on which the jubilee was based.

"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession." (Ver. 8-13) All estates and conditions of the people were permitted to feel the hallowed and refreshing influence of this most noble institution. The exile returned; the captive was emancipated; the debtor set free; each family opened its bosom to receive once more its long-lost members; each inheritance received back its exiled owner. The sound of the trumpet was the welcome and soul-stirring signal for the captive to escape; for the slave to cast aside the chains of his bondage; for the manslayer to return to his home; for the ruined and poverty-stricken to rise to the possession of their forfeited inheritance. No sooner had the trumpet's thrice-welcome sound fallen upon the ear, than the mighty tide of blessing rose majestically, and sent its refreshing undulations into the most remote corners of Jehovah's highly-favoured land.

"And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another: according to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee. According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt

diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am "the Lord your God." (Ver. 14-17) The year of jubilee reminded both buyer and seller that the land belonged to Jehovah, and was not to be sold. "The fruits" might be sold, but that was all — Jehovah could never give up the land to any one. It is important to get this point well fixed in the mind. It may open up a very extensive line of truth. If the land of Canaan is not to be sold — if Jehovah declares it to be His for ever, then for whom does He want it? Who is to hold under Him? Those to whom He gave it by an everlasting covenant, that they might have it in possession as long as the moon endureth — even to all generations.

There is no spot in all the earth like unto the land of Canaan in the divine estimation. There Jehovah set up His throne and His sanctuary; there His priests stood to minister continually before Him; there the voices of His prophets were heard testifying of present ruin and future restoration and glory; there the Baptist began, continued, and ended his career as the forerunner of the Messiah; there the Blessed One was born of a woman; there He was baptised; there He preached and taught; there He laboured and died; from there He ascended in triumph to the right hand of God; thither God the Holy Ghost descended, in Pentecostal power; from thence the overflowing tide of gospel testimony emanated to the ends of the earth; thither the Lord of glory will descend, ere long, and plant His foot "on the mount of Olives;" there His throne will be re-established and His worship restored. In a word, His eyes and His heart are there continually; its dust is precious in His sight; it is the centre of all His thoughts and operations, as touching this earth; and it is His purpose to make it an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations.

It is, then, I repeat, immensely important to get a firm hold of this interesting line of truth with respect to the land of Canaan. Of that land Jehovah hath said, "IT IS MINE." Who shall take it from Him? Where is the king or the emperor, where the power, human or diabolical, that can wrest "the pleasant land out of Jehovah's omnipotent grasp? True, it has been a bone of contention, an apple

of discord to the nations. It has been, and it will yet be, the scene and centre of cruel war and bloodshed. But far above all the din of battle and the strife of nations, these words fall with divine clearness, fullness, and power, upon the ear of faith — "*the land is mine!*" Jehovah can never give up that land, nor those "twelve tribes," through whom He is to inherit it for ever. Let my reader think of this. Let him ponder it deeply. Let him guard against all looseness of thought and vagueness of interpretation, as to this subject. God hath not cast away His people, or the land which He swore to give unto them for an everlasting possession. "The twelve loaves" of Leviticus 24 bear witness to the former; and "the jubilee" of Leviticus 25 bears witness to the latter. The memorial of the "twelve tribes of Israel" is ever before the Lord; and the moment is rapidly approaching when the trump of jubilee shall be heard upon the mountains of Palestine. Then, in reality, the captive shall cast off the ignominious chain which, for ages, has bound him. Then shall the exile return to that happy home from which he has so long been banished. Then shall every debt be cancelled, every burden removed, and every tear wiped away. "For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her (Jerusalem) like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb; and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many For I know their works and their thoughts; it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory, And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow; to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my

holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 66: 12-23)

And, now, let us look for a moment at the practical effect of the jubilee — its influence upon the transactions between man and man. "And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another. according to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according to the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee." The scale of prices was to be regulated by the jubilee. If that glorious event were at hand, the price was low; if far off, the price was high. All human compacts as to land were broken up the moment the trump of jubilee was heard, for the land was Jehovah's; and the jubilee brought all back to its normal condition.

This teaches us a fine lesson. If our hearts are cherishing the abiding hope of the Lord's return, we shall set light by all earthly things. It is morally impossible that we can be in the attitude of waiting for the Son from heaven, and not be detached from this present world. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4) A person may hold "the doctrine of the millennium," as it is called, or the doctrine of "the second advent," and be a thorough man of the world; but one who lives in the habitual expectation of Christ's appearing must be separated from that which will be judged and broken up when He comes. It is not a question of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, which is quite true; or of the transitory and unsatisfying character of the things of time, which is equally true. It is far more potent and influential than either or both of these. It is this, "*The Lord is at hand*. May our hearts be affected and our conduct in all things influenced by this most precious and sanctifying truth!

Leviticus 26.

This chapter requires little in the way of note or exposition. It contains a most solemn and affecting record of the blessings of obedience, on the one hand, and the terrible consequences of disobedience, on the other. Had Israel walked in obedience, they would have been invincible. "I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. and five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you and ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondsmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright." (Ver. 6-13)

The presence of God should ever have been their shield and buckler. No weapon formed against them could prosper. But, then, the divine presence was only to be enjoyed by an obedient people. Jehovah could not sanction by His presence disobedience or wickedness. The uncircumcised nations around might depend upon their prowess and their military resources. Israel had only the arm of Jehovah to depend upon, and that arm could never be stretched forth to shield unholiness or disobedience. Their strength was to walk with God in a spirit of dependence and obedience. So long as they walked thus, there was a wall of fire round about them, to protect them from every enemy and every evil.

But, alas! Israel failed altogether. Notwithstanding the solemn and appalling picture placed before their eyes, in verses 14-33 of this chapter, they forsook the Lord and served other gods, and thus brought upon themselves the sore judgements threatened in this section, the bare record of which is sufficient to make the ears

tingle. Under the heavy weight of these judgements they are suffering at this very hour. Scattered and peeled, wasted and outcast, they are the monuments of Jehovah's inflexible truth and justice. They read aloud, to all the nations of the earth, a most impressive lesson on the subject of the moral government of God — a lesson which it would be profitable for these nations to study deeply, yea, and a lesson which it would be salutary for our own hearts to ponder likewise.

We are very prone to confound two things which are clearly distinguished in the word, namely, God's government and God's *grace*. The evils which result from this confusion are various. It is sure to lead to an enfeebled sense of the dignity and solemnity of government, and of the purity, fullness, and elevation of grace. It is quite true that God in government reserves to Himself the sovereign right to act in patience, long-suffering, and mercy; but the exercise of these attributes, in connection with His throne of government, must never be confounded with the unconditional actings of pure and absolute grace.

The chapter before us is a record of divine government, and yet, in it we find such clauses as the following: "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me; and that also they have walked contrary unto me, and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgements, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet, for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom

I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord." (Ver. 40-45)

Here we find God in government, meeting, in long-suffering mercy, the very earliest and faintest breathings of a broken and penitent spirit. The history of the judges and of the kings presents many instances of the exercise of this blessed attribute of the divine government. Again and again, the soul of Jehovah was grieved for Israel, (Judges 10: 16,) and He sent them one deliverer after another, until at length there remained no hope, and the righteous claims of His throne demanded their expulsion from that land which they were wholly incompetent to keep.

All this is *government*. But, by and by, Israel will be brought into possession of the land of Canaan on the ground of unqualified and unchangeable *grace* — grace exercised in divine righteousness through the blood of the cross. It will not be by works of law; nor yet by the institutions of an evanescent economy, but by that grace which "reigns through righteousness, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Wherefore, they shall never again be driven forth from their possession. No enemy shall ever molest them. They shall enjoy undisturbed repose behind the shield of Jehovah's favour. Their tenure of the land will be according to the eternal stability of divine grace, and the efficacy of the blood of the everlasting covenant. "They shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation."

May the Spirit of God lead us into more enlarged apprehensions of divine truth, and endow us with a greater capacity to try the things that differ, and rightly to divide the word of truth.

Leviticus 27

This closing section of our book treats of the "singular vow," or the voluntary act whereby a person devoted himself or his property unto the Lord. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation. And thy estimation shall be after the shekel of the sanctuary."

Now, in the case of a person devoting himself, or his beast, his house, or his field, unto the Lord, it was obviously a question of capacity or worth; and, hence, there was a certain scale of valuation, according to age. Moses, as the representative of the claims of God, was called upon to estimate, in each case, according to the standard of the sanctuary. If a man undertakes to Make a vow, he must be tried by the standard of righteousness; and, moreover, in all cases, we are called upon to recognise the difference between capacity and title. In Exodus 30: 15, we read, in reference to the atonement money, "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." In the matter of atonement all stood upon one common level. Thus it must ever be. High and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, old and young, all have one common title. "There is no difference." All stand alike on the ground of the infinite preciousness of the blood of Christ. There may be a vast difference as to capacity, as to title there is none. There may be a vast difference as to experience — as to title there is none. There may be a vast difference as to knowledge, gift, and fruitfulness — as to title there is none. The sapling and the tree, the babe and the father, the convert of yesterday and the matured believer, are all on the same ground. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." Nothing more could be given, nothing less could be taken. "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." This is our title to enter. Our capacity to worship, when we have entered, will depend upon our spiritual energy. Christ is our title. The Holy Ghost is our capacity. Self has nothing to do with either the one or the other. What a mercy! We get in by the blood of Jesus; we enjoy what we find there by the Holy Ghost. The blood of

Jesus opens the door; the Holy Ghost conducts us through the house. The blood of Jesus opens the casket; the Holy Ghost unfolds the precious contents. The blood of Jesus makes the casket ours; the Holy Ghost enables us to appreciate its rare and costly gems.

But, in Leviticus 27, it is entirely a question of ability, capacity, or worth. Moses had a certain standard from which he could not possibly descend. He had a certain rule from which he could not possibly swerve. If any one could come up to that well; if not, he had to take his place accordingly.

What, then, was to be done in reference to the person who was unable to rise to the height of the claims set forth by the representative of divine righteousness? Hear the consolatory answer: "But if he be *poorer* than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before *the priest*, and the priest shall value him; *according to, his ability* that vowed shall the priest value him." (Ver. 8) In other words, if it be a question of man's undertaking to meet the claims of *righteousness*, then he must meet them. But if, on the other hand, a man feels himself wholly unable to meet those claims, he has only to fall back upon grace, which will take him up, just as he is. Moses is the representative of the claims of divine righteousness. The priest is the exponent of the provisions of divine grace. The poor man who was unable to stand before Moses fell back into the arms of the priest. Thus it is ever. If we cannot "*dig*" we can "*beg*;" and directly we take the place of a beggar, it is no longer a question of what we are able to *earn*, but of what God is pleased to *give*. "Grace all the work shall crown, through everlasting days." How happy it is to be debtors to grace! How happy to take when God is glorified in giving! When man is in question, it is infinitely better to dig than to beg; but when God is in question, the case is the very reverse.

I would just add, that I believe this entire chapter bears, in an especial manner, upon the nation of Israel. It is intimately connected with the two preceding chapters. Israel made "a singular vow" at the foot of Mount Horeb; but were quite unable to meet the claims of law — they were far "poorer than Moses' estimation." But, blessed be God, they will come in under the rich provisions of divine grace. Having learnt their total inability "to dig," they will not be "ashamed

to beg;" and, hence, they shall experience the deep blessedness of being cast upon the sovereign mercy of Jehovah, which stretches, like a golden chain, "from everlasting to everlasting." It is well to be poor, when the knowledge of our poverty serves but to unfold to us the exhaustless riches of divine grace. That grace can never suffer any one to go empty away. It can never tell any one that he is too poor. It can meet the very deepest human need; and not only so but it is glorified in meeting it. This holds good in every case. It is true of any individual sinner; and it is true with respect to Israel, who, having been valued by the Lawgiver, have proved "poorer than his estimation." Grace is the grand and only resource for all. It is the basis of our salvation; the basis of a life of practical godliness; and the basis of those imperishable hopes which animate us amid the trials and conflicts of this sin-stricken world. May we cherish a deeper sense of grace, and more ardent desire for the glory!

We shall here close our meditations upon this most profound and precious book. If the foregoing pages should be used of God to awaken an interest in a section of inspiration which has been so much neglected by the Church, in all ages, they shall not have been written in vain.

C. H. M.