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**MEDITATIONS BY**  
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**ON THE CHARACTER OF**  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
**AS PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING**

# MEDITATIONS ON THE OFFICE CHARACTERS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

## 1.—JESUS AS THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD

### I.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet," was the gracious experience and expressive language of the inspired Psalmist of Israel, when he had been favoured with a view by faith of the grace and glory of the LORD; (Psa. 104:34;) and since to those that believe Jesus is "precious," "the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely" to all whose eyes have been divinely opened to see the King in his beauty, our meditation of him will be sweet too, if we are indulged with the same discovery of his beauty and blessedness, and are led by the same blessed Spirit into a similar train of holy contemplation. The Lord, in his infinite mercy and goodness, has provided his believing people with various means of renewing their strength, refreshing their spirit, feeding their soul, comforting their heart, and instructing their understanding, as they journey through this waste, howling wilderness. These are "the wells" in the "valley of Baca," "the pools" at which the pilgrims drink when "the rain" from heaven "filleth" them. (Psa. 84:6.) Such are hearing the preached gospel, searching the Scriptures, prayer in the closet, in the family, and in the assembly of the saints, the ordinances of God's house, Christian conversation, and secret meditation upon the divine realities revealed in the word of truth. Without the spiritual and continual use of these divinely appointed channels of communication, the soul cannot be kept alive and lively in the things of God. They are as necessary to its health, its growth, its continuance in every good word and work, as food and drink, warmth and shelter, are indispensable to the sustenance of the natural body.

Now, of these means of grace, as they are frequently termed, one of the most edifying, and yet perhaps the least practiced, is that of spiritual *meditation*. The reason of this neglect of one of the choicest means of grace is evident. It is the most spiritual of them all, and, therefore, the most difficult, the most opposed to the carnal mind, and most needing the immediate power and presence of God. In hearing *preaching*, we have chiefly to listen. It does not necessarily require the direct and immediate exercise of the spiritual faculties of the new man of grace. It needs, indeed, faith, for unless *that* be mixed with the word, it cannot profit; (Heb. 4:2;) but it is rather passive faith than active, a faith that rather feeds upon the bread which Boaz reaches to it than which

goes forth to glean for itself in the field, a faith equally the sovereign and efficacious gift and work of God, but one which rather stays at home to divide the spoil than, like the merchants' ships, brings its food from afar. So also with *prayer*. Though a most blessed means of grace, a living channel of communication between the exalted Head and the suffering members, yet many of us know, from painful experience, how much there may be in it of the form and how little of the power. So also with *reading* the Scriptures, *Christian conversation*, sitting down at the *ordinance*,—these may be all duly and regularly attended to, and yet little life or power, faith or feeling, be in active exercise upon the Lord of life and glory. But spiritual meditation, especially if its object be the Person and work of the blessed Lord, so needs the immediate and sustained help and power of the blessed Spirit, that it can be neither begun nor carried on without him. In spiritual meditation, the soul is not as a fish in a pool, which may alike swim or sleep without any sensible difference, but like the bird in the air, which, unless its flight be continually sustained by the exertion of its wings, at once drops to the ground. Some, however, of the Lord's family seem almost incapable of spiritual meditation, at least to any extent. Like a bird with wounded wing, they cannot rise. A wandering mind, an inability to fix their thoughts on divine things, hinders some; powerful temptations prevent others. Darkness, unbelief, infidel suggestions, blasphemous imaginations, doubts and fears of their own interest in the Lord Jesus, hardness of heart, the strong opposition of their carnal mind to everything spiritual and holy,—all these besetments work to the same end, to grievously hinder if not wholly disable many who truly fear God from sweet meditation on those heavenly mysteries which are the food of every regenerate soul.

But may not some help be afforded to those who thus feel their inability to meditate themselves upon the precious truth of God? May not the blessed Spirit employ the thoughts of others to aid those who cannot, from various causes, exercise their own? As in the ministry of the word the preacher breaks the bread of life on which the people feed, who perhaps could not break it for themselves, so may a writer upon the things of God afford a means of meditation to those who cannot well meditate for themselves, by bringing before them his thoughts upon the mysteries of the kingdom. This we attempted to do in our "Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer;" and as we have reason to believe that a blessing rested on our feeble attempts to set that subject forth in these pages, we have felt led to commence, with the Lord's help and blessing, a similar series upon the office characters of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will form, we trust, an appropriate

sequel to our papers, first on the Eternal Sonship, and then on the Sacred Humanity of our blessed Lord. In the one we viewed him as the Son of God, in the other as the Son of man; now we shall have to view him in his complex Person as the great and glorious God-Man, Immanuel, God with us. Not that we should ever view him purely as the Son of God, distinct from that humanity which he was to assume, nor purely as the Son of man distinct from his eternal Sonship and Deity; but as these two natures are really distinct, it may tend to clearness of understanding, and be a help to faith to view them sometimes, as we have done, separate from each other. But in these office characters which he sustains in behalf of his Church, there is no such necessity for viewing his two natures separately; on the contrary, to do so would much mar those spiritual views of him which are so full of blessedness to a believing heart.

We have called them the "Office characters" of the Lord Jesus Christ, meaning thereby those peculiar relationships which he sustains to the church of God as Priest, King, Prophet, Head, Husband, &c. And as of these office characters that of the Priest is the most important, and that which laid a foundation for all the rest, we shall commence the present series by giving it the first and most prominent place. It will be necessary in so doing to bring forward much doctrinal truth; but as our object is not so much to furnish our readers' heads as to edify and profit their hearts, we shall seek to blend instruction with experience, and as the Lord may enable, so to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ in his beauty and blessedness, grace and glory, that our faith may be strengthened, our hope enlarged, and our love drawn forth, and that thus our meditation of him may be sweet.

An objection has been taken by some good men to the word "office" as applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, as if the term rather lowered the dignity of his heavenly Majesty. The Lord ever keep us from using any term that may seem derogatory to the glory and honour of Him whose name is above every name; but if it was no degradation to him to "take upon him the form of a servant," (Phil. 2:7,) and if the Father himself said to him in prophecy, "Behold my Servant whom I uphold," (Isa. 42:1,) it cannot be degrading to him if we speak of his "offices," as understanding thereby the part which he undertook to fulfil for, and the relation which he sustains unto the church of God. But we have chosen rather to adopt the expression, "Office characters," as embodying a fuller and wider idea than the simple term, "office," and thus more completely embracing what the Lord Jesus Christ is as the great and glorious Mediator between God and man.

The High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ is so wide and deep a subject that we can only hope at the best to bring forth a small measure of the treasures of mercy and grace which are stored up in it. But in order to prevent losing ourselves in so wide a field, we shall, the Lord enabling, endeavour to treat the subject as clearly as we can. We shall therefore consider,

I. *The Origin and Nature of Priesthood* generally.

II. *The Priesthood of the Lord Jesus*, as completely filling up all the requisites of that office.

III. The *bearing* which this has on the *experience* of a Christian.

I. The *origin* of priesthood lay in the mind of God from all eternity, for the whole of the Levitical priesthood, from which we gather our truest ideas of the priestly office, was but a type and figure of Him to whom God said, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek," (Psa. 110:4,) and who was "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.) But as regards its *institution*, which, as regards time, we may call its origin, when these hidden purposes of God first came to light, we may assign the garden of Eden as the place wherein, and the fall of man as the epoch when the office of priesthood was instituted. It was, in fact, virtually announced in the first promise; for "the seed of the woman" pointed to the sacred humanity of Jesus, as the bruised "heel" predicted his sufferings, and as the bruised "head" of the serpent proclaimed the victory gained thereby over sin and Satan. Sacrifices are essential to priesthood—so essential that it is an acknowledged principle that where there is no sacrifice there is no priest. Thus the Apostle argues: "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. 8:3.) Sacrifices meet us immediately after the fall as the only acceptable way of worshipping God; and as independently of a divine institution, there is no necessary or natural connection between sacrifice and worship, it is evident that they must be of divine appointment. But where can we so well place their institution as after the fall in Paradise? For why did "the LORD God make coats of skins" to clothe our first parents, except to show them the necessity and nature of a covering from his wrath by the righteousness of his dear Son? And as animal food was prohibited till after the flood, why were the beasts killed but as a sacrifice? We find, therefore, Abel offering sacrifice when he brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof—the fat being that part of the sacrifice which was always burnt on the

altar. And that this offering of Abel was not a mere tribute of thankfulness, but a real slaughtered sacrifice, is clear from the words of the Apostle, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent *sacrifice* than Cain." (Heb. 11:4.) We need not stay to enumerate the sacrifices offered by Noah, (Gen. 8: 20,) by Abraham, (Gen. 15:9, 10; 22:13,) by Jacob, (Gen. 31:54; 46:1,) except as clearly establishing two facts: 1, that sacrifices were still the appointed means of approaching God; and, 2, that the head of the family was, antecedently to the Levitical dispensation, the sacrificing priest.

2. The *nature* of these sacrifices we shall not now dwell upon, at least at any length, as we shall have occasion to consider them more fully when we approach that part of our subject in which we shall hope to show how the blessed Lord fulfilled them all by the sacrifice and offering of himself. Still we may drop a few words of explanation upon the difference between what were sacrifices in the true sense of the term, and, what were more strictly offerings. This difference is expressed by the Apostle in the words: "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices." (Heb. 8:3.) He here draws a distinction between what are called the "*Minchoth*," or unbloody offerings, such as those of corn, oil, meats, and drinks, which he terms "gifts," and the "*Zebachim*," or the true "sacrifices," in which the victim was killed, and its blood shed at the foot of the altar. Taking, then, a general view of both the sacrifices and offerings which were made by the high priest, we may divide them into three distinct kinds, according to the places where they were severally offered: 1. Those of the *court*, or the brazen altar, by blood and fire; 2. Those of the *sanctuary*, at the altar of incense and table of shew-bread; and 3. Those of the *most holy place*, before the ark of the covenant within the veil. The first, being truly and properly sacrifices wherein blood was shed and the victim wholly or partially burnt by fire, represented the death of Christ and his sacrifice on the cross; the second, being the burning of incense on the golden altar morning and evening, and the offering of the shew-bread weekly upon the table, figured his present intercession in heaven; and the third, or the carrying in of the blood of the bullock and the goat, and the incense beaten small, into the most holy place, represented the effect of both in atonement and reconciliation, and those divine transactions which are still now being carried on by our exalted High Priest, as our advocate with the Father in the courts of bliss.

It is, however, with the sacrifices offered upon the brazen altar that we have at present chiefly to do, and these may be divided into six kinds, as enumerated Lev. 7:37: 1. Burnt offerings; 2. Meat offerings; 3. Sin offerings;

4. Trespass offerings; 5. Consecrations; and 6. Peace offerings. These were distinguished by two circumstances from all the other offerings: 1, in that they were all "fire offerings," being wholly or partially burnt; and, were, 2, "most holy." They were thus distinguished from the "heave offerings" and "wave offerings," which were not burnt with fire, and were not "most holy," but, as the term may be rendered, were called "holy praises," being, for the most part, voluntary thank offerings. The matter of these sacrifices was of two sorts: 1. Beasts; 2. Fowls or birds. Of beasts there were three sorts offered in sacrifice: one of the herds, viz., bullocks, and two of the flocks, viz., sheep and goats. Of birds were used two sorts: 1, turtles; 2, pigeons; and 3, in one case, that of cleansing the leper, (Lev. 14:4) sparrows. In all these sacrificial victims there were two necessary requisites: 1, that they should be *males*, except in the sin and trespass offering; and 2, should be *without blemish*, figuring thereby the ability and the spotlessness of the Lord Jesus, both as the Priest and as the Victim.

These minute details may appear to some of our readers uninteresting and almost unnecessary, and indeed would be so were it not for their reference to the blessed Lord, and the food which they afford to a living faith, as seeing in them all a representation of the sacrifice and blood-shedding of the Son of God. To a believing heart nothing can be unnecessary, nothing uninteresting which points to him, and which tends in any way to shed a sacred light on the Person, work, sacrifice, and sufferings of our great High Priest. By these rites and sacrifices he was represented to the faith of the Old Testament church; and though; the substance being come, these shadows have now no place in our worship, yet can a living faith look back to them and see them illuminated by a divine glory, as testifying of Jesus, and of salvation by his blood and righteousness.

II. But having thus cast a glance at these "shadows of good things to come," we may now pass on to consider the Lord Jesus Christ under that blessed character which, as we said before, lies at the foundation of all his other covenant relationships, and shall therefore proceed to view him as the great *High Priest* over the house of God.

Several important considerations here at once meet our view, as,

i. What is the true *nature* of priesthood, what is its *foundation*, and whence did it take its rise and origin?

1. The essential office of a priest is to offer sacrifice. But sacrifice implies three things: 1, the just desert of a sinner—death; 2, the substitution of a victim in his place; 3, the acceptance of the substitute by the offended Judge. There is no natural or necessary connection between sacrifice and forgiveness. To take an innocent lamb, cut its throat, sprinkle its blood, and burn its fat on an altar, as an act of divine worship, would rather, of itself, aggravate sin than atone for it, unless this mode of worship had been instituted by God himself, with an immediate and special reference to an atonement of his own providing. "It is not possible that the blood of bullocks and of goats should take away sins;" (Heb. 10:4;) and thus sacrifice has neither validity nor significance apart from the offering up of the Son of God as a propitiation for sin. But a sacrifice requires a *priest*. We see this most clearly in the Levitical law, for in that no sacrifice was allowed to be offered but by a priest of the family of Aaron. It is true that the offerer might bring the victim to the altar and kill it, though this was usually done by the Levites, (2 Chron. 30:16, 17; 35: 11,) yet none but the priest could offer the sacrifice, by taking the blood and sprinkling it round about then altar. (Lev. 1:1-5.)

But priest, as well as sacrifice, must be of *divine appointment*. This the Apostle expressly lays down: "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." (Heb. 5:4.) Moses, though "the man of God," unto whom alone "the Lord spake face to face," did not take upon himself the office of priesthood. God chose to it his brother Aaron, as a sovereign act of his good pleasure, and fixed the priesthood in him and his family. (Exod. 28:1.) Similarly, the Lord Jesus Christ did not choose or appoint himself to the office of High Priest, as the Apostle declares: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest; but he that said unto him, "Thou art my son; to-day have I begotten thee." (Heb. 5:5.) We are thus at once led up to the spring head, the original source and fountain, of our Lord's priesthood. He was appointed and constituted a high priest by the express will of the Father; for he "glorified not himself to be made a high priest;" that is, he did not take to himself that glorious office of his own mind and will, without the express designation and appointment of his heavenly Father.

But *when* was he thus solemnly and divinely appointed? Surely in eternity. Time had neither place nor name, for as then it had neither birth nor being, in the eternal counsels of heaven. It has witnessed, it daily witnesses, their development, but it was not present at their conception. But without seeking to pry with too curious an eye into those solemn transactions in a dateless

eternity wherein and whereby our blessed Lord was appointed to the office, and assumed the relationship of a High Priest to the house of God, we may perhaps draw a distinction between the counsels themselves and the open declaration of them. Prior to the open declaration of the Father to the Son—prior to the word of the oath, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek," Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the eternal Three-in-One Jehovah, took solemn counsel concerning the salvation of the church. Her miserable condition, as sunk and ruined in the Adam fall, was foreseen, and a plan devised in the eternal mind to save her from her destructions. This was "the counsel of peace," (Zech. 6:13,) the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," (2 Sam. 23:5,) in which the Father proposed, the Son accepted, and the Holy Ghost ratified that solemn compact, whereby the Son of God undertook to become the Head, Husband, Advocate, Mediator, and Redeemer of that innumerable multitude which the Father gave him to be his people, that in them he might be eternally glorified. Now, it was when this covenant had been entered into and firmly ratified and sealed by mutual compact, that the Father "spake in vision to his Holy One, I have laid help upon One that is mighty." Then was the Son of God consecrated to the high priesthood, and all that he subsequently did and suffered in the execution of that office was but the fulfilling of what he then undertook in harmony with the will of God.

ii. But let us now see his *fitness* for that sacred office. The infinitely wise God would not have chosen him for the work unless he had been perfectly qualified to fulfill it. For what a work it was—a work in which the glory of God, the salvation of millions of sinners, the utter defeat and overthrow of Satan, and the destruction of sin, were all to be accomplished; and that through seas of suffering, agony, shame, ignominy, and temptation, to be waded through and overcome by the Son of God in the flesh! But God knew both work and workman; what was to be done and who alone could do it; what was to be suffered and who alone could endure it. He knew that it was a work suitable for his own dear Son to accomplish, and that he alone was qualified for the work and the work alone qualified for him. Thus the dear Redeemer, with holy joy in the sweet consciousness of his Father's approving smile, could look up just before he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4.)

1. In looking, then, at his qualifications for the work, let us first take a glance at his *divine Person*, as co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. None but a Person can mediate. This at once overthrows the Sabellian heresy, which

denies the three distinct Persons in the Godhead. A name, a relationship, an airy nothing, cannot interpose between the Person of God and his guilty creatures. That he then should be a distinct and divine Person was absolutely necessary, or how could he mediate between God and us? And to give him power and authority to mediate he must be also a divine Person. A creature, the highest creature, the loftiest and brightest of the burning seraphim, the noblest angel, such as Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, (Luke 1:19,) had not, could not have sufficient dignity to mediate between God and man. The seraph veiled his face with his wings before the Majesty of God when his glory filled the temple. (Isa. 6:2.) Could he then mediate on equal terms with the great and glorious self-existent I AM? One was needed who, as Job speaks, as a "daysman," or umpire, "could lay his hand upon us both;" (Job 9:33;) that is, one who, as God, could be equal with God, and as man be equal with man, laying one hand upon God in the fulness of Deity and the other hand upon man in the identity of his humanity—near to the Father as the Son of God; near to man as the Son of man. But this wondrous daysman could only be found in him who "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with h God," (Phil. 2:6)—in him who "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," (John 1:1)—in him who is God's "fellow," or equal, (Zech. 13:7,) as being the Son of the Father in truth and love.

2. We say it, then, not to stir up controversy, but as a part of divine truth, that his being the *true, proper, and eternal Son of God* gave him an additional and most special fitness thus to mediate between God and man. Who so suitable to plead with the Father as his only-begotten Son? Who, as ever lying in his bosom, so acquainted with his mind and will? Who so fit to come forth into visible manifestation as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Person? Who so able to reveal in his own Person the love, the pity, the mercy, the compassion, the grace of the Father? We may add, who so able to manifest his holiness, his purity, his hatred of sin, and all those glorious perfections of the divine character which, hidden from the sons of men in the blaze of that light which no man can approach unto, were all brought to light in the Person of Immanuel? As, then, we view by faith the Person of the Son of God, we see how suitable he was to undertake and execute the office of a high priest. This intrinsic and eternal dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God is the foundation of his priesthood, as the Apostle argues in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

**We have laid thus far the foundation of the Lord's priesthood in his eternal Deity and divine Sonship, and shall hope, with God's help and blessing, to pursue our subject in the next chapter.**

## **II.**

**In resuming our Meditations on the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, we feel our need of that anointing "which teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie," (1 John 2:27,) and without which, as resting upon the lips or the pen, no preaching, however eloquent or powerful, no writing, however clear, fluent, or argumentative, can be of any spiritual profit or of any abiding benefit to the Church of God. But if this "unction from the Holy One" be necessary to the gracious understanding and experimental unfolding of every part of the truth of God, so indispensable to all true light upon and life from every portion of holy writ, that without it all is darkness and death, how much more is it needed when we have to meditate upon the Person and work of the blessed Lord, and to lead up the thoughts and affections of the living family to him who is now seated on his throne of grace and glory as the great High Priest over the house of God!**

**The special work and office of the Holy Ghost is to testify of Jesus, (John 15:26,) to glorify him, to take of the things that are his, and to show them to the soul; (John 16:14;) and therefore without these teachings and testimonies of the Holy Ghost we have no true, no saving knowledge of him, no living faith in him, no sweet communion with him, no tender and affectionate love toward him. And are not these the marks which peculiarly distinguish the living family of God from the dead in sin and the dead in profession? A bare knowledge of the letter of truth can communicate no such gracious affections as warm, soften, melt, and animate the soul of a child of God, under the felt power and influence of the Holy Ghost; can create no such faith as gives him manifest union with Jesus; can inspire no such hope as carries every desire of his heart within the veil; can produce no such godly sorrow for sin as makes him loathe and abhor himself in dust and ashes; can shed abroad no such love as makes him love the Lord with a pure heart fervently. But let us not be misunderstood. The same blessed and holy Teacher who takes of the things that are Christ's and reveals them to the soul, thus raising up faith, hope, and love, and bringing into living exercise every other spiritual gift and grace, first prepares the heart to receive him in all his gracious characters and covenant relationships by deeply and powerfully convincing us of our need of him as**

our all in all. Is he a Priest? We need his atoning blood and his all-prevailing intercession that we may have peace with God, and that our prayers and supplications may rise up with acceptance into his ears. Is he a Prophet? We need his heavenly instruction, that we may sit at his feet and hear his word, so as to believe his promises and obey his precepts. Is he a King? We need his powerful and peaceful sceptre to subdue every foe, calm every fear, subdue every lust, crucify the whole body of sin, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

But it may well be said of the present day, as recorded in the roll of ancient prophecy as indicating "the time of the end:" "Many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased." Is not this true of the professing Church as well as of the profane world?—as much fulfilled in the pulpit and the pew as in the railway train, the electric telegraph, and the scientific lecture room? From book to book, from chapel to chapel, from preacher to preacher many run, and by this increase their knowledge of Gospel truth; but how few run so as to obtain that spiritual and experimental knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent which is eternal life! The truths of the Gospel are widely spread; the Person and work of the Lord Jesus are proclaimed from many pulpits; but it is still now as true as ever it was, that "many are called but few chosen;" that "strait is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" that "no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him;" and that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It is not, then, the increase of knowledge—that knowledge which "puffeth up," that either makes or manifests a true believer in Jesus. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are still hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes; and however plainly they may be set forth in the word of truth, or enforced by the lips of men, it still remains good that only trembling hearts and wounded consciences know them in their saving power. For such we write, and if any word drop from our pen which may comfort and encourage such, we shall little heed the cavils of those who are settled on their lees and are at ease in Zion.

We attempted in our last chapter to show that the intrinsic and eternal dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God is the foundation of his priesthood; and we may further add that the Person of our blessed Lord is so intimately connected with his office characters that without a gracious and experimental knowledge of his Deity and Sonship we cannot have any true or saving experience of his love and blood. We insist upon this, not in a spirit of

controversy, nor with a view directly or indirectly to be over pertinaciously bringing forward a disputed doctrine, whether necessary or not for the maintenance of our point or the elucidation of truth, but from a deep and solemn conviction of its truth, and that upon it, as the only firm basis, the priestly as well as every other office of our blessed Lord rests. Among the devices of Satan to obscure the truth of God this is not the least or last, first to raise up opponents to it, and then, when controversy arises, with its usual attendant warmth, to try and persuade the defenders of truth to soften down their statements, to keep back their views, or even quietly drop them altogether, lest further confusion should arise among churches, or weak brethren be stumbled. Apply this to the present case. The true, proper, and eternal Sonship of our blessed Lord lies at the very foundation of his priestly office. Because he is a Son, and only because he is God's true and proper Son, is he qualified to mediate between God and us. His true and real Sonship, therefore, is as necessary, as indispensable to his assuming that office as his Deity. The grace and glory of this present dispensation, as unfolded by Paul, (Heb. 1,) is that, whereas "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. 1:1-4.) Thus, according to the Apostle's testimony, that Jesus is and ever was the Son of God, that as such he is and ever was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person," and that "by him," as his Son, and therefore before his incarnation, "he made the worlds," is the distinguishing grace and glory of this present dispensation as a covenant of mercy and peace. He could not otherwise "by himself have purged our sins," nor could he have been "made so much better than the angels," unless, as the eternal Son of the Father, he had "by inheritance,"—his lawful inheritance as his true and only-begotten Son, obtained a more excellent name,"—the name because the nature of a Son, "than they." His name, his nature, his inheritance, all, therefore, necessarily preceded his covenant engagements, and were the foundation of them all. Nor is he the eternal Son of God because his people were chosen in him from before the foundation of the world, as if eternal love to the Church were the foundation of his Sonship, but because such is the natural and necessary mode of his divine Personality as a Person in the ever blessed Trinity.

**But having thus far seen his blessed fitness for the office of Priest as the true and proper Son of God, we may now direct our thoughts to a consideration of the office character which he thus assumed. In attempting to do this, it will perhaps be desirable to obtain a clear view of the nature of that office. A priest implies a sacrifice, and a sacrifice implies three parties: 1, a guilty transgressor, for whom the sacrifice is offered; 2, a holy God, to whom the atonement is made; 3, a priest, who shall stand as a mediator between God and the sinner, and who shall offer the sacrifice required. We see all this strikingly shown when the children of Israel sinned in murmuring against the Lord for his destroying Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The children of Israel were the guilty transgressors; the Lord God of Israel was he against whom they had sinned; Aaron, offering incense and making an atonement for the people, was the priest, the typical Mediator. As such he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed. (Num. 16:48.) Thus we, as we know by painful experience, are guilty sinners before God; he, in all the perfections of his justice, purity, and holiness, his wrath against sin, and his inflexible determination by no means to clear the guilty, is our most just and righteous Judge; our adorable Lord, the Son of God in our nature, Immanuel, God with us, is the Mediator, the only Mediator between God and us; and he, as our High Priest, has offered a sacrifice, even himself, as a propitiation for our sins. We should, however, carefully observe that there is no necessary or natural connection between sin and sacrifice, or that God is at all bound by his moral perfections to pardon sin. It is wholly owing to the all-wise and all-gracious will of God that any pardon should be extended to any sinner, that any grace should be shown to him, or that any way should have been devised and executed to open a way of escape from the wrath justly due to his transgressions. It pleased God, in the depths of his infinite wisdom and mercy, that a way of salvation should be provided for the lost; but as justice must be amply satisfied, as the righteous law of God could not be violated with impunity, as his infinite purity and holiness could not be tarnished by passing by iniquity as if it were a slight thing for man to deface the image of God, and, by listening to Satan, to defy the authority of his Maker, this could only be accomplished through a sacrifice of God's own providing, which was no less than that of his dear Son, that "he should be made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."**

**But here let us for a moment pause to apply these thoughts to our own consciences, and to examine our spiritual and experimental acquaintance with them; for however clearly we may seem to see, or however boldly**

acknowledge these as important truths, however they may form a part of the creed for which we contend, yet what is all this short of their experimental power? And how deeply do we need that they should not only be at first made known to us by divine manifestation, but that they should be kept warm, fresh, and alive in our bosom as every-day realities for our faith, hope, and love to be actively engaged upon as the very life of our soul. We therefore need on all these points the special teaching and testimony of the Holy Ghost, not only to lead us feelingly and experimentally into them under the first convictions of sin and the early suings for mercy, but to seal them daily upon our consciences as living realities, so as to live continually under their power and influence. The great mark of divine life in the soul is, that it makes itself manifest by its internal movements, and that all these movements, whether up or down, in or out, all really tend upward to the Fountain of life, who said, "Because I live, ye shall live also;" "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." If I have no daily sight or sense of sin, no deep and abiding conviction of my state by nature before God as a most miserable transgressor, a guilty criminal of no common dye, I shall certainly neither know nor care to know anything experimentally and savingly of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, again, if I have no spiritual view of that just, holy, and righteous God with whom I have to do, who in himself is "a consuming fire," and whose indignation as such burns to the lowest hell, what sense can I have of needing a sacrifice for my sins, and that that sacrifice should have been consummated by nothing less than the bloodshedding, sufferings, and death of his co-equal, coeternal Son? And further, unless I have some spiritual knowledge of and faith in the only-begotten Son of God, what can I know of his having shed his precious blood to redeem my soul from the lowest hell? Or again, whatever may be my views and feelings upon these points, how can I spiritually apprehend them, or live from day to day upon them, except the blessed Spirit be continually opening them up and applying them to my heart? But we are rather anticipating our proposed intention of showing the peculiar bearing which the priesthood of the Lord Jesus has upon the experience of the saint of God, and shall therefore pursue no further this train of thought. Our present object is rather first to establish its truth on a firm, scriptural basis, and open up its nature and character, its end and object, before we enter upon the experience of its benefits and blessings as made known by a divine power to the soul.

Having, then, seen that the original and eternal dignity of the Son of God, as a Person in the glorious Trinity, is essential to his Priesthood, and that his being God the Son fitted him in a manner, full beyond all conception of ineffable

grace and glory, to sustain that office, we may now look at what was further necessary that he might execute it according to the will of God, and in perfect harmony with "the counsel of peace which was between them both." (Heb. 10:9; Zech. 6:13.) One main object of our blessed Lord's assuming, according to the will of his heavenly Father, the office of a Priest was that he might "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:26.) To offer sacrifice, we know, was one chief part of the priestly office, for priesthood and sacrifice are so indissolubly connected that it is a received axiom, that where there is no priest there is no sacrifice, and where there is no sacrifice there is no priest. Sin could not be put away without a sacrifice, and this sacrifice must be no less than the obedience, bloodshedding, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, wherein and whereby he offered up himself as a propitiation to put away the wrath of God; for "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." (Heb. 10:4.) Sin being such an abominable thing in the sight of God, such a violation of his word and will, such a daring rebellion against his majesty and glory, such a casting aside of his righteous government and authority, rendering the sinner so polluted and unclean, so filling him with a teeming mass of ungodliness, and so making body and soul a very temple of Satan, it could not be forgiven and put away without a sacrifice in some way commensurate to its flagrant and hideous enormity. That sin should be visibly and effectually punished, the righteous character of God be fully and openly cleared, the claims of his holy law be thoroughly satisfied, his truth and justice be amply vindicated, his wrath be wholly appeased, and yet that his mercy and love might be displayed in all their gracious and eternal fulness in the complete salvation of an innumerable company of chosen sinners—this was the grand mystery of infinite wisdom, infinite love, and infinite power, to be accomplished and revealed in the Person and work of the Son of God, as "giving himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. 5:2.) But this sacrifice of himself he could not offer unless he took a body capable of doing and suffering the whole will of God. Deity, as pure Deity, can neither obey nor suffer. The Son of God, as the true and proper Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, could neither obey, nor bleed, nor die. And yet without obedience, the law cannot be fulfilled; without blood, sin cannot be remitted; without death, the sacrifice cannot be completed. Yet must it be obedience without failure, blood without blemish, and death without desert. A Lamb, therefore, was needed "without blemish and without spot;" (1 Pet. 1:19;) a Lamb "slain," in the purposes of God, "from the foundation of the world;" (Rev. 13:8;) and that Lamb one which God had "provided for himself," as Abraham prophetically assured Isaac he would do. (Gen. 22:8.)

Here, then, we see, in some measure, the beauty and blessedness, the grace and glory of that pure and sacred humanity which the Son of God took in the womb of the Virgin Mary, under the overshadowing power and operations of the Holy Ghost, and whereby he became "Immanuel, God with us." This was "the body" which his heavenly Father "prepared" for him, and which was "curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth," (Psa. 139:15,) when at one and the same instant the divine Person of the Son of God took a pure and perfect human body and a pure and perfect human soul in the womb of the Virgin. Then could he say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Sacrifice and offering (that is, such as are offered by the law) thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. (Heb. 10:5.)

But the question may now arise, *When* did our gracious Lord more particularly enter upon the discharge of his priestly office? Was he a priest from the moment of his assumption of the body prepared for him, or did he enter upon his priestly office at any subsequent period? To answer this question we must draw a distinction between his virtual and his actual susception of his covenant offices. The Lord Jesus Christ was invested with all his offices from the moment of his conception and birth. He became, therefore, virtually the Priest, Prophet, and King of his Church and people when his human nature, as "the holy thing," was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, for he received all his offices, at one and the same moment by the unction of the Holy Ghost communicated to him in all its fulness. He was therefore "born Christ the Lord," (Luke 2:11,) and was consequently Prophet, Priest, and King at his birth; for as under the law prophets, (1 Kings 19:16, ) kings, (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13,) and priests, (Exod. 29:7,) were consecrated to their office by being anointed with oil, so our blessed Lord, when anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, in the womb of the Virgin, received in that unction of the Holy Ghost all those graces, gifts, and abilities, and all that right and authority which qualified and entitled him to the discharge of all his covenant offices. And yet there was a space between his virtual and his actual entering upon his offices as regards their discharge. We believe, then, that though he assumed the body prepared for him at the moment of his incarnation, and thus virtually took upon him the office of priesthood under the unction of the Holy Ghost, yet that strictly speaking he did not then actually enter upon his priestly office. There were, so to speak, degrees in his assumption of it. 1. There was first his susception of it with his other offices at his incarnation. 2. There was, secondly, his visible and declarative anointing at his baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended upon

him in the form of a dove and filled him with all his graces and gifts. 3. And there was, thirdly, his especial dedication and consecration of himself to his work of suffering and dying when he said, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself;" (John 17:19;) that is, I dedicate and consecrate myself as a sacrificer and as a sacrifice. Thus we may place the time when the Lord Jesus Christ more especially entered upon the execution of his priestly office in that intercessory prayer which he offered up John 17. It is true that he assumed it initially when he became the Lamb of God that bore the sins of the world; but as he did not enter upon his prophetic office till after his baptism, nor upon his kingly office till after his resurrection, so he did not enter upon his priestly office, that is, fully, until just prior to his crucifixion. But as the distinction may not be immediately seen by all our readers, let us explain the difference between entering upon an office initially and completely. When he was yet a child of twelve years old, Jesus was found by his parents "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." (Luke 2:46.) There Jesus was entering initially into his prophetic office, though he did not really and fully enter upon it until he returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee after his temptation in the wilderness, and "taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." So when he cast out devils, fed hungry multitudes, bade stormy winds and waves cease and be still, he was executing initially his kingly office. Yea, even when he stood before Pilate, and answering his question, "Art thou a king, then?" replied, according to the Jewish mode of affirmation, "Thou sayest (that is, 'Thou sayest truly') that I am a king," he claimed then and there, even in the hour of his lowest humiliation, his regal dignity. Pilate, therefore, wrote a title which he put upon the cross, and which he would not alter for all the loud clamour of the chief priests, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." And yet he did not fully assume the kingly office till after his resurrection, when he said to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Thus we see that entering upon an office initially differs from, and yet is perfectly consistent with, taking it fully and completely. So, therefore, in the priestly office, which our Lord assumed according to the will of God, he entered upon it initially before he fully and completely entered upon its discharge. He was, in a sense, bearing sin from the moment of his conception. His life was a life of suffering; he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and he was always perfectly obeying the law in thought, word, and action, and thus working out a robe of righteousness for the justification of his people. But this was not precisely the same thing as offering himself a sacrifice for sin on the cross. We may illustrate this by the type of the paschal lamb; the lamb was to be taken on the tenth day of the month Abib, and kept up till the

fourteenth day. When then it was taken out of the fold and kept apart by itself for four days, it was initially a victim, but it was not killed till the evening of the fourteenth day. So our Lord from his first separation unto the office was a Priest, and from his incarnation was a Lamb without blemish, but as a Priest he did not offer the sacrifice until the blood of his pure humanity was shed on the cross. But he more especially consecrated and dedicated himself as the Priest, when, as if anticipating that part of his priestly office which he now carries on in the courts of heaven, he offered up the intercessory prayer recorded in John 17.

With the Lord's help and blessing, we shall attempt to show in our next paper the nature of this sacrifice, and that indeed it was a propitiation for sin.

### III.

"How should man be just with (or 'before,' *margin*) God?" (Job 9:2) always has been, ever must be, a matter of deep and anxious inquiry when the mind is once enlightened to see, and the conscience awakened to feel the awful state of condemnation into which we are sunk by sin before Him who, in his eternal purity, spotless holiness, and inflexible justice, is indeed "a consuming fire." But if even from natural convictions, the conscience, as if necessarily and distinctively, trembles under a sight and sense of sin before the great and glorious Majesty of heaven, how much more keenly and deeply must it feel these pangs of guilt and shame when the Holy Ghost, by his quickening operations on the heart, "judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet;" when "the hail" of God's manifested anger against all transgression "sweeps away the refuge of lies" in which self-righteousness has vainly endeavoured to intrench itself, and the rising "waters" of his felt displeasure "overflow the hiding-place" of good works and good resolutions in which the convinced sinner has sought a temporary but most unavailing shelter! "What shall I do to appease the wrath of God, to satisfy his justice, to fulfil the demands of his righteous law, to conciliate his favour, to escape hell, and win heaven?"—however in minuter features the beginnings of a work of grace may vary, such solemn searchings of heart, such eager and anxious inquiries from the lips must always attend the first operations of the Spirit of God upon the conscience. For *where* does grace always find us? In sin—if not in open yet in secret transgression. If a condemning law do not arrest us as plainly and manifestly guilty of vile, flagrant acts of iniquity, yet it comes upon us in its accusing sentence as "walking in the vanity of our mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the

ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our heart." Being, then, convinced of sin by the quickening operations of the Holy Ghost, the alarmed sinner looks out to find some way of escape from the wrath to come, some refuge wherein his guilty soul may find safety and shelter. Now to such a poor self-condemned wretch, to such a guilty criminal, the atoning blood and justifying obedience of the Son of God, as revealed to his heart by the Holy Ghost, becomes the only refuge of his weary soul, the only way of salvation from the wrath to come, the only door of hope opened to him in the valley of Achor. To him, therefore, as faith hears and receives the joyful sound, it is glad tidings, good news, that the Lord Jesus "now once in the end of the world hath appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:26.) The convincing operations of the Holy Ghost on his conscience have been those "preparations of the heart" which "are of the Lord;" and which, by breaking it up, give it that "deepness of earth," (Matt. 13:5,) without which there is no proper tilth, no suitable seed-bed for the word of life to germinate in and grow; for until the fallow ground of the heart be broken up by the ploughshare of the law, it is but a sowing among thorns to receive the mere doctrine of the atonement into the judgment. There being no living faith in a heart destitute of grace, there can be no spiritual view of the blood of the cross; no sight of the groaning, agonising Son of God; no secret, sacred entrance into his sorrows, no holy fellowship of his sufferings, no inward conformity to his death. But where the Holy Ghost has convinced the soul of sin, and thus prepared the heart for the reception of atoning blood and dying love, he sooner or later reveals the Son of God as the Mediator—the only Mediator, between God and men, and especially in his character of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.)

As this train of thought at once leads us to the subject of the sacrifice offered upon the cross by the suffering Son of God, and as we proposed above, (page 175, ) to show, with the Lord's help and blessing, the nature of that sacrifice, and that it indeed was a propitiation for sin, we shall here resume the thread of our Meditations upon the blessed Lord as the great High Priest over the house of God.

Our readers will doubtless recollect that we have sought carefully to distinguish between the *past* and the *present* work of our great High Priest. Before "he gave up the ghost," and thus laid down his previous life as the last and crowning act of his suffering obedience, our gracious Lord cried out with a loud voice, "It is finished." (Matt. 27:50; John 19:30.) The sacrifice, therefore, according to his own testimony, was complete in and by the death of

the sacred Victim. As the high priest could not enter within the veil on the solemn day of atonement until he could carry in the blood of the slain bullock, so his Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, could not enter into the courts above until he had first bled and died below.

To constitute an efficient sacrifice several things were required:

1. The whole must be *according to the Sovereign will of God*. The victim must be of his choice, and the whole arrangement at his supreme disposal. This we see most clearly intimated in the minute directions given as to the Levitical sacrifices to which we shall have occasion presently more fully to refer.

2. *The blood of the victim must be shed*, for "the blood is the life;" (Gen. 9:4;) "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul;" (Lev. 17:11;) and "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9:22.)

3. The victim must *die*. As death was the original penalty for disobedience, ("In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," Gen. 2:17,) so the sacrifice cannot be complete without the death of the victim. Thus Jesus "became obedient unto death," (Phil. 2:8,) "poured out his soul unto death," (Isa. 53:12,) and gave his life for the sheep. (John 10:11.)

4. The victim must also be *without spot or blemish*, in most cases be a male, and in one—the paschal lamb, a male of the first year. (Exod. 12:5.) The stronger sex typified strength, the ripe age maturity, and the freedom from blemish spotless purity; all which three marks blessedly met in the Christ of God; for as strong, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; as mature, he was made perfect through suffering; and as a Lamb without blemish and without spot, he was the Holy One of Israel.

We have already alluded to the sacrifices offered under the law, and intimated (page 160) that we should have occasion to consider them more fully when we approached the present part of our subject. This, therefore, we shall now, with the Lord's help and blessing, attempt to do, as hoping thereby to throw some light upon the only true Sacrifice which Jesus offered upon the cross of Calvary.

It is to the early chapters of the book of Leviticus that we must chiefly turn to examine the sacrifices which were appointed by God as types and representatives of this great, this all-atoning Sacrifice.

1. The first sacrifice which there meets our view is "*the Burnt offering*," the nature and emblematic intention of which we shall now therefore consider. "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord." (Lev. 1:1-3.) Our space will not admit of our bestowing upon this remarkable sacrifice all the attention that its importance demands; it must suffice, therefore, to furnish our readers with some hints for their own profitable meditation.

The "burnt offering" was one of the earliest modes of sacrifice. The first recorded instance of its firing offered was by Noah, after the flood:\* "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." (Gen. 8:20.) This was doubtless typical of the sacrifice offered up on the cross by the Lord Jesus, for we read that "the Lord smelt a sweet savour;" (or "savour of rest," *margin*;) for did not Christ give himself "for us an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweet smelling savour?" (Eph. 5:2;) and does not the Father "rest" with ineffable complacency and delight upon the sacrifice thus offered to offended Justice by his only-begotten Son? The next instance, we believe, of this mode of sacrifice is when God commanded Abraham to take his son, his only Hon Isaac, whom he loved, and offer him for a burnt offering upon Mount Moriah; (Gen. 22:2;) and though the sacrifice of Isaac himself was arrested by the voice of the Lord out of heaven, yet Abraham offered up the ram caught in a thicket by his horns,—(type of Jesus, caught, as it were, in the thicket of our sins,) as a burnt offering in the stead of his son. Other instances previously to the giving of the law, are those in Job, (1:5; 42:8,) and of Jethro, (Exod. 18:12,) but as they convey no peculiar instruction, we need not here dwell upon them. It is sufficiently evident from the two instances of Noah and Abraham that the rite of burnt offering existed, and no doubt by God's own appointment, before the setting up of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The ceremonial law then instituted only gave it a peculiar and additional sanction, put it, as it were, on a fresh basis, and furnished its offerer with more specific and minute directions, that the type might be more complete. Its distinctive feature was that it was wholly burnt; which was typical of two things: 1, of the anger of God, as a consuming fire, wholly burning up the victim, as it will

burn body and soul in hell; 2, as we shall presently more fully show, of the flames of self-sacrificing love, in which the body and soul of Jesus were as if wholly consumed in the devotedness of his heart.

\* We do not instance Abel's offering, of whom it is recorded that "he brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof," (Gen. 3:4,) as the express mention of "the fat" seems to indicate that the fat only, and not the whole victim was burnt on the altar.

1. But as we have proposed to direct our attention chiefly to the opening chapters of Leviticus, we shall name a prior feature, viz., that it was wholly *voluntary*. "He shall offer it of his *own voluntary will*." It was not like the sin offering or the trespass offering, a sacrifice specially offered for some particular sin, wrung from him, as it were, by guilt of conscience, but it was brought willingly of the man's own accord. Now this peculiar feature of the burnt offering, which, it will be observed, well harmonises in that point with the voluntary burnt offerings offered by Job for his sons, (Job 1:5,) points to that marked character of the sacrifice offered by our great High Priest that it was on his part wholly a *voluntary act*: "Lo! I come to do thy will," was the language of the Son of God in taking the body which the Father had prepared for him. The eternal love with which the Son of God loved the Church before he gave himself for it; (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:25;) his covenant engagements on her behalf; (Psa. 89:19, 35, 36;) his anticipation of the time of his incarnation by his various appearances in a human form under the Old Testament, were all so many marks and indications of the holy eagerness with which he undertook the work which the Father gave him to do. As the Son of the Father in truth and love, as lying from all eternity, as his only-begotten Son, in his bosom, he know the will of the Father, for he and the Father are one—one in essence, one in nature, one in will. (2 John 3; John 1:18; 10:30.) The will of the Father was that he should take a body which the Father, in his infinite wisdom and grace, had prepared for him, and offer it up as a sacrifice, and thus redeem and sanctify the Church with his precious blood. The whole of his suffering and obedient life was a doing of the will of God, for he could ever say, "I do always those things that please him;" (John 8:29;) but, as we have already pointed out, it was more particularly when he sanctified or consecrated himself as the High Priest in his intercessory prayer, (John 17:19,) that he did the will of God by for ever perfecting by one offering them that are sanctified. (Heb. 10:14.) His whole heart, therefore, panted to do that will. Thus, on his last journey, after he had passed through Jericho, we read that he "went before" his disciples as they were in the way ascending up to Jerusalem, (Luke

19:28,) as if he would reprove their lagging footsteps, and go before them, not only to show them the way to the cross, but as himself advancing with all holy eagerness to meet it. In this spirit he said, on a previous occasion, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how and straitened ('pained,' *margin*) till it be accomplished." (Luke 12:50.) This baptism was the baptism of suffering and blood in which he was to be immersed when all the waves and billows of God's wrath went over him; but his holy soul was straitened, or as if drawn together with the cords of love, and "pained" with the delay, time itself moving on with pace too slow for his ardent desire to do and suffer the whole will of God. This voluntary offering, then, of himself to be wholly offered up to God, as the burnt offering was entirely consumed, is a most blessed feature of the sacrifice consummated on the cross by "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." (Heb. 3:1 .) As "the Apostle," or messenger of God, bringing in his heart and hands a message of mercy, he came forth from the Father's bosom in self-sacrificing love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" (John 15:13;) "Who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.) Whatever amount, therefore, of sorrow or suffering he had to endure, Jesus could still say, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book," (the book of God's eternal counsels and fixed decrees,) "it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in my heart." (Psa. 40:7, 8.) Thus "he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Isa. 53:7.) The whole of his obedient and suffering life was a voluntary offering up of himself to do and suffer the will of God; but it is in its last acts, as offering himself in sacrifice, that we see it especially manifested. In this spirit, as we have already pointed out, he comes up to Jerusalem, for there must he die, as he himself said, "Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke 13:33.) In this spirit, he entered Jerusalem, in meek yet holy triumph, sitting on an ass's colt. (John 12:15.) In this spirit, he sat down with his disciples at the paschal supper, when he said unto them, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." (Luke 22:15.) And in the same spirit, he freely, voluntarily laid down his life as the last act of his willing, suffering obedience, according to his own words, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment, (that is, this enjoined part of my priestly office,—for he is here speaking not of his essential, but of his mediatorial life) have I received of my Father." (John 10:17, 18.)

2. But let us now view another feature, indeed what may be considered the leading and main characteristic of the burnt sacrifice. It was to be *wholly burnt*. "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." (Lev. 1:9.) In the other sacrifices only the fat, (that is, the internal fat,) the kidneys and the caul were burnt upon the altar, for that was "the food of the offering made by fire, for a sweet savour, and was the Lord's;" (Lev. 3:16;) but the burnt sacrifice was wholly burnt. The burnt sacrifice, therefore, represents the offering up of the pure humanity of Christ, not only in the flames of the anger of God against sin, without which it would not have been a sacrifice at all, but also in the pure and holy flames of filial love and devotedness to the Father's will. It did not, therefore, so much represent the atonement made for sin by the sacrifice of Christ in its aspect towards man, for that was more fully typified in the sin and trespass offerings, and especially in the sacrifice of the bullock and the goat offered on the great day of atonement, as it represented the atonement in its aspect towards God. There were certain actings of ineffable love between the Father and the Son, when Jesus was doing and suffering the will of God upon earth, of which we get only faint glimpses in the word of truth; but these actings were, in a mysterious and inscrutable manner, connected with the obedience unto death of the Son of God. Thus, the Lord himself said, "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 love of the Father connected with the obedience of the Son—a love not distinct from, not independent of, the eternal love with which the Father ever loved him as his only-begotten Son, but a love to him as the God-man Mediator, a delighting in his obedience as his own sent servant: "Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect"—the elect Head of the church, "in whom my soul delighteth." (Isa. 42:1.) The patience, the meekness, the submission, the resignation, the faith, hope, and love, the humility, the brokenness of heart, the pure and holy, unswerving, unshrinking obedience of Jesus in his sacred humanity were ineffably delighted in by his approving and accepting God and Father. His eternal love to him as his only-begotten Son, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his Person, was thus drawn as it were into a new stream of ineffable complacency and delight. Thus, as the eternal Father looked down from heaven upon the Son of his eternal love with ineffable delight and complacency when baptized in Jordan, as thus fulfilling all righteousness, (Matt. 3:15,) and showing forth in type and figure his future baptism of suffering and blood, and gave audible expression to that delight by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," (Matt. 3:17,) so as Jesus hung upon the cross, consumed in the flames of his own self-

sacrificing obedience and love, it was an offering of sweet savour to his heavenly Father; not that the Father took delight in the sorrows and sufferings of his co-equal, co-eternal Son, viewed in themselves, but as doing his will and thus glorifying him. How solemn are the words when Jesus consecrated himself as the High Priest, in the opening of his intercessory prayer, and what a holy and sacred light do they cast on those transactions between the Father and the Son, to which we have called our readers' attention! "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee." (John 17:1.) The burnt sacrifice, therefore, represents rather what Jesus on the cross was to his heavenly Father than what he was for and unto man. The cross of our blessed and suffering Lord has thus, as it were, two aspects, one turned towards God, the other turned towards man. "I do always those things that please him;" (John 8:29;) "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again;" (John 12:28;) "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11.) These passages give us as it were a glance into those deep and mysterious yet blessed transactions between the Father and the Son, wherein and whereby the Son glorified the Father by becoming "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," (Phil. 2:3,) and the Father glorified the Son by first accepting his obedience on behalf of the Church, and then as a declaration of his divine Sonship, (Rom. 1:4,) and that he might be a partaker of his throne, (Rev. 3:21,) raising him from the dead, and highly exalting him to his own right hand and giving him a name which is above every name. (Phil. 2:9.) Thus the burnt sacrifice represented two things: 1, the offering of Jesus for sin in the flames of divine wrath; 2, the offering of his obedient body and soul in the flames of self-sacrificing devotedness to the will of the Father.

This latter aspect of the cross is, we think, not sufficiently borne in mind by the people of God. We naturally view the sacrifice of Jesus, the atoning blood and finished work of the Son of God on the cross, more as regards our own personal, individual salvation than as it regards the honour and glory of God. But there is in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ something far deeper and higher than the mere salvation of the Church from the ruins of the fall. Though in most complete and blessed harmony with every divine perfection of Jehovah, though in it are treasured up, not only the exceeding riches of his grace, but infinite depths of manifold wisdom, (Eph. 1:7; 3:10,) yet the salvation of the Church was in the mind of God but secondary to the manifestation of his own glory. *That* must ever be the supreme and ultimate end of all his counsels and purposes, of all his ways and works. "Glory to God

in the highest," was the first note in the angelic song, and preceded "on earth peace, good will toward men;" (Luke 2:14;) "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord;" (Num. 14:21;) "To the praise of the glory of his grace;" (Eph. 1:6;) "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory. Amen." (Rom. 11:36.) Thus speaks the Holy Ghost in the word of truth.

Sin broke in upon the original glory of God, as manifested in the creation of man in his own image, after his likeness. "Behold, it was very good," (Gen. 1:31,) was God's own testimony to his glory in creation. But the entrance of sin marred and defaced it in marring and defacing the image of God in man. Thus, by the entrance of sin the justice of God was outraged, his work defaced, his command trampled under foot, his holiness insulted, and Paradise, his own garden, wherein dwelt peace and happiness, purity and innocence, polluted by the poison of the serpent. When, therefore, the Son of God undertook, in the solemn counsels of eternity, by his own obedience unto death, as the suffering Surety, to vindicate the honour of his Father, to fulfil his broken law, to glorify his justice, and at the same time, and by the same way, to manifest his mercy and reveal his grace,—attributes of Jehovah hitherto undiscovered to angelic minds, (1 Pet. 1:12,) the glory of God was his chief end and aim. But this could only be accomplished by the cross, for that is "the wisdom of God" as well as "the power of God;" (1 Cor. 1:24;) and by that only could all the glorious perfections of Jehovah, such as his justice and his mercy, his holiness and his grace, be fully harmonised. (Psa. 85:10, 11; Rom. 3:26.) When, then, the suffering Son of God "offered himself without spot to God," in the flames of the intensest love and devotedness to the will of his heavenly Father, seeking his glory, not his own, in the moment of, and through his own deepest and lowest humiliation, even when burning in the flames of his anger against sin, and crying out under the hidings of his countenance,—*then* it was that the eyes of the Father rested with ineffable complacency and delight on the Son of his love. What eye but the Father's could read his heart, melting in the flames of wrath like wax, and yet melted into the intensest devotedness and love? (Psa. 22:14.) Who else could mark his perfect and unswerving obedience to the Father's will in drinking the cup put into his hand to the last and lowest dregs? Whose but the Father's all-searching eye could read the zeal for his honour and glory which even then, in the flames of self-devoting love, was eating him up? (Psa. 69:9.) As the blessed Lord hung upon the cross, what angelic, still less what human eye marked the breadths, and lengths, and depths and heights of that love which passeth knowledge? (Eph. 3:18, 19.) Who could view this amazing scene of sorrow and

of obedience even unto death, so as to read fully the very depths of the heart of Christ, but the all-seeing God? Where were the disciples? Fled. Where his Virgin mother? Weeping and lamenting at the foot of the cross, a sword piercing through her own soul also. (Luke 2:35; John 19:25.) Where the angels? Wondering in silent awe, as they bent down to see the solemn mystery. Where his foes? Triumphant in mockery and scorn, for their short-lived hour and of the power of darkness was come. Where was the very sun? Hiding his face, as if shocked to see his Maker die. Where the solid earth? Rocking to its very base, as if unable to bear the weight of the suffering Son of God. Where the rocks; cleaving to their centre, as if they could no longer hold the bodies of the saints committed to their charge, but must let them forth to witness the death of their Lord. What eye, then, but the eye of the Father, saw the suffering Son of God in all the depths and fulness of his bleeding, dying love, in all the intensity of his self-sacrifice devotedness, and in the most resigned filial submission unto, as well as perfect execution of his sovereign will?

3. But we must now mention another distinctive feature in the burnt sacrifice, in which, doubtless, is typically couched some gracious instruction for the Church of God: "And he shall *flay the burnt offering*, and *cut it into his* (or, as we should now say, 'its'\*) *pieces.*" (Lev. 1:6.)

\* The useful pronoun "its," as referring to things distinct from persons, was not used in our language at the time the Bible was translated into English; but "his" or "her" was employed instead. Thus we read of "the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver with his foot," (Ex. 31:27, 28,) where we should now say, "its." So, "in his season," (Psa. 50:3,) "her roots," "her leaf." (Jer. 17:8.)

The *flaying* of the burnt offering, or removing the outer skin, would necessarily lay bare the inner flesh with all the muscles and joints of the body, and thus bring to view two things: 1, the exquisite cleanness of the inner flesh; and, 2, the nature and strength of its moving parts; for we know how clean is the flesh in a flayed animal as the skin is stripped off, and how plain are the muscles and joints when divested of their outward covering. Thus the flaying of the burnt sacrifice seems typically to represent: 1, the purity of the inner flesh of Jesus, for his sacred humanity was inwardly as well as outwardly, in soul as well as in body, "a holy thing;" (Luke 1:35;) and, 2, the purity and strength of all his motives. Could we bear to be stripped of our skins—our external life, our outward and visible profession of godliness? Should we be

found clean were all this flayed away? The secret joints and muscles of our nature, the hidden motives of many of our words and actions could not bear to have the skin of profession stripped off them; but the holy flesh of Jesus, and all the joints and muscles of his pure humanity, the secret motives of all his words and works, could bear to be looked at and into by the all-seeing eye of God, and viewed with ineffable complacency in all their purity and all their strength.

Among the sons of men, some, like Joseph and Daniel, may seem almost without spot or blemish; but what are they within? What would they be were they flayed, were all the skin of their profession thoroughly stripped off? But God desireth truth in the inward parts; (Psa. 51:6;) for he, as well as his word, "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 opened\* unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:13.) But the pure heart of Jesus could bear this all-seeing scrutiny. Beneath his holy external life and walk lay concealed from man the spotless purity of his holy soul, whereby he was internally as well as externally a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

\* Literally, "necked," *i.e.*, the neck and throat exposed to view, as was the case with the sacrifices when they were flayed and laid upon the altar with their neck cut through and laid open.

4. The *cutting of the burnt sacrifice into pieces* was typical of the sufferings of Jesus in the garden and on the cross. Thus, "the sweet incense" which the high priest, on the solemn day of atonement, carried within the veil, for a similar reason, was "beaten small," (Lev. 16:12,) that it might indicate the broken heart, the bruised soul of Jesus. As, then, the cut pieces of the burnt sacrifice lay on the altar, so the bruised body and soul of the Lamb of God lay on the cross; and as, when those pieces were burnt on the brazen altar, a smoke ascended from them heavenwards, so, when Jesus gave himself for us, "an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour," (Eph. 5:2,) the smoke of his meritorious obedience and death rose up with acceptance before the face of his heavenly Father.

5. Another mark we must briefly dwell upon: "*The inwards and legs*" of the burnt sacrifice were to be "*washed in water.*" Water, we know, was typical of the purifying, sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost. Our blessed Lord did not need the purifying operations of the Holy Ghost, for he was "holy,

harmless, undefiled;" (Heb. 7:26;) but as his sacred humanity was formed under the overshadowing influences and operations of the Holy Ghost, so was it anointed by him with all his gifts and graces for his mediatorial work; (Isa. 41:1-3; 42:1;) and in an especial way sanctified for his atoning sacrifice. Thus we seem to have a typical representation of the power and grace of the Holy Ghost as connected with the sacrifice of Jesus. Upon his sacred humanity the Holy Ghost rested in all the fulness of his gifts and graces. We therefore read of Jesus that he "*through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God.*" (Heb. 9:14.) As in the burnt sacrifice the inward parts and legs were washed with water, and thus were typically sanctified, so the heart of Jesus, as well as the actions of Jesus, were as if consecrated by the unction of the Holy Ghost, and thus presented holy and acceptable to God upon the altar of the cross.

But here our limits admonish us to pause. We intended to consider in our present paper the sin offering and the trespass offering, and the sacrifice of the bullock and the goat on the great day of atonement; but these and other points tending to throw light upon the sacrifice of our great High Priest we must now defer to a future opportunity.

#### IV.

The priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ divides itself into two distinct branches, corresponding to those two mighty works of grace and love of which one was finished by him upon earth, and the other is now being carried on by him in heaven. These two distinct works were, 1, to offer sacrifice for sin; 2, to make intercession for his people. We have termed them distinct works, rather with a view to help our conceptions than with any intention really to separate them; for, in point of fact, they are most closely and intimately connected with each other and in a measure blended together, for when our blessed Lord offered himself without spot to God he made intercession by his blood, and now that he is in heaven the merits of that blood are still pleading before the throne. Thus we find the prophet connecting together the bearing of sin with intercession for sinners, in those striking words, "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," (Isa. 53:17,)—his intercession for transgressors being made at the time and by the very means of his bearing their sin. "Father, forgive them," was his interceding breath at the very time when he was bearing sin in his own body on the tree. (Luke 23:34.) So, in type and figure, on the great day of atonement, the high priest took of the blood of the sin offering within the veil and sprinkled it upon and before the mercy

seat, thus connecting together the sacrifice at the altar without, with the intercession in the most holy place within. When we approach that part of our subject in which we shall have to contemplate our gracious Lord as even now at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us, (Rom. 8:34,) we shall endeavour, with God's help and blessing, to enter more fully into the connection between his bearing sin on the cross and his interceding in heaven; but our chief object at present is to open up the mystery of dying love and atoning blood which was consummated in the garden and on the cross.

As the Levitical sacrifices throw much light on the one offering whereby Jesus perfected for ever them that are sanctified, we have already made much use of them, and if our limits admitted should be glad to enter still more largely into their nature and spiritual interpretation; but, as our space is necessarily restricted, we think it best to confine ourselves to two offerings prescribed under the law—the burnt offering and the sin offering. These were not only the two most important sacrifices of the Levitical dispensation, and are therefore specially named, Psa. 40:6, "Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required," but have an especial claim upon our attention as representing our suffering High Priest under two distinct aspects, yet each full of grace and glory. The burnt offering, as we have already pointed out, represents him chiefly as he was to God; the sin offering as he is to man. In both he was represented as a sin-bearer, for in both of these sacrifices a transference was made of sin by the priest laying his hand on the head of the victim; (Lev. 1:4; 4:4;) in both the blood of the victim was shed and sprinkled; (Lev. 1:5; 4:4-6;) in both atonement was made for sin; (Lev. 1:4; 4:20;) and both were burnt either wholly or in part upon the altar. (Lev. 1:9; 4:9, 10.) Those were their points of union sufficiently close to show that they corresponded in representing the sacrifice offered by our great high Priest on the cross. But there were distinctive differences between them of a character sufficiently marked to show that they represented this sacrifice under different aspects. Thus the burnt offering was voluntary, the sin offering was compulsory; the burnt offering was flayed, cut into pieces, and the inwards and legs washed in water; but not one of these three things was required in the sin offering; the blood of the burnt offering was merely sprinkled round about upon the altar, (Lev. 1:11,) but the blood of the sin offering was put upon the horns of the altar, sprinkled seven times before the Lord before the vail of the sanctuary, and poured out at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering; (Lev. 4:6, 7;) the whole of the burnt offering was burnt upon the altar, (Lev. 1:13,) but the fat only of the sin offering, that is the internal fat which covers the kidneys, was burnt on the altar; for the skin and flesh, even the whole of

the bullock, was to be carried forth without the camp, into a clean place, and there burnt on the wood with fire. (Lev. 4:11, 12.) We see, therefore, that though in some points the burnt offering and the sin offering resembled each other, yet that in others they widely differed; and as we may be sure that the Holy Ghost intended to convey instruction by these differences, we may, with his help and blessing, attempt now to enter on their mystical and spiritual meaning.

1. The burnt offering was wholly *voluntary*. This was one of its most distinctive features. "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it *of his own voluntary will* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." (Lev. 1:2, 3.) But the sin offering was compulsory. "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them; if the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people, then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering." (Lev. 4:2, 3.) When the sin was discovered, no choice was given whether atonement should be made for it, but it was imperatively required that the sin offering should be made. It is called indeed a sin of ignorance, but much more was intended, both by that expression and by the sin offering made for it, than at first sight might appear. We shall therefore attempt to explain by-and-by what was intended by "sins of ignorance;" but at present our object is to show the distinction between the burnt offering and the sin offering, in that the former was voluntary and the latter compulsory. In one sense the sacrifice of the blessed Lord was voluntary, in another compulsory; and thus the two kinds of offering represent these two distinct features of the one propitiation for sin which he offered upon the cross. The word of truth brings before us, very vividly and clearly, in various passages, both these aspects of our suffering High Priest. Thus we read that Jesus "loved the church and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:25.) "Who loved me," says the Apostle, "and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.) "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:15, 17, 18.) In these passages our blessed Lord is represented as freely loving and

freely giving himself for his Church and people, as freely and voluntarily laying down his life for his sheep, and freely taking it again. No compulsion is here. As Judah freely offered himself to his father Jacob, to become surety for Benjamin, (Gen. 43:9,) so Jesus freely offered himself to his heavenly Father, to become Surety for his brethren. He could therefore say, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy wills O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psa. 40:7, 8.) In this voluntary offering of himself to do the Father's will, in these promptings of love to give himself for the Church, in these actings of pure mercy to come forth from the Father's bosom to take the sinner's place, and, as the suffering Surety of his people, to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is signally displayed. Where is love equal to his love? Where was sorrow equal to his sorrow? These promptings and actings of pure, free, and voluntary love, as apprehended by a living faith, and realised in sweet experience, make the Lord Jesus Christ unspeakably precious to believing hearts. "Ye know," says the Apostle, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8:9.) "We love him," says holy John, "because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) This pure, unmerited love of Jesus, to become a propitiation for our sins, as shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, constrains redeemed and regenerated sinners to love him, and to live to his praise, as one testified, to whom it was given not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake, "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." (2 Cor. 5:14, 15.) In our contemplations, therefore, of Jesus as the High Priest, we must fix our eye steadily on the free and voluntary character of his undertaking, when, in the councils of the eternal covenant, he graciously undertook to become the Father's servant; and though he was a Son, an eternal, a true, and real Son, to learn obedience by the things that he should suffer. This phase of our blessed Redeemer's character is beautifully typified by the sacrifice of the burnt offering.

But, when in the councils of eternity, ratified by the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, he had undertaken to become Surety, then what was before purely free and voluntary became in a sense compulsory. There is a sense, a gracious sense, in which the word compulsion may even be used of God himself. For instance, when he had sworn by himself to bless Abraham, (Gen. 22:16, 17,) he was bound, so to speak, by his own oath to

perform what he had promised; and therefore the Apostle tells us it was to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel. Moses, therefore, when he pleaded with the Lord on behalf of the people who had worshipped the golden calf, urged this oath as his most prevailing plea: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest 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." (Exod. 32:13.) As, then, when God had bound himself by oath to bless Abraham, he was, so to speak, tied by his own oath; so, when our blessed Lord had once bound himself by covenant engagements to stand in his people's place and stead, he was no longer free. He had become like the Hebrew servant, who, though free to go out in the seventh year, yet if he said, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free;" and if, in pursuance of this free determination, his master had bored his ear to the door-post, was then free no longer. So, when our blessed Lord said to his heavenly Father, "Mine ears hast thou opened," (margin, "digged," in especial reference to this voluntary servitude of the Hebrew bondman), he was no longer free. He was now God's "servant, whom he upheld, his elect in whom his soul delighted;" (Isa. 42:1;) his servant in whom he would be glorified, given as a light to the Gentiles, that he might be his salvation unto the ends of the earth. (Isa. 49:3, 6.) Not that he wished to be free, not that he repented of his eternal engagements; on the contrary, he could say, in the days of his flesh, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke 12:50.) But we find, from various passages, which give us, as it were, a view into the depths of his suffering experience, that there were shrinkings in his holy soul from the cup which he had undertaken to drink. Thus, even before the hour of Gethsemane's suffering, as if in anticipation it even then cast its gloomy shade over him, he said, "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;" (John 12:27.) "Father, save me from this hour;" there is the shrinking of the victim. "But for this cause came I unto this hour;" there is the holy resignation to the Father's will. And when he came into that overwhelming trouble of soul, of which he says, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me;" (Psa. 69:2;) when in Gethsemane's gloomy garden, he was "in an agony, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground;" (Luke 22:44;) when before the chief priests and elders, and all the council, "he held his peace," (Matt. 26:63,) and in the presence of Pontius Pilate "answered him to never a word," (Matt. 27:14,) fulfilling thereby the prophetic declaration, "As a sheep

before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;" (Isa. 53:7;) and more especially on the cross, when, as the bitterest ingredient in his cup of suffering, his Father hid his face from him;—in all these circumstances of sorrow, shame, and ignominy, we see not only what the blessed Lord suffered as bearing the weight of sin, but why his holy soul shrank in the prospect of bearing the load. That he voluntarily undertook to suffer did not make the sufferings less. Nay, the weight of the suffering enhanced the freeness of his grace. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," was but the utterance of the agony of his holy soul in the first tasting of the Father's wrath, when, bowed down with grief and sorrow, he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death. (Heb. 6:7.) But he had undertaken, and must go through. The word had gone forth, "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." (Psa. 118:27.) The sin offering was now to be sacrificed. As the burnt offering, Jesus had voluntarily yielded himself up to be wholly consumed in the flames of divine wrath, yet of self-sacrificing love. But now he stands as a sin offering\* by the altar; for God "made him to be sin for us who knew no sin;" (2 Cor. 5:21;) and as the literal victim was bound with cords to the horns of the altar, that its struggles might be restrained whilst its blood was being shed, so was its Antitype, the holy Lamb of God, spiritually bound to the horns of the altar, not only by the cords of his own loving heart, not only by the firm cords of the fixed, immutable will of his heavenly Father, but by the no less strong cords also of his own eternal covenant engagements. He had promised, and must perform. Thus, though free, he was bound. This union of perfect freedom and self-imposed bondage we see not only in the case of the Hebrew servant which we have already adduced, but as a matter of continual experience in human affairs. Thus I may be asked to become surety for a person. I am free to accede to the request, and free to decline it. But if I accept it, and become his surety, I am free no longer, but am bound by my engagement, and the still stronger ties of the law. Or if a friend need my help, I am free to give it, or to withhold it. But if I once promise to grant his petition, I am no longer a free agent, but am bound to perform my promise. "Pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." (Eccl. 5:5.) Jesus, therefore, was bound by his own engagements to finish the work which the Father had given him to do. Justice arrested him, as standing in the sinner's place. Being "made under the law," (Gal. 4:4,) the curse of the law fell upon him, for he was made a curse for us; (Gal. 3:13;) and having become Surety for his brethren, as they could not pay the weighty debt, he smarted (Prov. 11:15) under it, that he might discharge it to the utmost fraction.

\* The Septuagint, *i.e.*, the Greek version of the Old Testament, usually renders the word sin offering "for sin," which by the expression used by Paul Rom. 8:3.

2. And this leads us to another feature of the sin offering, in which this substitution of Christ in the sinner's place is more clearly and distinctly typified. Before he slaughtered the victim, the sacrificing priest *laid his hand on its head*. "If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people, then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the Lord." (Lev. 4:3, 4.) This act represented the transference of sin from the transgressor to the victim. It identified, as it were, the one with the other. It typified the substitution of the victim for the transgressor, and declared by a visible sign that it bore his sins and endured their penalty, which was suffering and death. Dr. Watts has well expressed the feelings of a believing heart, as realising this substitution, when he writes,

"My faith would lay her hand  
On that dear head of thine;  
While, like a penitent, I stand,  
And there confess my sin."

But as this transference of sin was more fully and completely brought out in the case of the scapegoat, we shall direct our readers' attention to that solemn transaction on the great day of atonement. "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." (Lev. 16:21.) How striking is the figure whereby Aaron is represented as laying "both his hands," as if they were filled with the sins of Israel, upon the head of the live goat, and confessing "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." How we see by faith all the iniquities of the children of God and all their transgressions with all their sad slips and falls, all their base backslidings, and all the horrid crimes which have lain with such guilt and weight upon their bleeding consciences, put upon the sacred head of Jesus; "made to meet," as the prophet speaks, (Isa. 53:6, *margin*,) like a

**mighty flood rushing upon him from a thousand confluent streams. Jesus was, from his first entrance into this evil world, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. As the Lamb of God, he was bearing the sin of the world, (John 1:29, margin,) at the very time when John the Baptist bore testimony of him in the wilderness. When yet going about doing good to the bodies and souls of men during the exercise of his public ministry, he was by imputation taking our infirmities and bearing our sicknesses. (Matt. 8:17.) But it was in the garden and on the cross that the Lamb of God chiefly bore the weight of imputed sin. As Berridge says,**

**"The garden scene begins his woes; "**

**not that they had not begun before, but hitherto he had but tasted the bitter cup which there he drank to the very dregs. This commencement of the hour of suffering made him say in the opening of his intercessory prayer, when, as we have before shown, he entered more fully on his priestly office: "Father, the hour is come." (John 17:1.) What hour was this but the hour of agonising suffering, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and yet the hour for which he came into the world; (John 12:27;) the hour of ungodly men and of the power of darkness; (Luke 22:53;) the hour when the Father cried aloud, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." (Isa. 53:7.) Would we, then, see, feel, and realise the exceeding sinfulness of sin, it is not by viewing the lightnings and hearing the thunders of Sinai's fiery top, but in seeing the agony and bloody sweat, and hearing the groans and cries of the suffering Son of God, as made sin for us, in the garden and upon the cross. To look upon him whom we have pierced will fill heart and eyes with godly sorrow for sin, and a holy mourning for and over a martyred, injured Lord. (Zech. 13:10.) To see, by the eye of faith, as revealed to the soul by the power of God, the darling Son of God bound, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, mocked, and then, as the climax of cruel scorn and infernal cruelty, crucified between two thieves,—this believing sight, this fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, will melt the hardest heart into contrition and compunction. But when we see, by the eye of faith, that this was the smallest part of his sufferings, that there were depths of soul trouble and of intolerable distress and agony from the hand of God as a consuming fire, as of inflexible justice and righteous indignation against sin wherever and in whomever found, and that our blessed Lord had to endure the wrath of God till he was poured out like water, and his soft, tender heart in the flames of indignation became like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels, (Psa, 22:14,)—then we can in some measure conceive what he**

undertook in becoming a sin offering. For as all the sins of his people were put upon him, the wrath of God due to them fell upon him. As when Joseph's cup was found in Benjamin's sack, the penalty of the transgression fell upon the guilty one, who might have said, "Then I restored that which I took not away," so, when the sins of the elect were found on the head of Christ, really innocent though by imputation guilty, justice viewed him and treated him as the guilty criminal. Separation from God, under a sense of his terrible displeasure, and that on account of sin, that abominable thing which his holy soul hates,—is not this *hell*? This, then, was the hell experienced by the suffering Redeemer when the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all. (Isa. 53:6.) What heart can conceive or tongue express what must have been the feelings of the Redeemer's soul when he, the beloved Son of God, when he who had lain in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, he whose whole joy was in their mutual love and fellowship, whose ineffable bliss it was to be ever "by him as one brought up with him, and to be daily his delight, rejoicing always before him," when he, the Father's only begotten Son, was as if put away from his bosom as, by imputation, a sinner. In proportion to his love to the Father were his distress and agony at his displeasure; in proportion to his intense holiness was his grief at being treated as a transgressor. The prophet, speaking to the afflicted Church of God, says, "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God." (Isa. 54:6.) What so grievous to the spirit of a loving wife, one who had been married in all the warmth and affection of youth, as to be forsaken of her husband, and that all her advances to reconciliation should be refused? But what is her grief of spirit, what are all her deep wounds of suffering love compared to the grief of spirit felt by the Son of God when his Father, his own Father, hid his face from him? This brought into his bosom the pangs of hell; for let us ever bear in mind that there was a solemn and dreadful reality in the wrath of God as felt in the heart of Jesus. Was not the bodily suffering of the cross real? Did not the nails really pierce the tender hands and feet, whilst every nerve of the agonised body was wrought up to the most exquisite and excruciating height of pain? No less real, and far more severe, were the agonies of his soul, for the wrath of God in the Redeemer's heart was as real as the nails that pierced his hands and feet. What is bodily pain compared with mental anguish? Under the heaviest bodily pain martyrs have rejoiced in the flames; but a wounded spirit who can bear? Of all trouble soul-trouble is the heaviest; and of all soul-trouble, what is to be compared with a sense of God's wrath drinking up the very spirit, and burning in the conscience to the lowest hell? Yet the depths of this trouble—depths in which he himself as man could not have stood, but from

the sustaining energy of his own indwelling Deity and the gracious support of the eternal Spirit, Jesus sustained when he bare our sins in his own body on the tree. We have still several other points of the sin offering to consider, but as these contain in them much spiritual instruction, we shall defer their consideration to our next chapter, when we hope to close our meditations on the Priesthood of Jesus.

## V.

In dwelling so much upon the typical character of the two principal sacrifices of the Levitical dispensation, the burnt offering and the sin offering, our object has been not so much to open up their spiritual meaning in all its minute details, as to seize those prominent features in them which cast a light upon that one great and all-sufficient sacrifice, whereby, by the offering of himself without spot to God, Jesus perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Pursuing, then, this intention, we have still to consider two or three remaining features of the sin offering, before we proceed to direct the thoughts of our readers to that part of his priestly office which Jesus, as ascended on high, now executes at the right hand of the Father.

3. The sin offering, it will be borne in mind, was expressly for *sins of ignorance*. (Lev. 4:2.) To understand why an atonement was provided for sins of this nature, we must bear in mind the distinction made both in the Old Testament and the New between sins pardonable and unpardonable. There were sins under the Old Testament dispensation for which no atonement was provided, such as blasphemy, (Lev. 24:15, 16,) witchcraft, (Exod. 22:18,) wilful murder. (Exod. 21:14.) These were "presumptuous sins," for which no sacrifice was provided. So, under the New Testament dispensation, there is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which John calls "the sin unto death," (1 John 5:16,) and which the Lord himself declares is absolutely unpardonable. (Matt. 12:32.) By "sins of ignorance," then, we understand not merely sins of inadvertence, such, for instance, as accidentally eating unclean meats, but, to use the language of the Holy Ghost in express reference to this very sacrifice, those sins "against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done," (Lev. 4:2,) into which a man might fall without being guilty of wilful presumption. To illustrate the distinction between pardonable and unpardonable sin, compare the case of Paul with that of the blaspheming scribes and pharisees. (Matt. 12:24; Mark 3:22.) Speaking of himself and of his sin in the persecution of the saints, Paul says, "Who was

before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. 1:13.) He sinned with his eyes shut; but they with their eyes open. It was in him headlong zeal and blind fury; in them enlightened, deliberate malice, for they had both seen the Lord's miracles and heard his discourses, and yet they ascribed his wondrous works of mercy and love, and his words full of grace and truth, to his possessing "an unclean spirit." There was, therefore, an atonement for Paul's sin as a sin of ignorance, but none for theirs, as being blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. (Mark 3:30.) Paul, it is true, persecuted Jesus in his members; (Acts 9:4;) but he did not tread the Son of God under foot, nor did he count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, nor did he do despite unto the Spirit of grace. (Heb. 10:29.)

But as the wide range which we have given to the "sins of ignorance," for which the sin offering was provided, may not appear, at first sight, sufficiently grounded on scriptural truth, we shall offer several reasons to substantiate our opinion.

It is evident that our blessed Lord offered a real and actual sacrifice to put away the sins of his people; for this is the express testimony of the Holy Ghost: "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:26.) "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. 10:12.) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" (1 Pet. 2:24;) and thus "washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. 1:5.) As, then, the sacrifices under the law were "examples and shadows of heavenly things," (Heb. 8:5; 10:1,) we may well ask, What were the precise offerings under the Old Testament which were meant to be the standing types of that one great sacrifice which Jesus offered when he, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God? (Heb. 9:14.) The burnt offering certainly was one, and the sin offering another. The typical character of the former we have already explained, and have shown that it represented the sacrifice of our great High Priest in its peculiar aspect to God. But we want a type also to show him as bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, as bleeding and dying in our room and stead, as putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and thus representing him in his peculiar aspect to man. Now where shall we find this type but in the sin offering? If we exclude the sin offering from being a typical representation of the sacrifice offered by our blessed Lord for all manner of sin, as being appointed only for sins of ignorance, where shall we find another sacrifice under the law to represent it? The "meat offering," or

**"mincha," was an unbloody offering, and therefore not a type of atoning blood at all; and the "peace offering," as being eaten by the worshipper, represented the effects of the sacrifice of Jesus in the sweet experience of feeding on his flesh by faith, and so finding peace, rather than was a type of the sacrifice itself. The "trespass offering" (Lev. 5, 6;) is so similar to the sin offering that, as a type, it may be considered almost identical, and therefore does not come under present consideration.**

**That this view of the typical nature of the sin offering is not mere conjecture or a plausible guess, but is grounded on sound Scripture testimony, is evident from two passages in the New Testament: "For 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;) and again, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8:3.) In both these passages express reference is made to the sin offering, for in both the same term is used as in the Hebrew, with this difference, that in the first the exact Hebrew word is used in a translated form, in the second the Greek version of it,\* as continually found in the Septuagint.**

**\* The Hebrew word (Lev. 4, &c.) translated "sin offering," is literally, "sin," and is so rendered, Deut. 9:21, Prov. 10:16, 21:4. In the Septuagint, or ancient Greek translation, as we have before pointed out, the Hebrew word "sin offering," or "sin," is rendered, "for sin," which is the exact expression used by the Apostle, Rom. 8:3, which may be also translated, as in the margin, by "a sacrifice for sin," or, "on account of sin."**

**But there is another still stronger argument to show that the sin offering was the peculiar type and representation of the sacrifice of Christ, which he offered upon the cross when he once "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Pet. 3:18.) It was the offering made on the great day of atonement. On that solemn day Aaron was to offer for himself and his house a bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He was also to take two goats for the people, one for a sin offering, on which the Lord's lot fell, and the other for a scape goat. Here we have evidently the sin offering as the chief typical sacrifice, for it was the blood of the bullock and of the goat which was to be taken within the veil., and sprinkled *upon and before the mercy seat.***

4. But this leads us to another feature of the sin offering, to which we shall briefly refer before we enter upon the typical meaning of the taking of the blood within the veil, as was done by the high priest on the solemn day of atonement. The blood of the burnt offering was merely sprinkled round about upon the altar; (Lev. 1:11;) but the blood of the sin offering, in ordinary cases, that is, when not taken within the veil, was partly sprinkled seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary,\* and partly put upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense, and all the rest poured out at the foot of the altar of the burnt offering, that is, the brazen altar. (Lev. 4:6, 7.) The meaning of the sprinkling of the blood we shall presently explain; the point to which we would direct present attention is *the pouring out of the blood at the foot of the brazen altar*.

\* It was sprinkled before the veil with reference to the mercy seat within the veil.

This represents what the prophet calls "the pouring out of his soul unto death," when our suffering High Priest laid down his life for the sheep. (Isa. 53:12; John 10:11.) The life is in the blood. (Gen. 9:4.) There was, therefore, a necessity that the blessed Redeemer should pour out his life with his blood. Two things were indispensable to a sacrifice offered as an atonement for sin: 1, that the victim should *die*; 2, that the victim should *bleed*, and thus die a bloody death. If our blessed Lord, therefore, had died without bloodshedding, for instance, had he been stoned to death like Stephen, there would have been no atonement for sin by such a death, for "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul," (Lev. 17:11,) and "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9:22.) And again, had he shed his blood without dying, as at his circumcision; or had he been scourged and then released, as Pilate suggested, (Luke 23:22,) in that case there would have been also no redemption, for death being the penalty of disobedience, (Gen. 2:1.7,) there could have been no ransom price but by obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:8.) Thus that wondrous scheme of eternal wisdom, that our divine Redeemer should die upon the cross, secured the two indispensable requisites to an atonement for sin,—blood-shedding, and death. And yet no bone was broken, (Exod. 12:46; Numb. 9:12; Psa. 34:20; John 19:36,) which would have been derogatory to the pure humanity, as well as unbecoming his resurrection from the dead on the third day. There was something also very significant in the *pouring out of the blood* at the bottom of the brazen altar. That altar was typical of Christ, and the fire ever burning upon it of the ever-burning anger of God against sin. At the foot, then, of this altar, was the blood

of the sin offering fully and freely poured out; for here full reconciliation was effected, here thorough atonement made, here the debt wholly paid. Thus, as the worshipper stood at the brazen altar, himself a guilty sinner, and yet with his hand on the head of the victim, his eyes now fixed upon the fat rising as with a sweet savour unto heaven, and now on the atoning blood partly sprinkled on the horns of the altar, and the rest poured out at its foot, he might, as blessed with a living faith in the Son of God, at the same time tremble and rejoice,—tremble at the majesty and holiness of God as a consuming fire, and yet rejoice at the putting away of all his sins by the blood of the Lamb.

5. One point more in the sin offering demands a few moments' attention, before we proceed to the special application of the blood as carried within the veil on the great day of atonement. After the fat had been burnt on the brazen altar (Lev. 4:9, 10)—significant emblem of the acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus as a sweet-smelling savour, the skin, head, legs, inwards, &c., of the bullock were to be *carried without the camp*, into a clean place, and there burnt on the wood with fire. (Lev. 4:11, 12.) This carrying forth of the body of the sin offering was significant of two things: 1. That Jesus suffered without the camp, as the Apostle speaks: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into 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.) He was to be despised and rejected of Israel, and therefore was not crucified within the walls of Jerusalem, but "nigh to the city," (John 19:20,) or, as Paul testifies, "without the gate." Jerusalem was considered "the holy city,"\* (Matt. 27:53,) as through the temple bearing the same sacred relation to God as the camp of Israel of old through the tabernacle. (Deut. 23:14.) Jesus, therefore, as a condemned criminal, was cast out of the city as unclean, as afterwards they cast Stephen out of the city before they stoned him, (Acts 7:58,) no execution being permitted within the city, as defiling its holiness.

\* This is the name it still bears in the East, "El-khuds," that is, "Holiness;" and the inscription on the ancient Jewish coins was almost the same, namely, "Jerusalem Kedushah," *i.e.*, the "holy."

6. But the carrying of the sin offering without the camp, there to be burnt in a clean place, has a reference also to the spiritual position of those that believe in the crucified Son of God. Their place in worship is where his place was in suffering, clean, though without the camp. Thus the Apostle says, "Let us go

forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Heb. 13:13.) Jesus was despised, hated, and cast out by the professing Church of his day. It was not the mass of the people, though their fickle minds were wrought upon to cry, "Crucify him, crucify him!" who a day or two before had cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" but it was the chief priests and scribes and pharisees, who conspired to put him to death. And as the disciple is not above his master, we must drink in our appointed measure of the same cup. The Holy One of Israel was cast out of the professing Church, crucified without the gate as a malefactor whose very death within the walls would pollute the holy city. Where is our place, then, as believers in the crucified Son of God, but where he suffered, bled, and died? In the camp are the scribes and pharisees, the chief priests and the elders, and all who cry, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we;" holding the form, but denying the power; wrapped up in the letter, but destitute of the Spirit; satisfied with a name to live while dead in sin; professing the gospel, but the veil of ignorance and unbelief upon the heart. Must we not leave all such, come out from among them, and be separate; and go forth unto Jesus without the camp, bearing his reproach?

But before we pass on to look at the next point which meets our view, viz., the sprinkling of the blood of the sin offering on and before the mercy seat, we wish to impress one point deeply on our own and on our readers' hearts,—*the reality and the greatness of the sacrifice* which Jesus offered when he died the just for the unjust, and by laying down his life upon the cross, offered himself without spot to God. And why do we wish to view with believing eyes, and to realise in our hearts the greatness of this sacrifice, with all the grace, mercy, and love which shine forth in and through it, but because all salvation is wrapped in it? By the blood-shedding and death of the Son of God, all our horrible filth and defilement, however black, monstrous, aggravated, and abominable, however deep and dreadful, were thoroughly and for ever put away, cast behind God's back, blotted out as a cloud, yea, a thick cloud, and drowned in the depths of the sea. In the pierced hands, and feet, and side of Immanuel a fountain was opened for all sin and uncleanness; (Zech. 13:1;) and the iniquity of the land removed in one day. (Zech. 3:9.) At the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ justice and mercy met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other; yea, mercy rejoiced over judgment, and where sin abounded there grace did much more abound. (Psa. 85:10; James 2:13; Rom. 5:20.) By the blood-shedding and death of our great High Priest, justice, with all its inflexible requisitions, was thoroughly satisfied; the law, with all its holy, unbending demands, fully magnified; every perfection of God eternally

glorified; every apparently barring attribute entirely harmonised; so that Jehovah, in all the blaze of ineffable purity, majesty, power, and holiness, can now be just, infinitely just, and yet the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. 3:26.) Here, then, at the foot of the cross, is pardon and peace for guilty criminals; here is thorough justification for the self-condemned and self-abhorred; here is salvation, complete and everlasting, for all the redeemed family of God; here is a fountain, ever open, full, and free; here is a robe, in which the spouse of Jesus stands without blemish and without spot before the throne of God; here mercy is built up for ever; here dying love displays itself in all its breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and here grace, all-glorious, all-triumphant grace, reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. To know, to realise, to experience, and to enjoy these heavenly mysteries of the cross of Christ in sweet manifestation and divine revelation, by the work and witness, teaching and testimony of the Holy Ghost, is the sum and substance of all vital godliness. A persuasion of this made Paul "determined to know nothing among" the saints of God, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" (1 Cor. 2:2;) this was the gospel which he preached, "not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect;" as well knowing that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto those which are saved the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:17, 18.) For a knowledge of Christ and him crucified he had suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, that he might "win and be found in him;" yea, the whole desire of his soul was to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Happy are those who, taught by the same Spirit, have the same faith, and hope, and love, and are pressing toward the same mark, "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:8-10, 14.)

ii. But we now approach that part of our subject where we have to view our great High Priest *as executing his priestly office in the courts above*. We have several times called the attention of our readers to this point, that our gracious Lord is still the great High Priest over the house of God. As the Apostle speaks, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." (Heb. 8:1, 2.) To offer sacrifice was but a part of the priestly work. He was to be a priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec; and therefore his office did not cease when he said with expiring breath, "It is finished," and laid down his life that he might

take it again. It is sweet to view our great High Priest offering himself without spot to God; sweet yet sorrowful to see the atoning blood flow from his pierced hands and feet and side; sweet to enjoy pardon and peace as the fruit of his sufferings and death. But we must not ever tarry at the cross or the sepulchre; for he tarried not there, but rose from the dead, ascended on high, and entered into the immediate presence of the Father, there to be a ministering High Priest at the right hand of God; for after the similitude of Melchisedec, he was "made not after the law of a carnal commandment," as was the high priest under the Levitical dispensation, "but after the power of an endless life." (Heb. 7:15, 16.) This is beautifully stated by the Apostle in that glorious epistle in which the High Priesthood of Jesus is, as it were, the illuminating sun, casting light and glory on every page. "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:23-25.)

But let us now trace the connection between the sacrifice offered by our great High Priest on earth and the present exercise of his priestly office in heaven. There is the closest and most intimate connection between those two parts of the priestly office of our divine Redeemer; and their union and harmony were beautifully shown in type and figure by the entrance of the high priest within the veil on the great day of atonement. The veil,\* we need not remark, separated the holy from the most holy place. Into the most holy place, sometimes called "the holy of holies," the high priest was permitted to enter but once a year. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." (Lev. 16:2.) Now when the high priest entered once a year on the solemn day of atonement within the veil into the most holy place, he took in the blood of the bullock and afterwards that of the goat, which he had previously sacrificed as sin offerings, the one for himself and his house, and the other for his people, and sprinkled each upon and before the mercy seat. This was a typical representation of Jesus as the great High Priest entering the court of heaven, represented by the most holy place, with his own blood, which in a mystical and spiritual sense, he sprinkled before and upon the throne of God. And thus the Apostle speaks, "But Christ being come a 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 us." (Heb. 9:11, 12.)

\* The Apostle calls this (Heb. 9:3) "the second veil," because in the tabernacle there were two veils of the same materials, the first of which was an exterior curtain, called (Exod. 36:37) "a hanging for the tabernacle door," which, as veiling the holy place from external view, might be termed "the first veil." In the temple there was but one veil, that which was rent in twain from the top to the bottom when the blessed Lord yielded up the ghost. (Matt. 27:51.)

There are several things, however, in this entrance of the high priest within the veil on the great day of atonement which demand our earnest attention.

1. Let us then first observe the *priestly vestments* which he wore on that day. These were all pure linen, and were called "holy garments;" and it is added, that there might be cleanness underneath as well as outside, "Therefore shall he *wash his flesh in water*, and so put them on." (Lev. 16:4.) These holy garments, and this washed, and therefore clean flesh, typified the pure and holy humanity of our blessed Lord, with which, in all its integral perfection, he entered the immediate presence of God and sat down at his right hand, there to make intercession for us. (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25.)

2. But the high priest was directed to enter the most holy place *with a cloud of incense*. "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 vail: 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." (Lev. 16:12, 13.) There is much here, though veiled in type and figure, of blessed significancy. *The burning coals of fire* from off the brazen altar typified the burning wrath of God; "the *incense beaten small*" represented the bruised body and soul of the suffering Redeemer; the "cloud of incense" rising up from the burning coals and *covering the mercy seat* typified the merits of the sufferings and sacrifice of the Son of God as propitiating divine wrath, and filling the court of heaven with the sweet smell of his blood and obedience when "he gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." (Eph. 5:2.)

Thus, as the typical high priest entered the most holy place in the holy garments, so Jesus entered heaven in his pure and holy humanity; as the cloud of incense lighted by the burning coals filled the most holy place and covered

the mercy seat, so the merits of Jesus, rising up from his sufferings under the wrath of God and his obedience unto death, filled and ever fills the courts of heaven with the grateful odour of his finished work. And thus there is a sweet and blessed connection and harmony between the sacrifice below and the incense above.

3. But this harmonious connection of the two parts of the Lord's High Priesthood is still more clearly seen in the special directions given to the typical high priest about *sprinkling the blood* of the sin offering when he had taken it within the veil: "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 vail, 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." (Lev. 16:14, 15.) The blood of the bullock, as a sin offering for himself and his house, and the blood of the goat, as a sin offering for the people, were alike to be sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat. What a striking and beautiful type was this of the carrying, as it were, of the blood of Christ into the very presence of God, that, being mystically, not really, sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat, the throne of grace, it might ever plead, ever be present before the eyes of the Father. Seven times was it sprinkled—a perfect number, to show the perfection of that blood of sprinkling. It was sprinkled *before* the mercy seat, as the actual blood of Jesus was shed *upon* the cross; and it was sprinkled upon the mercy seat that there might be enduring marks of it from year to year.

Thus we see a blessed connection between the past and the present work of our great High Priest. He came down from heaven to earth to do the will of his Father, which will was, that he should by one offering perfect for ever them that are sanctified. (Heb. 10:10-14.) Having accomplished this will, and finished the work thus given him to do, (John 17:4,) he is gone up on high, and has sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; for this was the ancient promise given unto him when he was made a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Psa. 110:1; Heb. 10:12, 13.)

III. But we now come to the spiritual *bearing* and gracious *influence* which the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ has on the experience of a Christian. This,

indeed, is to us personally of the deepest importance, for only so far as we have, in our own bosoms, some vital experience of the High Priesthood of Jesus, have we any real, any saving knowledge of those heavenly truths connected with and flowing out of it which have thus far engaged our attention. This experience, however, divides itself into two leading branches, corresponding to the two parts of the Lord's priesthood, though, as is the case with it, a close and intimate union and harmony connect them with each other.

1. First, then, view the sufferings, blood-shedding, obedience, and death of the Lord Jesus as suitable to our state and case as sinners before God. We commence with this, for here and here alone the cross meets us in our deep and desperate necessity, in our utterly ruined and lost condition.

"To be heal'd before we're wounded,  
To be saved before we're lost,"

is neither law nor gospel, neither Scripture nor common sense. But until we are quickened into spiritual life, and the conscience is aroused and alarmed by the entrance of the word with power, we neither know nor indeed care to know, anything of atoning blood or justifying righteousness. The cross of Jesus is to us what it was to the unbelieving Jew and to the infidel Greek—a stumblingblock and foolishness. Dead in sin, or dead in a profession, whatever be our religion, it is not that of the life of God or the fruit of the teaching of the Spirit. But when we are made alive unto God by quickening grace, we are taught in his light to see and in his life to feel our lost and desperate case as poor, vile, guilty sinners, condemned by the law and by our own conscience. The curse of the law effectually backed by the verdict of our own guilty conscience, slays outright all our own goodness, turns all our comeliness into corruption, reveals the wrath of God against sin, and thus cuts off all help and hope of salvation by our own righteousness. Here, then, we are, in all our sin and guilt, exposed to the wrath of God as a consuming fire. Where now is any help or hope in self, or in any wisdom, strength, or righteousness of our own? But this very state of condemnation prepares the soul to receive the atonement, (Rom. 5:11,) or the reconciliation effected by the bloodshedding and death of our great High Priest. As, then, the gospel comes near, proclaiming salvation by the blood of the Lamb, the eyes of the enlightened understanding are turned towards the light which shines around and from the cross; and as its words of truth and grace fall upon the ear and are applied to the heart, a measure of faith is raised up in the soul, whereby it looks unto

**Jesus hanging there, and bearing all its sins in his own body on the tree. This is the first real act of faith upon Jesus as our High Priest, putting away sin by the blood of the cross. But when, after many conflicts, many ups and downs, many doubts and fears, many prayers, tears and supplications, and many deep searchings of heart, he is more fully and blessedly revealed to the soul by the power of God, and his blood more manifestly sprinkled on the conscience by the work and witness of the Holy Ghost, this gives deeper and clearer union and communion with a suffering, bleeding Lord; and as faith embraces him in his dying love, his precious blood more fully purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**

**But all the living family of God are not so highly favoured as to enjoy this sweet communion with the Lord Jesus, and yet there may be a measure of faith in him short of this clear manifestation. There may be true faith, and yet many doubts and fears, many exercises, many temptations to unbelief and infidelity. There may be a faith of adherence where there is not a faith of assurance, a faith able to rely though not able to realise. Guilt may press very hard; sin lie with almost crushing weight on the soul; lusts and corruptions be very strong; Satan grievously buffet; the conflict be very long, and victory at times seem very doubtful. All this is the trial of faith whereby it is tried like gold in the fire. But be the faith weak or strong, be the conflict brief or prolonged, all whose eyes are divinely enlightened to see, and hearts graciously touched to feel, are eyeing the atoning blood of the Lamb even where much darkness pervades the mind and much doubt and fear possess the soul. There is in all believers a looking, a longing, a seeking, a desiring, a sighing and groaning, a suing and a begging, a watching and expecting of salvation through atoning blood, even where there is not a sweet assurance of interest in it, or a blessed enjoyment of a bleeding, dying, loving Jesus. It is most desirable to enjoy a sweet sense of his atoning blood applied to the conscience, and his dying love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Indeed there is no real peace of conscience or assurance of salvation without it. But it is his own free gift, bestowed as, when, how, and to whom he will; and we are not to cut off those as unbelievers whose faith though real is weak, whose hope though good is feeble, and whose love though sincere is often damped by doubt and fear. For these doubts and fears, by which so many are deeply tried, are not as to the foundation, not as to the Person, work, blood, grace, and suitability of the Lord Jesus, but as to their own interest in the atoning sacrifice. But if Jesus by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified, any measure of the sanctifying work and influence of the Holy Ghost secures a manifested interest in that one offering. Thus the very**

sighings of the quickened soul under the guilt of sin, its earnest and genuine repentance, its looking and longing for manifested mercy, its separation from the evil of this ungodly world, with every gleam of hope, every ray of light, every act of faith, every word of encouragement, every token for good, every prospect of approaching deliverance, every stretching forth of eyes and ears after the Lord that it may see his atoning blood and hear his pardoning voice, are evidences of the soul's having received the Spirit of holiness; for these feelings spring from his secret and sacred influences. But whilst these evidences are good, to rest in them is not good. The soul should press forward after communion with Jesus as its suffering Lord; after a sweet experience of his bleeding, dying love, even of that perfect love which casts out all fear that hath torment, and should never rest satisfied till, embraced in the arms of a loving Lord, it can look up with adoring eyes, and say, "Thou didst love me, and gavest thyself for me."

2. But there is also an experience of the *present* work of Jesus *at the right hand of God*. Here faith is especially alive as drawn forth by the power of God. In all our approaches to the footstool of mercy we feel our need of such a Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor as Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. He ever liveth to make intercession for us; not, indeed, by vocal prayer, but by the merits of his blood filling heaven as with sweet and acceptable incense. He is gone before to prepare a place for us; he sits at God's right hand as our ever-living Mediator, through whom, by one Spirit, we have access unto the Father.

The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ is the great object of faith. In all our approaches, then, to the Father of all mercies and the God of all grace, we only draw near acceptably as we come to him through Jesus Christ, for he is the way, the truth, and the life; and no man cometh unto the Father but by him. He is the Mediator, the only Mediator between God and men; (1 Tim. 2:5;) but only so as High Priest, for in that character only is he "the Mediator of the New Covenant." (Heb. 12:24.) The office, then, of faith is to view him as "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" (Heb. 8:1;) and in all our approaches to God to look to him alone as our Advocate with the Father. This believing view of Jesus, as ever making intercession for us, will encourage and embolden us from time to time to come before the throne, and there spread all our wants and woes. Our blessed Lord has said, to encourage us thus to pray, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13.) And again: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye

will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) Faith hangs upon these and similar promises, knowing that they are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus; and every gracious answer encourages it more and more still to plead in his all-prevailing name. "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" (Heb. 11:6;) and he who lacks wisdom, and asks of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, must ask in faith, nothing wavering. (James 1:5, 6.) But this faith will eye not self but Jesus, as the Mediator ever making intercession for his people, and presenting their prayers and supplications as perfumed by the incense of his own blood and obedience. Thus we see what an abiding influence the present intercession of Jesus has on the experience of every believer, for he cannot, even for the relief of his own necessities, pray acceptably without it. He having by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, gives his people power and privilege to enter spiritually and experimentally where he himself had gone actually. The Apostle, therefore, says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:19-22.) We in ourselves are, and always shall be whilst here, poor sinful creatures, fickle in feeling, mutable in frame, changing and changeable in affection, from day to day and from hour to hour. Whence, then, can we gather up any strength or encouragement but from the sweet persuasion that it is not our sins and backslidings that the Father regards, no, nor our prayers and supplications for what they are in themselves, but is ever looking upon his dear Son at his own right hand, and accepts us in him? But O how apt are we to lose sight of this Mediator and Intercessor, ever presenting the merits of his blood-shedding and death before the throne; and getting again and again entangled in unbelief, or doubt and fear, how little and how rarely do we realise the blessed truth that "if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" and that he is the "propitiation for our sins." (1 John 2:1, 2.)

Our limits warn us to draw our "Meditations" to a close, or we should much desire to show also the *influence* which a gracious experience of the high priesthood of Jesus has on the *life, conduct, and conversation* of a true believer. The tree is known by its fruit; and those branches alone are in manifest union with the only true Vine which bring forth fruit unto God. (John 15:5.) The love of Christ is the constraining principle of all holy obedience. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," was his dying injunction

**to his disciples. As, then, his bleeding love is experimentally known, there will be a conformity to his image, an obedience to his will, a walking in his footsteps. And as his dying love produces motive, so his risen life secures power, for he has said, "Because I live ye shall live also." Having gone up on high, he has led captivity captive and received gifts for men; and thus, by sending forth the blessed Spirit as the fruit of his former sufferings and present intercession, he makes his people willing in the day of his power, and works in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**

**Here, then, we close our Meditations on the High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ; and may the God of all grace smile on our feeble attempt to set forth that name which is above every name. And to him in his Trinity of Persons and Unity of Essence, be ascribed all power and glory, majesty and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## 2.—JESUS AS SUSTAINING THE OFFICE OF PROPHET TO THIS CHURCH AND PEOPLE

### I.

In the aim and hope of promoting, according to the measure of grace given to us, the glory of God and the profit of his people, we, on a former occasion, expressed our intention to attempt a series of Meditations on the various Office-characters of the Lord Jesus Christ. In pursuance of that intention, we have already directed the thoughts of our readers to that most gracious and glorious office of High Priest as sustained by our blessed Lord formerly in his past state of humiliation here below, and now in his present state of exaltation to the right hand of the Father. This is the most eminent of all his offices, as well as preparatory for and introductory to every other; for until reconciliation for sin was made unto God by the blood of the covenant, there was no place for his ministry as Prophet, or for his reign as King. The consideration, therefore, of that office demanded the most prominent place both in our Meditations and in the expression of them.

We have now to consider his *Prophetical* office, as that comes next before us; and we shall hope, with God's help and blessing, to show that, as sustained by him, it is one of peculiar grace, and full of divine blessedness to his believing people. The Lord the Spirit guide our thoughts and direct our pen in our Meditations on the grace and glory of Jesus as the Prophet of his Church, that he may make himself very dear, near, and precious to both writer and reader, and that, preserved from all error and led into all truth, we may exalt his great and glorious name, as we sit at his feet hearing his word and looking up to him for that heavenly instruction which is so blessed a feature of his prophetical office to communicate.

In unfolding this subject, as some degree of order is necessary to clearness, we shall endeavour to show,

- I. *The essential nature of the prophetical office.*
- II. *The peculiar qualifications of the blessed Lord to sustain that office.*
- III. *His execution of it upon earth.*
- IV. *His present mode of sustaining it in heaven.*
- V. *The spiritual bearing which this office has on the experience of his believing people.*

I. The *peculiar*, and what we may call the *primary and essential character* of the prophetic office, is sometimes, we think, not clearly understood. The leading idea of a prophet is usually considered to be that he is *one who predicts future events*. This certainly is one part, and a very important part, of the prophetic office; but it is by no means the primary or essential; and indeed, as regards that office as sustained by the Lord himself, it was quite a subordinate feature.

The *primary and essential character* of a prophet is that he *speaks* for God. He is as God's mouth, (Jer. 15:19,) to speak God's words. This is plain, not only from the derivation of the word in both the Hebrew and Greek languages,\* but from several passages in the word of truth. Take for instance the following Scriptures: "And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land," (Exod. 7:1, 2.) As we have quoted an explanation of this passage in a note by one of our first lexicographers, the great German scholar Gesenius, who, though not always sound in his theological views, yet had the deepest insight into the primary meaning of Hebrew words, we shall not dwell further upon it, except to point out the parallel expression, (Exod. 4:16,) which so fully proves the truth of our assertion that the primary and essential idea of a prophet is that he speaks for God: "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." (Exod. 4:15, 16.) The Lord's words to Jeremiah, when he called him to the prophetic office, bear most closely also on the same point: "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." (Jer. 1:4-7.) The distinguishing feature of Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office was that the Lord "put his words in his mouth." These words were words of authority and power; and thus by them he instrumentally rooted out, and pulled down, and destroyed, and threw down the enemies of God and godliness, and built and planted the Lord's own peculiar people. This was surely a much wider and more authoritative commission than if he had been sent merely to predict future events. It is

perfectly true that he predicted the seventy years' captivity, the destruction of Babylon, and the return of the children of Judah to their own land, with other prophecies, some of which are still unfulfilled, but this was only a part of his prophetic mission. Similarly, when the Lord called Ezekiel to the prophetic office, he said to him, "Thou shalt *speaking my words* unto them, whether they will hear or forbear." (Ezek. 2:7.) And again, "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." (Ezek. 3:10, 11.) The leading, the characteristic feature of a prophet, then, was that he came to the people with a "Thus saith the Lord" in his mouth; that his words were not his own words, but God's words, and his message the express message of the Lord of hosts.

\* The Hebrew word for prophet, "Nabi," is derived from a root which signifies primarily, according to Gesenius, "*to cause to bubble up, hence, to pour forth words abundantly, as is done by those who speak with ardour or divine emotion of mind.*" The explanation by Gesenius of the primary meaning of the word "Nabi" is, "a prophet, who, as actuated by a divine afflatus or Spirit, either rebuked the conduct of kings and nations, or predicted future events. (Deut. 13:2; Jud. 6:8; 1 Sam. 9:9; 1 Kings 22:7; 2 Kings 3:11; 2 Chron. 28:9.) With the idea of a prophet there was this necessarily attached, that he spoke not his own words, but those which he had divinely received, that he was the messenger of God, and the declarer of his will. This is clear from a passage of peculiar authority in this matter, Exod. 7:1: 'I have constituted thee as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.'"—*Gesenius's Hebrew Lexicon.*

the Greek word "prophetes," whence comes our word "prophet," means literally one who "speaks for" God.—*Scott and Liddell's Greek-English Lexicon.*

This view of the fundamental character and position of a prophet may prepare us to see a little more clearly into the peculiar suitability of such an office, and the wisdom and mercy of God in providing such a means of speaking to the children of men. Man, being created in the image and after the likeness of God, was, from the very constitution of his intelligent being, made capable of receiving direct communications of the will and good pleasure of his heavenly Creator. Thus, in Paradise God walked and talked with Adam, instructed him into the knowledge of his will, and set before him a precept

what to do, and a prohibition what to shun. (Gen. 2:16, 17.) In this state of innocence and happiness there was no need of a prophet to speak for God to man, as the Lord himself communed directly and immediately with him as the pure and intelligent creature of his hand. But when Adam sinned and fell, this mode of direct and immediate intercourse of man with his Maker was at once cut off. Man, stripped of his native purity and innocence, felt his nakedness and shame, and, full of guilt and terror, fled from the voice of the Lord which he once had heard with delight, to shelter himself from the indignant eye of Justice amidst the trees of the garden. But O, the unparalleled mercy and goodness of the Lord! Where sin had thus abounded there did grace much more abound; for in the very garden where man had so awfully and wilfully sinned and fallen, there mercy was revealed, and the very trees which had been witnesses of the fall, and had in vain sheltered guilty Adam from the wrath of his justly incensed Creator, now witnessed the first promise of redemption by a Mediator of God's own providing, one no less than his own Son, in due time to be made of a woman—of the seed of that very woman who had first sinned and then dragged the man down with her into the pit wherein she had herself fallen. The former way, then, of direct and immediate communication between God and man being cut off by sin, the glorious plan of redemption, which had lain from all eternity in the bosom of God, now provided a new way whereby God could once more commune with man. A Mediator having been provided, and a ransom found through and by his blood, a way was made whereby, no longer as before, immediately, but mediately, intercourse might be re-opened on a different footing, and resting on a surer and more blessed basis. This, then, is the foundation of the prophetic office, first in the Person of the Mediator, and then in inspired men sent of God as witnesses of him. We like to trace truth up to its eternal source, and to show the strong foundations on which the ordinances and appointments of God rest. There is in all the ways and works of God unspeakable wisdom; and when we can see this wisdom not only, as in creation, full of harmony and beauty, but as in the covenant of grace, replete with love and mercy, it has a blessed tendency to satisfy the mind with the fullest persuasion of the certainty of revealed truth, and to draw up the heart and affections to the Lord in the spiritual enjoyment of it. This must plead our excuse if we seem to any of our readers to have at all wandered from our subject.

Now no sooner was the covenant of grace brought to light in the first promise, than it was acted upon, at first indeed dimly and obscurely, but ever with increasing clearness, till fully revealed in the Person and work of the Son of

God, when, by appearing in the flesh, he brought life and immortality to life. Thus, in a sense, Abel, the first martyr, was also the first prophet, for he testified for God and for the way of salvation through the atoning blood of the promised Mediator, when he "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." The Apostle therefore says of him, "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11:4.) "He being dead *yet speaketh*." He spoke for God, as a prophet of the future, when he offered unto him a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; and "he yet speaketh" for him as a prophet of the past, for his testimony being recorded in the sacred page, it still uttereth its voice as a witness for the way of salvation through the blood of the Lamb, wherever the word of truth is borne. Thus, as there is no speech nor language where the silent voice of the starry heavens is not heard, (Psa. 19:3,) so wherever, in the providence of God, the Bible is carried, in every tongue and to every nation, does Abel still speak as a silent prophet, and as one who sealed his testimony with his blood, to those who have ears to hear his voice. But if the instance of Abel be somewhat obscure, the next that we shall adduce is stamped clearly enough by God's own testimony. Enoch, certainly, was a prophet of the Lord, as Jude plainly testifies, and one of his prophecies, as yet unfulfilled, is preserved for us in the word of truth. He walked *with* God, and he spoke *for* God. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." (Jude 14.) What a clear view was given him of the second coming of the Lord Jesus in all the glory of the Father, attended with ten thousands of his saints, "to execute judgment upon all;" and how distinctly he saw the character and predicted the end of all those base creatures which, under the cloak of a profession, have ever infested, and will in the last days still more awfully infest, the Church of God. Noah was the next prophet recorded in the word of truth, for he was "a preacher of righteousness;" (2 Pet. 2:5;) and the blessed Lord himself spake in him by his Spirit when he preached by him unto the spirits now shut up in their awful prison, awaiting the judgment of the great day, even those rebellious and disobedient antediluvians against whom Noah testified, both by word and deed, when he prepared the ark to the saving of his house. (1 Pet. 3:18-20; Heb. 11:7.)

But time and space will not admit of our pursuing further this subject, or to trace out the stream of prophecy from its original source down to the close of the canon of the Old Testament. Let these two observations on the general character of prophecy suffice:

1. It pleased God to choose a people for himself in the seed of Abraham, to whom he might make known his will, and he therefore raised up a succession of prophets among them to be as his mouth, to speak to them in his name. As they, in thus testifying of him, had continually to predict coming judgments or to promise future blessings, the idea naturally attached itself to the office of a prophet, that he was one sent to foretell future events, but always in connection with the primary feature of his character, that he was specially sent by God, and spoke in his name and by his special authority. To foretell the future was indeed necessary to their office, and the fulfilment of their predictions was a proof of God's speaking in and by them. The following words of Moses throw the clearest light on the whole subject: "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." (Deut. 18:20-22.)

2. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," (Rev. 19:10,) both in the Old Testament and the New, and thus the whole series of prophets testified to the Person and work, grace and glory of the Son of God. To testify of him was the delight of their heart and the theme of their tongue. They themselves indeed did not fully understand the import of their own prophecies, but they know that salvation by the promised Messiah was the burden of them all, as the Apostle declares: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1:10-12.) In similar language he testified to the same truth when, almost immediately after the day of Pentecost, he spake unto the people in the porch of the temple: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

(Acts 3:24, 25.) Thus, too, our blessed Lord reproved the two disciples journeying to Emmaus with the slowness of their heart in not seeing and believing that which the prophets had testified of him. "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:25-27.) Blessed Interpreter! blessed interpretation! O that he would do to us by his Spirit and grace what he afterwards did to all his disciples just before he was parted from them and carried up into heaven! that he, even he, would open our understanding that we might understand the Scriptures, and under his divine teaching, as the Prophet of his Church, might sit at his feet and hear his words, and know in sweet experience that they are Spirit and they are life to our soul.

But we pass on to the consideration of the second branch of our subject:

## II. The *qualifications of the Lord Jesus Christ* to sustain the office of Prophet to the family of God.

i. In opening up this part of our subject, we shall first examine *the foundation* of these qualifications, which we shall find in great measure identical with that on which his priestly office rests, viz., his glorious Person, *as Immanuel, God with us*. That he is God, actually and essentially God, as the second Person in the glorious Trinity, is the foundation not only of all his offices, but of everything that he is to the Church of God. Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, all of which are essential attributes of Deity, are needed in him who shall atone as Priest, teach as Prophet, and rule as King. The Deity of our blessed Lord does not, therefore, rest merely on single texts of Scripture, however numerous or however clear. We bless God for giving us these direct testimonies to strengthen our faith and to defend it against gainsayers; but the indirect are, if possible, stronger still. The Deity of our blessed Lord is so interwoven with the truth of God that could it be rent from it the whole of revelation must fall to pieces. His blood, his righteousness, his grace and glory, and the whole scheme of salvation as accomplished by him, are so dependent upon his Deity, that without it and separate from it, they have not only no value or validity, but would have no existence—no place in the word, and no place in the heart of the family of God. View this in connection with his offices. If Jesus were but man, his blood, as at once Priest and Sacrifice, could not be of sufficient value to put away one sin, much less millions of sins of

millions of sinners; if he were but man, his eye could not see, his ear hear, or his lips instruct, as the Prophet of his Church, thousands of his believing people who are crying and looking to him from all parts for instruction. If he were but man, how could his shoulders support the weight of sovereignty as King over all things in heaven and in earth? Thus the very foundation of all his offices is his eternal, actual, essential Deity, for without that every other qualification would be utterly ineffectual.

But here again, as in the case of his priestly office, we are met by that blessed and glorious truth of his real, proper, and eternal Sonship. This is as necessary a qualification for his office as Prophet as his eternal Deity; and, in fact, is intimately and indissolubly connected with it, for he is God, as God the Son. We are quite aware that we shall seem to many to tread here on controversial ground, but we hope never to keep back vital and essential truth for fear of being considered contentious or disputatious. Amongst the evils which attend controversy, for with all its advantages it has attending evils, it has a tendency to create and maintain these two: 1. An angry and bitter spirit 2. A tacit dropping of the subject, lest it provoke further strife, or bring upon the controversialist the character of being a lover of contention. Thus truth becomes gagged and silenced, and from a carnal desire for peace at any price, to gain the character of what is called a Christian spirit, (though there is little enough of the Spirit of Christ in compromising his truth,) to win the good opinion of men, and to make things pleasant, as it is termed, in churches and congregations, one point in dispute is quietly dropped after another, till at last all the distinctive and separating features of our most holy faith are fairly out of sight, and as much vanished as the Queen's face on a flat shilling. When, then, we assert that the true and proper Sonship of our blessed Lord is an essential qualification to his sustaining the office of Prophet to his Church, we do so, not in a spirit of angry controversy, but as a declaration of a grand and important gospel truth.

In our introductory remarks on the nature of the prophetic office, we showed that the fundamental character of a prophet was that he was one who spoke for God. Now, this is just the character that our blessed Lord sustains to the Church as the Son of the Father in truth and love. He speaks for the Father to the Church; for the Father speaks in and by him. Twice did the Father speak with express voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and added on the holy mount, "Hear ye him." (Matt. 3:17; 17:5.) The peculiar grace and glory of the Christian dispensation, its eminent and distinctive feature, is that, in it God speaks in and by his dear Son. How

clearly and beautifully is this declared by the Apostle in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. 1:1-4.) When we have a view by faith of the Son of God as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, well may we feel and say,—Who so proper, who so suited to speak for the Father as his own Son, who had for ever lain in his bosom? Who so perfectly and intimately acquainted with the Father's will, who so able to reveal that will to the sons of men? In whom can we find love and power so blended; such zeal for the glory of God, such pity for the children of men; such majesty and such mercy; such infinite purity, yet such unspeakable condescension; such a representative of God, such a messenger for man! He and the Father are one—one in essence, one in will, though in Person distinct. To be one with the Father in essence, yet distinct from the Father in Person, is the peculiar character of his eternal relationship to him as his only-begotten Son. Some of those writers who have lately denied or attempted to explain away his eternal Sonship, have dwelt much on his title as the Word, almost as if it were his distinctive name in the Godhead, and prior to that of Son. Thus considering that he is the Son of God, not as his very mode of eternal subsistence as a Person in the glorious Trinity, but merely in time, by virtue of his complex Person, they would say that he was the Son because he was the Word. Now the truth is exactly contrary to this view. He was not the Son because he was the Word, but he is the Word because he is the Son. The Word, we fully admit, is his title as a Person in the Godhead, "For the Word was God." But why is he the Word? Because God speaks in him and by him. But why does the Father speak in and by him? Because he is his Son. Who is so fit for the Father to speak by as his own Son; or, who is so fit to speak for the Father? Out of the Son, the Father can neither be seen, nor heard, nor known. God is in himself essentially invisible, for he dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see. But he has been pleased to reveal himself in the Person of his dear Son. Thus in seeing him we see the Father, as he told Philip; (John 14:9;) and in beholding his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, we view the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:6.) In a similar way we cannot hear directly and

immediately the voice of God. When that voice spoke on Sinai's blazing top, all the people that were in the camp trembled; yea, the whole mount itself quaked greatly; for so fearful was that voice that they that heard it entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; and so terrible was the sight that even Moses, the man of God, and the typical mediator, said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12:19-21.) As, then, we cannot see God but as revealing himself in his Son, so we cannot hear God but as speaking in his Son. This was John the Baptist's witness of him. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18.) As coming from the bosom of the Father, how qualified was he to speak of him and for him, as John so plainly testified: "He that cometh from above is above all he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:31-34.)

In our next paper we shall hope, with God's help and blessing, to enter still further on the qualifications of the Lord Jesus Christ to sustain the office of Prophet to the Church of God.

## II.

In all his works and in all his ways, whether in creation, in providence, or in grace, the infinite wisdom of the great and glorious Sovereign of heaven and earth shines forth with conspicuous lustre. It is true that in consequence of the darkness, unbelief, and infidelity of the human mind, as sunk and debased by the fall, this wisdom is for the most part hidden from the eyes of men; but when, under the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit, we are brought to see light in God's light, then this infinite and unspeakable wisdom begins to open itself to our admiring view. As taught by the Spirit to see in creation his wonderworking hand, we can join with David in saying, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches." (Psa. 104:24.) As favoured to trace his providential hand, we can look back upon all the way by which he has led us these many years in the wilderness, and see wisdom and mercy stamped upon every step. But whatever view we may obtain by faith of the only wise God as working in the wonders of creation, or as ruling in the complicated affairs of providence, it is

in the domain of grace that his wisdom is more especially discovered to a believing heart; for as the gospel is the grand final revelation of his mind and will in the salvation of his people, it is the greatest display of the wisdom of God that could be afforded to his intelligent creatures, whether redeemed men, or admiring, adoring angels. A sense of this made the Apostle say, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory," (1 Cor. 2:6, 7.) This, on another occasion, made him stand as if on the brink of holy wonder and admiring awe, with the cry in his heart and mouth, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways ast finding out!" (Rom. 11:33.) The angels, therefore, themselves, those bright and glorious beings who always behold the face of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus in heaven, derive their deepest lessons of instruction into the wisdom of God from contemplating his gracious dealings with his people: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:10, 11.) This manifestation of the wisdom of God to angelic intelligences by means of the Church was typically represented to the Old Testament saints by the two cherubim of beaten gold who covered the mercy seat with their wings, and turned their faces towards it, as if seeking ever to penetrate into the divine mystery of mercy and grace for guilty man through the incarnation of the Son of God; as the Apostle speaks, "Which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1:12.) The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, in his Person and work, as the Mediator between God and men, in all the offices that he sustains, in all the riches of his grace, and all the fulness of his glory, is "the wisdom of God," as well as "the power of God;" (1 Cor. 1:24;) for "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3.) But as these treasures are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed only to babes, (Matt. 11:25,) he himself is "of God made unto us wisdom," (1 Cor. 1:30,) that by sitting at his feet and hearing his words; (Luke 10:39;) by taking his yoke upon us and learning of him; (Matt. 11:29;) by union and communion with him as living members of his mystical body; (Eph. 5:30;) by being joined to him as one spirit with him; (1 Cor. 6:17;) by drinking into his mind; (1 Cor. 2:16;) by beholding with open face as in a glass his glory, and being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, (2 Cor. 3:18,) we may possess in him, and derive from him that wellspring of wisdom which shall be in us as a flowing brook. (Prov. 18:4.)

The bearing of these remarks on the wisdom of God, as displayed in the Person and work of Christ, may perhaps not be immediately obvious, but they have been dropped by us in connection with that part of our subject which is still before us, viz., *the qualifications possessed by the Lord Jesus* for the fulfilment of his office as Prophet to his people.

If, then, the blessed Lord is "the wisdom of God," this wisdom will shine forth, not only in the constitution of his glorious Person as Immanuel, God with us, but in every one of his covenant offices. Not only as Priest and King but as Prophet he shines forth in the glory of the Father. Infinite wisdom, infinite love, and infinite power,—the wisdom of God the Father, the love of God the Son, and the power of God the Holy Ghost, all combined in the Person and work of Immanuel to glorify the Father, to exalt the Son, and to save the Church. To understand, to believe, to love, to revere, and adore the heavenly mystery of this wisdom, love, and power, to realise it in sweet experience, and to be filled with all the blessed fruits which spring out of it for time and for eternity, will be our highest wisdom and richest mercy.

With the desire, then, to look into some of these depths of wisdom, love, and power, let us now resume our subject—*the qualifications of Jesus* to sustain the prophetic office for the glory of God and the good of his people.

In our last chapter we dwelt chiefly upon those qualifications which he possesses as a *divine Person in the glorious Trinity*, antecedent to and irrespective of man, viewed as fallen or unfallen. These were two: 1. His eternal Deity; 2. His true and proper Sonship. Both of those, we have seen, were necessary to qualify him to speak for God as his mouth. He was "the Word," who "in the beginning was with God;" who alone had seen the Father; (John 6:46;) who knew the Father as the Father know him; (John 10:15;) who came forth from the Father; (John 16:28;) the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father; (John 1:18;) and who what he had seen and heard that he testified. (John 3:32.) It is very strengthening to faith to have a view of these qualifications of the blessed Lord to testify of the Father. We want *certainties*, the fullest evidence, the clearest assurance, that what Jesus has declared of the Father he knew, not by inspiration, as the prophets, but by actual personal sight and knowledge; that he came from the bosom of the Father; that he was "ever by him as one brought up with him, and daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." (Prov. 8:30.) What a repose is this for faith, that it can rest with implicit confidence on all that Jesus has testified

of the Father as alone knowing him, and yet graciously revealing him to the sons of men. In the things which concern our everlasting peace, in the solemn matters of eternity, where our soul's comfort and joy, not to say its eternal salvation, are at stake, how needful it is to have a foundation on which faith can firmly build and stand secure amidst all the storms of temptation, waves of affliction, and the foaming billows of unbelief and infidelity, urged on by the breath of Satan. Believer, your faith has to rest upon and deal with the words of Jesus Christ, for he has "the words of eternal life." Your faith, if it has not already been, will have to be tried with fire. Look well, then, to the foundation, and see that it is firm and good. We shall have, with God's help and blessing, to dwell more fully upon this part of our subject when we come to see how our Lord's prophetic office bears upon a believer's experience; but we wish to impress upon the mind of our readers the necessity as well as the blessedness of having true and believing views of the qualifications of our Lord to speak in the name of the Father, as "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his Person," before the foundations of the earth were laid, or the dayspring knew its place.

But now we come to those qualifications which are more immediately connected with *his pure humanity*; and these we shall find as necessary as those which are based upon his eternal Deity and Sonship.

1. It is *his being man* as well as God that makes him fit to be a Mediator: "for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2:5.) It is his being "the man Christ Jesus," as well as God the Son, which makes him capable of being the daysman or "umpire," (*margin*.) for whom Job longed, (Job 9:33,) that can lay his hand upon us both. As God, Jesus could speak to God for man; as man, he could speak to man for God. High as the highest, he became low as the lowest; equal with the Father in his divine, he became equal with man in his human nature. The Prophet of whom Moses spake was to be "from the midst of the children of Israel, of their brethren:" "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren;" and again "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. 18:18.) The promised Prophet was to be raised up from the midst of, and from "among the brethren," for he was to be of the seed of the woman, (Gen. 3:15,) and of the seed of David according to the flesh. (Rom. 1:3.) To be a brother he must assume their nature, as the Apostle declares: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of

the same;" (Heb. 2:14;) and again: "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Heb. 2:16, 17.) This qualified him to say, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee." (Heb. 2:12.) His qualification as man to sustain the office of a Prophet was as needful as his qualification as God. To save man God became man. To teach his brethren the Son of God became their brother. This pure and perfect humanity he assumed in the womb of the Virgin, and the Holy Ghost, under whose divine and supernatural operation and overshadowing this human nature was conceived, filled it, at the very instant of its conception, with every grace, making it a holy temple in which all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.

2. But though this human nature of our blessed Lord was in the instant of its conception sanctified and filled with all heavenly grace, yet was it capable of both natural and spiritual growth, and a *further increase of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost*. We therefore read of Jesus in his earliest years, that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40.) The growth spoken of there refers to his body, as he is said elsewhere to have "increased in stature," (verse 52,) growing as we grow from childhood to youth and manhood, but without any of those drawbacks of sickness and infantile complaints to which we are subject, from which he was perfectly free, as having no taint of disease or seeds of mortality in his pure and holy frame. His being said to "wax strong in spirit" refers to his being more and more filled in his soul with strength and wisdom, from more continual accessions of the power and unction of the Holy Ghost. No new grace was imparted to his soul, as no new member was added to his body; but as his pure human soul, like our own, expanded and grew with his bodily growth, so was it more and more filled with the Holy Spirit. The divine nature was not to our blessed Lord in the place of a soul.-The two natures were essentially distinct, and though mysteriously united in the Person of the God-man, there was, as the Athanasian Creed has well expressed it, no "confusion of substance" from their intermixture, which would have been the case had his essential Deity been as a soul to animate his body. And if it be asked why the human soul of Jesus needed the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, as it was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sin and sinners from the moment of his conception, we answer, that without these gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost it would not have been

consecrated to the service of God, nor could it have lived unto him and for him according to the full measure of its capacity. The whole of his human nature, body and soul, would still have been "a holy thing;" (Luke 1:35;) but as the body without natural growth would have ever remained a babe, so would his soul not have grown up into all its fulness of wisdom and grace unless the same blessed Spirit who had formed and sanctified it in the womb had continually replenished it with heavenly treasure. This is beautifully unfolded in the words of the prophet: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears." (Isa. 11:1-3.) By the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost the human nature of our blessed Lord became a holy temple, consecrated to the service of God, replenished with every grace, and qualified not only to do and suffer the whole will of the Father, but to sustain every covenant office.

3. But it was more particularly at his baptism when *the Spirit of God descended from heaven* in a bodily shape like a dove, and rested on him, when the Father proclaimed with an audible voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," that he was consecrated to the active service of his heavenly Father. This corresponded to the anointing of the prophets of old to their prophetic office, as Elijah was commanded to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room. (1 Kings 19:16.) Then the Father sealed him, (John 6:27,) bore witness of him, (John 8:18,) testified to his Sonship, gave him the Spirit without measure, (John 3:34,) and bade us hear him. Then the Holy Ghost, as John the Baptist saw, descended from heaven and abode upon him; (John 1:32, 33;) and by this visible descent and perpetual abiding on him anointed him in a more especial manner with all those divine gifts and graces whereby he was qualified to fulfil his mission as the Messenger of the covenant in the most perfect and complete manner for the glory of God and the good of his people.

We may thus draw a distinction between those graces of the Holy Spirit whereby he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9,) and that special communication of heavenly graces and gifts whereby he was peculiarly set apart and qualified to finish the work which the Father gave him to do. Our blessed Lord lived a life of faith upon his heavenly Father. The actings of this faith in all its diversified phases may be clearly

seen portrayed to our view in those Psalms which beyond all controversy contain the experience of Jesus in the days of his flesh. There is not a grace or fruit of the Holy Ghost possessed by his people in measure which the Lord did not possess without measure. And these, it must be borne in mind, were active graces, drawn out and called into continual exercise by the same Holy Spirit who had communicated them. As read with an enlightened eye, the Psalms wherein our Lord speaks show all these graces in constant and active exercise. Faith in all its actings, hope in all its anchorings, love in all its flowings, patience in all its endurings, humility in all its submittings, prayer in all its supplicatings, praise in all its adorings, obedience in all its yieldings, zeal in all its burnings, devotedness in all its self-sacrificings, holiness in all its flame, and worship in all its fervour,—all, all those graces and fruits of the Holy Spirit may be seen shining forth as with beams of heavenly light in the personal experience of our blessed Lord in those Psalms in which he speaks. They were, as it were, framed for him by the Holy Ghost before he came into a time state, that they might be not only prophetic of his sufferings for the benefit of his Church, but be the spiritual utterance of his own holy soul in the days of his flesh.\* This personal experience of our blessed Lord forms another and most necessary qualification for his sustaining the prophetic office. He thus possessed the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

\* When we speak thus of the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ being contained in the Psalms, we would strictly disclaim the view that *all* of them refer to him. That *some* do is evident from their being applied to him in the New Testament, and from his own words; (Luke 24:44;) but it would be monstrous to refer such Psalms as 32 and 51 to him. Beyond all controversy, however, Psa. 22, 40, 69, and 110 belong to him; and if, in Psa. 22 for instance, his bodily sufferings are described by his own lips, is it not in full harmony with this to consider the sufferings of his soul, in other words, his inward experience, similarly described by himself; more especially as he used the first verse to express that most dolorous of all his sufferings when the Father hid his face from him? This is what we mean when we say that the Psalms contain the experience of Christ.

4. But this leads us to another qualification of our blessed Lord to sustain the prophetic office—that he had *a personal experience of temptation*. We have already seen that, in the depths of infinite wisdom, it pleased the Father to send as a messenger of the covenant one who had that intimate and ineffable knowledge of himself which none possessed but his only-begotten Son. Now as

thus in his divine nature Jesus was thereby qualified in the highest degree to speak that which he knew, and to testify that which he had seen, so it pleased the father that in his human nature he should possess similar qualifications. We have already seen this under its two most principal features: 1. The gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon him without measure for the benefit of others; 2. The personal experience which he possessed of every grace of the Spirit. The former made him a preacher, the latter made him a believer; by the first he lived for God, by the second he lived to God; by the one he brake the bread of life to others, by the other he had himself meat to eat the world knew not of; by the first the words that he spake were spirit and life to his believing people, by the second he could say, "And he that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." (John 8:29.) The distinction that we have thus drawn between the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon the Lord for the exercise of his prophetic office and the grace with which he was filled as a matter of his own personal experience, may not be obvious to all our readers, but the difference seems clearly pointed out by comparing Isa. 11:2, 3 with Isa. 61:1-3: "The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, making him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," evidently points to an inward experience of godly fear which we know in the word of truth often stands for the whole sum of vital godliness; but his being anointed "to preach good tidings unto the meek" evidently points to the gifts conferred upon him to speak for God to his people. But as a part of this personal experience, it was needful for the Lord to know experimentally and feelingly the reality and power of temptation. Immediately, therefore, after his baptism, before he entered on the discharge of his prophetic office, he was led, or as one of the evangelists forcibly expresses it, "driven," (Mark 1:12,) that is, carried by a mighty impulse of the Spirit, into the wilderness, there to be tempted of the devil. Into the record and nature of those temptations we shall not enter, though doubtless much profitable instruction is contained in them. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to direct the attention of our readers to what we may call the Apostle's divine commentary upon them: "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 2:18; 4:15.) The Lord's people are, for the most part, a very tried and tempted people. It was therefore needful that their suffering Head should be tried and tempted too, that in his own soul he might have a personal, individual, and deep experience of the nature and power of temptation. It was not sufficient that he should know temptation as the

omniscient God; he must know it as suffering man. As he knew poverty by being poor, not having a place to lay his head; persecution, contempt, and hatred by being despised and rejected of men; suffering and sorrow by being himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; desertion of God by his Father forsaking him in the hour of his most dolorous agony,—so he learnt the power and pangs of temptation by being himself personally tempted. He "was in *all* points tempted like as we are," so that not a single temptation from without or from within can assail the child of God of which Jesus had not a personal experience; yet be it ever borne in mind, "without sin," of which there was no seed or taint in either body or soul. Here the gracious Lord differs from us. Temptation never comes to us without meeting with and stirring up sin; but in him there was no sin to stir up, as he said himself: "The prince of this world (Satan) cometh, and hath nothing in me," (John 14:30.)—nothing sinful to work upon, nothing corrupt to incite, nothing of his own spawn to beget upon, nothing combustible to inflame.

All figures must be essentially incomplete and inherently imperfect to set forth divine truth, and especially one so deeply mysterious and inscrutable by the human intellect as what passed in the soul of the holy Redeemer as tempted by the prince of darkness; but we may perhaps, with this reservation, employ two simple comparisons to illustrate the difference between temptation assailing the holy soul of Jesus and temptation assailing our corrupt heart. A raging sea may beat against a pure, white marble rock, or against a bank of earth. The former it can neither move nor sully; wave after wave is repelled and dashed off; whatever streams may lave its sides, the rock remains as before; the salt water has not penetrated its substance or mingled itself with it. So the pure and holy soul of Jesus, of him who is the "Rock of Ages," repelled and shook off, unmoved and unsullied, the fiercest, foulest temptations of Satan—felt them, knew them, experienced them, but never mingled with them, nor they with it. In the wilderness, on the top of the exceeding high mountain, on the pinnacle of the temple, with what holy calmness did Jesus shake off the assaults of the tempter, with "It is written!" Not that he did not feel the power of the temptations, but the Lion of Judah shook them off as the dew-drops from his mane. But *we* are a bank of earth, against, which, when the sea of temptation beats, it mixes with the native soil, washes off pieces, and runs off in muddy streams, as entering into its very substance. As in our figure the same sea assails rock and bank, so the same temptations assailed the Lord and us; but how different their effect! He felt them without sin; we feel them with sin. They mingled not with his pure soul, and therefore defiled it not; but they do mix with our corrupt heart, and sadly pollute it.

**But take another figure, of a still humbler character, to illustrate the difference between the effect of temptation in the Lord's case and ours. On your right hand is a golden vase filled with the purest, clearest water; on the left is an earthenware vessel in which the water looks clean and good, but for this reason only, that all the dirt has subsided to the bottom. Stir both with the same stick. The water in the vase is still pure and clean; the water in the bowl is at once turbid and thick. Whence the difference? Not in the stick that stirs; not altogether in the receptacle; but in the mud at the bottom of the water. But if our figures are imperfect and inadequate (and we fully admit that they are so), yet fix your eyes—your believing eyes—for sense and reason are useless and worse than useless here, on these two points, and seek to enter into them, though unable to comprehend them: 1. "In all points tempted like as we are;" 2. "Yet without sin." In these two points the whole truth and the whole mystery of our Lord's temptation are locked up and contained. But if any, still wanting some explanation of the mystery, should inquire how the Lord could feel temptation as we do if there was no sinful principle in him to mingle with it, let him ask himself if he never feels temptation when he abhors it? The fiery darts of Satan, as, for instance, blasphemous and infidel temptations, things that your very soul abhors, do not these grieve and distress your spirit, which hates and abhors them? The more heavenly-minded, spiritual, and holy a man be, the more acutely he feels these "masterpieces of hell." This then may give you a faint conception of the way in which the holy soul of the Redeemer felt, most acutely felt, felt in proportion to his own spotless holiness, the temptations of Satan, yet was never tainted by them.**

**But we must pause. We have rather run out to sea, as the wind filled our sail; still, we trust we have not gone out of our course if, fixing our eye on Jesus as our polar-star, we have followed up our intention to lay before our readers the qualifications of our gracious Lord to fulfil that prophetic office for the benefit and blessing of the Church of God which he undertook in the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.**

**We hope, with God's help and blessing, to show in our next chapter, the way in which the blessed Lord *executed it*.**

**III.**

**Thus far the *qualifications* of our blessed Lord to sustain the office of Prophet**

to his Church have formed the subject of our Meditations. As all the relationships which the Lord bears to his people, as their covenant Head, are living springs of strength and consolation to them in exact proportion to their faith in him and to their receiving of his fulness grace for grace; (Psa. 87:7; John 1:16; Gal. 2:20;) and as this faith is fed by knowledge, and works by love, how desirable it is that all who believe in his name should clearly see with anointed eyes, and experimentally feel with confiding hearts, the strong foundation on which their trust in him is built. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." (Isa. 28:16.) Our faith, if indeed it be the faith of God's elect, has to be tried as by fire. We need then look well to two things: 1, the *foundation* itself; 2, the *faith* which stands on that foundation. Failure in either would be perilous, if not fatal. We are at present engaged with the foundation; the faith which builds upon it will, in due course, come under our notice.

O thou, then, who wouldest build for eternity, but art often deeply tried and exercised about thy faith whether it be indeed wrought in thy heart by the mighty power of God, look well to the foundation. How can thy faith be strong if the foundation be weak? Or how can thy faith firmly embrace the foundation, unless thou clearly see it as laid by the hand of God himself in Zion, and know for thyself that, as a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation, it is able to bear all the weight of thy aggravated sins, all the burden of thy continual sorrows, all the pressure of thy daily wants, all the load of thy complicated perplexities? This is the reason, then, why in all our previous attempts to set forth the covenant offices of our exalted Lord, we have dwelt so much on his qualifications to sustain them for the glory of God and the salvation and sanctification of his people. Let us ever bear in mind that the glorious Person of Christ is the grand object of our faith. "Look unto *me*,"—not my offices—"and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" (Isa. 45:22;) "Come unto *me*,"—to myself, to me, the God-man, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden," (Matt. 11:28,) are his gracious words. First himself, then his offices; first the Son of God, then the High Priest over the house of God; first the Son given, then the Wonderful Counsellor; first the mighty God, then the Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6.) From his glorious Person his covenant offices derive all their grace and glory, all their beauty and blessedness, all their suitability to our wants and woes. Unless, then, we have a living faith in his Person, we cannot have a living faith in his work. We first embrace his glorious Person, as revealed to our soul by the power of God as his only-begotten Son, and then, by receiving out of his fulness supplies of heavenly grace, live a life of faith upon him. If, then, our faith has to embrace him as

"the Messenger of the covenant," (Mal. 3:1,) as the promised Prophet, to whose words we are to hearken, under penalty of eternal ruin; if we turn away our ear from him and harden our heart against him; (Deut. 18:15-19;) if all the saints who are in his hand "sit down at his feet and receive of his words," (Deut. 33:3,)—and we are among that favoured number, surely we cannot be too well grounded and established in a spiritual and experimental knowledge, first of his glorious Person, and then of his covenant office as Prophet, whereby he leads in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that he may cause those that love him to inherit substance, and he will fill their treasures. (Prov. 8:20, 21.)

In pursuance, then, of this desire to lay a sure foundation for faith, we have thus far endeavoured to show the qualifications of our gracious Lord, both as the Son of God and as the Son of man, to be the Messenger of the Father, the Revealer of his mind and will, the Mouth by which he speaks to the sons of men.

We now, therefore, pass on to the consideration of,

### *III. The execution of the office of Prophet by our blessed Lord upon earth.*

We have already seen that Jesus was consecrated to the service of his heavenly Father from the womb, that every grace and gift of the Spirit rested upon and filled his pure humanity, and that thus initially he was Priest, Prophet, and King from his miraculous conception and birth. But it was at his baptism, as we have already pointed out, that he was peculiarly consecrated and set apart for the work which his Father had given him to do. When found in the temple by his sorrowing parents, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, he said unto them, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:46, 49;) but it was after his baptism that he could more specially say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34.)

i. The first step towards doing this will and finishing this work which we shall notice is, his *receiving words from his heavenly Father*, that he might speak them in his name.

In our introductory remarks on the nature of the prophetic office, we showed that its peculiar and most prominent feature was, that the prophet was, as it were, the very mouth by which God spake. "Thus saith the Lord,"—not "I his

prophet," was not only his only title to be heard, but the only message with which he came. Now this "Thus saith the LORD" involved the necessity that whatever he uttered in the name of the Lord should be the very words which God spake unto him; for if they were in the least degree modified or altered, there would be no certainty that they were the full and exact expression of the mind and will of the Lord of hosts. We all know that if a messenger be allowed to put the words of him that sent him into his own language, they cannot be fully relied on. Thus our blessed Lord, as the anointed Prophet of the Father, had words given to him, which words he spake exactly as the Father gave them to him.

As this is to our mind a point of deep importance, yet one which we have rarely if ever seen touched upon, we shall devote a few minutes' attention to it.

When Moses went up into the mount, the whole pattern of the tabernacle was set before him, and the injunction was given him, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." (Exod. 25:40.) Not a loop, therefore, or pin could Moses put in or leave out in the construction of the tabernacle to make it swerve one item from the pattern set before him. Had there been the least deviation or alteration from the exact pattern, it would not have been the Lord's own tabernacle. The additional loop would have been not the Lord's, but man's, and therefore an ungodly intrusion into the sanctuary; and the deficient pin would have taken from the fulness of the Lord's house, and made it imperfect.\* Thus, in a similar way, our blessed Lord, as the Prophet of the Most High, received words from his heavenly Father, full in number, and exact in nature; and these words he spake in his name and by his authority, no more and no fewer than they were given him. How plain are his words on this point: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (John 12:49, 50.) These words were "the words of eternal life," (John 6:68,) and as such were "spirit and life" (John 6:63) to those who received them with power from his lips. But, as we shall presently show, they were in a more especial manner given by him to his disciples, according to his own divine language in his intercessory prayer: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." (John 17:8.) And that those were the exact words given him by his heavenly Father is plain from what he also elsewhere testified: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that

**dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10.)**

**\* How far this is applicable to the service of the Christian sanctuary, and condemnatory of all additions not commanded, and of all deficiencies not supplied, let our readers judge.**

**But the question may arise as an objection to this view, "If the Lord Jesus were indeed God, possessing, as such, all the perfections of Deity, if, as you have so much insisted upon, the Son of the Father in truth and love, and as such intimately acquainted with his mind and will, what need was there that express words should be given him? Could he not have spoken them in his own name, and by his own authority, as he said to the roaring sea, 'Peace be still?'" (Mark 4:39.) Such questions are not very reverent, as we should receive the truth in the simplicity and humility of little children, and believe where we cannot comprehend; but as we cannot always still the objections of our reasoning mind, and this question admits a sufficient and satisfactory answer, we have anticipated it, and shall reply to it. When our blessed Lord took our nature into union with his own divine Person, it was to become the Father's servant: "Behold my servant," &c. (Isa. 42:1.) A servant, in his character as a servant, does his master's will, and speaks his master's words. For a servant, then, in the highest and fullest sense of the word, to have a will different from his master's will, and to speak words different from his master's words, would be not obedience but disobedience, not service but rebellion. As, then, the blessed Lord came as the most obedient and devoted of all servants to do his Father's will and his Father's work, (Heb. 10:7; Matt. 26:39; John 17:4,) and as his deepest grace and highest glory were to do both perfectly, so when he came as a servant to speak his Father's words, it was to him no degradation, but, on the contrary, a most gracious and blessed humbling of himself to speak them just as they were given him, without addition, diminution, or alteration. He was as perfect as a prophet to speak for God, as a priest to die unto God. It no more, then, detracts from his Deity and divine Sonship that he did not speak his own words than it detracts from them that he did not do his own will. Will and words, doing and dying, obedience and suffering, death and resurrection, grace and glory, were all determined on in the eternal Covenant, and were as fixed, certain, and unalterable as the stars in their courses or the sun in the sky. Fixed as these, do we say? Aye, much more, for the Covenant will stand when the stars fall from their places, and the sun, like a weary giant, pales and faints in his daily race.**

We do not think, however, that we should have dwelt so long upon this point were there not this peculiar blessedness in the words of Jesus as Prophet being the words of the Father, that 1, they thereby perfectly reveal the mind and will of God; 2, that, as spoken by the Mediator between God and man, they are words of peace and reconciliation from that just and holy God against and before whom we have so grievously sinned; 3, that, as applied to the heart by the power of God, they are spirit and life. We much wish that our limits allowed us to dwell more on this peculiar feature of the Lord's ministry, as it formed its chief power and glory, but we must pass on to the second step of the execution of his prophetic office, which we consider to have been,

ii. *The choice of disciples.*

Our blessed Lord had to found a church on earth. The corn of wheat had to fall into the ground and die, that it might bring forth much fruit. (John 12:24.) And after this corn of wheat had fallen into the earth and risen out of it,—in other words, after the Lord Jesus had put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, had risen from the dead, and gone up on high, it was the will of God that his death and resurrection should issue in a glorious crop of redeemed sinners. But that this crop might be gathered, labourers were needed; and that these labourers might go forth fully commissioned by the Lord of the harvest, they themselves must first be taught to plough, sow, and reap. Our Lord, then, for this purpose chose disciples, "whom also he named apostles, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13.)

In unfolding this part of our subject, it may, perhaps, be well to bear in mind that the Lord's calling and ordaining of his twelve disciples were distinct events, and took place at different periods of his ministry. He first drew disciples unto himself by those secret cords of his grace whereby, as made willing in the day of his power, they forsook all and followed him. It was at Bethabara\* beyond Jordan, when John was baptizing, that the Lord thus drew to himself his first disciples. "Behold the Lamb of God" was the word of power which, as it fell from John's lips, the Holy Ghost applied to the heart of two of his own disciples, and made them follow Jesus. One of the two was Andrew, who, having found for himself the Messiah, the Christ, must needs, in the overflowing of his heart, tell his brother Peter the good news,\*\* and bring him to the same blessed Lord. Philip is the next whom Jesus finds as a poor, lost, wandering sheep, and whose heart he touches and subdues with the word of power, "Follow me." Philip findeth Nathanael, the Israelite without guile; and the omniscient eye which saw him under the fig-tree wins him to believe

that not only good, but the Giver of all good, could come out of Nazareth. (John 1:35-51.) These disciples followed the Lord into Galilee, and were present with him at Cana, where he wrought his first miracle, in turning water into wine, to manifest forth his glory and to confirm their faith. (John 2:11.) We need not, however, particularise the call of the disciples by their gracious Master. It is sufficient for our purpose to show that to call, ordain, and commission them was a leading feature of the execution of his prophetic office. We may therefore divide this branch of his earthly ministry into three distinct periods: 1. The call of the disciples, which took place at different times in the first year of his ministry; 2. Their ordination in a more special and solemn manner to be apostles, which seems to have occurred in the first quarter of the second year of his ministry;\*\*\* and 3. Their final commission after the resurrection, when he breathed on them the Holy Ghost, as the foretaste and pledge of the full effusion of that sacred Comforter on the day of Pentecost. It was to the disciples thus called and ordained that he gave the words which the Father had given him. These words they received with power from his lips; and by this reception of them a spiritual knowledge of him, and a divine faith in him, were raised up in their hearts, according to his own testimony: "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." (John 17:8.)

\* Some of the best manuscripts, amongst them the Alexandrian, in the British Museum, written not later than the fifth century, read *Bethany*, which seems, for other reasons, to be the true reading.

\*\* It is well worthy of observation, that there was at this time a general expectation of the near advent of the promised Messiah; (see Matt. 2:3; Luke 2:38; 3:15; John 1:10-25;) and this circumstance, combined with John's ministry, prepared the way for the reception of Jesus by believing hearts. (Isa. 40:3-5; Matt. 3:3.)

\*\*\* We do not often quote our authorities, though on such historical points we occasionally consult them. We think, however, that the following extracts from Greswell's "Harmony of the Gospels," a work of great learning and deep research, are much to the point, and will be found useful and interesting.

"The concurrent testimony of St. Mark and St. Luke establishes the fact that, until the present period of our Saviour's ministry, which is the first quarter of the second year, not only were the twelve not yet ordained to their office, but even the name of apostle was not yet in being. Hitherto, then, they

were merely disciples; distinguished, perhaps, by nothing above the rest of the disciples in common, except that all or some of them might have been personally called by our Saviour, as the rest of the disciples were not. But from this time forward they were expressly discriminated from the rest, and formed into a body or society of their own."

"If we consider the momentous consequences which, though still in futurity, depended upon this appointment of the twelve; and though still in futurity, yet to the omniscience of Christ were even then as good as present; we shall confess that, next to the great business of suffering for man, this was, and would be regarded by our Lord himself as the most important act of his lifetime upon earth. Nor does he enter on it without a corresponding degree of preparation; nor proceed in it without an equal gravity and solemnity. The night before he spends on the mountain apart, in earnest prayer. (Luke 6:12.) As soon as it is day, he calls to him the whole of his disciples; (ver. 13;) out of this number he selects twelve by name, whom he invests with a new and a peculiar designation, expressive of the same relation to himself, in which he was appearing and acting with reference to the Father; for Jesus Christ was the Shiloh or Apostle of the Father, and the twelve were the Shilohs or apostles of Jesus Christ."

**iii. This introduces us to another leading feature of our Lord's ministry, viz., *the peculiar character of his teaching*. This we may view under three different aspects: 1. Its general bearing on the people at large; 2. Its peculiar reference to his own immediate disciples; 3. Its character toward the afflicted family of God.**

**1. As regards *the people*, it was *with authority*, and not as the scribes. At the time of our Lord's appearance on the earth, the pure word of God, the lively (or living) oracles which had been committed to the trust of the Jewish church, (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2,) had become overlaid by the traditions of the elders. Such pure and holy breathings towards the word of truth, and such an insight into, and experience of its spirituality and power as we find described in Psa. 119, and enforced by the prophets, were no longer known or taught by those who sat in Moses's seat. The tithing of mint, anise, and cummin; the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables; and a frivolous and burdensome code of traditions had, as it were, smothered the true knowledge of God and the worship of him in spirit and in truth. Formality and ceremony, long robes and broad phylacteries, praying in the market-place and at the corners of the streets, were substituted for judgment and the love of God; and as this mere formal religion was to some a mask of hypocrisy, and to others a**

cloak of covetousness, the scribe and the pharisee ruled over an ignorant people. To beat down, then, this corrupt pharisaism, to show the spirituality of the law, and how the precepts of God had been overlaid and perverted by the traditions of men, formed one leading feature of the Lord's prophetic ministry. It must be borne in mind that the Lord Jesus, as the promised prophet, was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God." (Rom. 15:8.) The Jewish people being in outward covenant the people of God, to them was Jesus sent, and to them he preached. Our limits will not allow us to enter further on this branch of the Lord's personal ministry; but it will be found the animating breath of many of his parables, his discourses, John 6, 8, 10, and especially of his Sermon on the Mount. But though our space does not admit of our entering more fully into this branch of our Lord's ministry, yet we would earnestly call our readers' attention to the wisdom, power, and authority with which he spake. This was felt and acknowledged even by the people themselves, though they derived no personal benefit from it, for we read that "they were astonished at his doctrine, (or teaching,\*) for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matt. 7:28, 29.) But with whatever power or wisdom he spake, none received his words as the words of eternal life but the elect remnant, for it was with the rest as the apostle speaks: "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day." (Rom. 11:7, 8)

\* The word "doctrine," in the New Testament, almost always means "*teaching.*"

2. In order, then, that his words should not wholly fall to the ground, God *gave him a few disciples*, who should receive them, and be saved and sanctified by them. There is something peculiarly emphatic in the language of Peter, when the Lord said unto the twelve, "Will ye go away?" It seems as if at his Master's voice faith immediately sprang up in his heart. "Lord," was his answer, in the name of them all, "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." He might find words elsewhere. The scribes and pharisees had them in abundance. But where could he find words which dropped eternal life into his soul but those which fell from the lips of the Son of the living God? Thus, apart from the wisdom and authority with which he spake, there was a power, a special power, which attended his words to the heart of his disciples. Others might say, "Never man spake like this man;" others might hang upon his lips, (Luke 19:48, *margin,*) and wonder at "the gracious words which

proceeded out of his mouth." But all this astonishment and admiration passed away as the morning cloud and the early dew. Eternal life was not communicated thereby. But as the distinguishing feature of his words, as spoken with power to the hearts of his disciples, eternal life gushed with them into their souls.

3. But besides our Lord's peculiar and personal ministry to his disciples, there was a *scattered remnant* to which his words were made words of power. Look, for instance, at the Syrophenician woman; (Mark 7:26;) the man sick of the palsy; (Matt. 9:2;) the woman with the issue of blood; (Matt. 9:22;) the woman that was a sinner; (Luke 7:47;) Zaccheus; (Luke 19:9;) Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. (John 11:5.) These are all instances of believing, pardoned, and saved sinners, to whom the Lord's words were words of power as distinct from those which were given to his disciples. This peculiar feature of the Lord's ministry is blessedly opened up in that portion of the word of truth which he read in the synagogue of Nazareth, and claimed as his own: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18, 19.) Thus, as distinct from his public preaching, when "he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all," (Luke 4:15,) and from his private ministry, when, after he had spoken to the multitude in parables, "when they were alone he expounded all things to his disciples," (Mark 4:34,) the Lord had a peculiar ministration for the afflicted remnant,—the lost sheep of the house of Israel, whom he was sent to seek and save. (Matt. 15:24; Luke 19:10.) These were the poor to whom he preached the gospel, (Matt. 11:5,) the brokenhearted whom he came to heal, the captives to whom he proclaimed deliverance, the blind to whom he gave recovering of sight, and the bruised whom he set at liberty. In sweet harmony with this peculiar ministry of our gracious Lord are the opening sentences of the Sermon on the Mount the invitations, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," &c.; "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;" the promises, "My sheep shall never perish;" "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" and the gracious declarations contained in John 6 and similar passages. There is, indeed, this peculiar blessedness stamped on the whole personal ministry of the adorable Lord, that grace being poured into his lips, all that he spake is full of profit and instruction to the Church of God. Take, for instance, his conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Here was a poor sinful creature, dark as midnight, and dead as the dust of Adam, who comes

to draw water, as she had often done before, little thinking whom she was that day to meet—the Son of God in the guise of a weary traveller. But mark how, in his conversation with this guilty daughter of sin, the blessed Lord, as the anointed Prophet of God, put forth truths of the deepest import to the Church of the living God. That God is a Spirit; that those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth; that the water which Jesus gives is a well of water springing up into everlasting life,—what a power and influence have these living truths had on the Church of Christ, and will have whilst there is a Church on earth. And yet to whom were they spoken? To a Samaritan—to one so hated by the Jew, that he would not, were he half dead with thirst, have taken a cup of cold water from the hands of any one of the abhorred race. To a sinful woman, living at the very time in unhallowed concubinage with one who was not her husband. This is but one instance to show that this Prophet never spake, but grace and truth dropped from his lips. Another instance is his conversation with the carnal multitude which sought him not because they saw the miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves, and were filled. (John 6:26.) What holy and sublime truths did he discourse in their hearing! What a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,—not for them who strove among themselves, and murmured out, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" but for his believing saints who eat his flesh and drink his blood, and experimentally know that his flesh is meat indeed and his blood drink indeed. That carnal, unbelieving, murmuring multitude passed away, dying in their sins; but the truths spoken in their hearing, and recorded by the Holy Ghost in the pages of John, live for ever. John 8 affords another instance of the deepest and most blessed truths dropped by our Lord in the presence of his enemies. They called him a Samaritan, and said that he had a devil—nay, took up stones to cast at him; but those words, which to them were a savour of death unto death, have been to thousands a savour of life unto life. Blessed be his holy name that such gracious words fell from his lips and blessed be the eternal Spirit, the Comforter, who has recorded them in the inspired page! When, too, we pass on to the closing scene, and are admitted to hear those heavenly discourses whereby our gracious Lord consoled the hearts of his sorrowing disciples, (John 14, 15, 16,) well may we long to sit at his foot, and drink in the rich contents of that legacy of peace which he there left, not for them only but for all who should believe on him through their word. Dear friends, friends of truth, friends of the Friend of sinners, lovers of the Son of God, can we believe too firmly, prize too highly, love too dearly, the words that dropped from the lips of the Redeemer as the Prophet sent by the Father? It is by believing them that we feel their power and sweetness, and experience their liberating and

**sanctifying influence.**

\* The Sermon on the Mount may be considered as embodying and illustrating the three distinct features of the Lord's personal ministry which we have pointed out. Thus in its opening sentences it is addressed to the afflicted remnant; in those parts where the spirituality of the law and its opposition to the interpretation put upon it by the traditions of the elders are enforced, it is addressed to the people; and in those passages where the Lord says, "Ye are the salt of the earth," &c., it is spoken to the disciples.

**But in the warmth of our heart we are anticipating a future subject of meditation,—the bearing which the prophetic office of the Lord Jesus has on the experience of a believer. We have not yet finished the mode of its execution.**

**But as we have already outrun our usual limit, and as the subject is of too great importance to be hastily passed over, we shall resume it, with God's help and blessing, in our next paper.**

#### **IV.**

**Next to the "unspeakable gift" of his dear Son, the greatest blessing which God has bestowed upon the Church is the gift of that holy word which testifies of him. And if this be true of the Scripture generally, as a divine revelation of the mind and will of God and of his testimony to the Person and work of the Son of his love, it is especially so of that portion of the inspired record which contains the words actually spoken by the Lord himself, when tabernacling here below. What indeed would the Church of Christ have fully and clearly known of the gracious words which the Lord Jesus spake when on earth, as the Prophet of the Most High, had they not been stored up, and thus, as it were, for ever embalmed in the four inspired Gospels? Memory, it is true, at first, and tradition afterwards, might for a season, have retained a small remnant of them; but what with the frailty and treachery of the one, and the corrupting tendency of the other, nothing certain, nothing pure could have been preserved for the benefit of the Church in the succeeding periods of time. But the Holy Ghost having inspired the four evangelists to commit to writing the exact words and actions of the blessed Redeemer as they were spoken and performed, the faith of the Church has a solid ground on which to rest, and each successive generation of believers can sit at his feet and hear his words**

almost as if they were still dropping from his gracious lips.

But as we are still engaged with the execution of his office here below, another feature of our Lord's prophetic ministry demands a few moments' consideration.

iv. *The miracles by which the Lord authenticated his divine mission.* These were essential to prove that he was sent of God as the promised Prophet. Had he not wrought miracles, there would not only have been no open proof of his divine mission, but he would have been inferior to Moses who gave, and to Elijah who restored the law, both of whom proved their commission of God by the wondrous deeds which they wrought in his name. The subject is too wide for us to enter into in our limited space. It will be sufficient to show from two passages the connection between our Lord's miracles and the belief that he was the promised Prophet. The first is in connection with the miracle of feeding the five thousand: "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." (John 6:14.) The other is the Lord's answer to John, when he sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the inquiry, "Art thou he that should come," (that is, the promised Prophet,) "or do we look for another?" "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. 11:4, 5.) There the Lord appealed to his miracles, that he was "he that should come," the Shiloh, the Prophet of whom Moses spake.

But though our limits preclude us from dwelling further on the Lord's miracles as a proof of his divine mission, yet we cannot but make upon them, as viewed in connection with the execution of his prophetic office, the following observations:

1. They were so vast, so numerous, and so well authenticated, that one would think the infidelity itself of the authors of the "*Essays and Reviews*" would blush to deny or explain them away. When five thousand men, for instance, were fed with five barley loaves and two small fishes, there were five thousand witnesses to the truth and reality of the miracle, besides the disciples, who distributed them to the people, and afterwards filled twelve baskets with the fragments which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Could all these have been deceived? Take five thousand hungry people now at some

**national gathering. To feed such a number, what an apparatus of provisions would be requisite! Did not, then, each man of this hungry multitude know for himself that there was no such apparatus to feed them? They were in "a desert place," (Matt. 14:15,) far from any human habitation, and were faint for want of food. Now, how could provisions in sufficient amount to feed such a famished crowd have been brought into this wilderness, and the persons thus abundantly fed not see or know it? Where were their eyes, not to see the camels loaded with loaves, or the boats on the shore of the lake filled with glittering fish? The large amount of provision needed and consumed precluded all collusion or mistake on the part of the disciples; and there could have been no deception of the senses on the part of the famished multitude, when each hungry man ate the bread and tasted the fish, and found and felt his hunger and faintness gone. These observations are indeed obvious enough, but the deep-seated infidelity of our wretched heart sometimes wants a seasonable check, and faith itself may occasionally need confirming by taking a closer view of the solid grounds on which it rests. We have, therefore, purposely selected this one miracle to show how clear the proof that it was wrought by a divine power; but the same train of reasoning, a little modified according to the circumstances of each, may be applied to them all. They were too open, too palpable, too vast, too supernatural, to be anything but real manifestations of divine power.**

**2. They were almost all *miracles of mercy*. The only exceptions that we can call to mind were, the permission given to the unclean spirits to enter into the herd of swine, and the denunciation of the barren fig-tree; of which the first was a just punishment for keeping for profit a herd of unclean animals, contrary to the law; and the other a standing warning against all barren professors.\* Contrast with the beneficent miracles of Jesus some of those wrought by Moses and Elisha, and it will at once be seen what compassion for suffering, and what power to relieve it, met in his tender, loving heart.**

**\* As the fig-tree stood by the way-side, and was therefore no man's property, no one was injured by its destruction; and being barren, no one would have been benefited by its continuance.**

**3. Our Lord's miracles *were wrought immediately by his own power*, and not like those of Moses, mediately by the power of God. In other words, Moses and the prophets only wrought miracles instrumentally by the power of the Almighty; the Lord Jesus wrought them by his own power as himself the mighty God. Moses could do nothing without his rod; Jesus had but to say, "I**

will; be thou clean," and the leprosy departed; "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead man issued out of the tomb.

v. But whilst treating of the execution of his prophetic office, we must not omit another noticeable point; that the Lord, *as a Prophet, predicted events that should come to pass*. Thus he prophesied his own sufferings, death, and resurrection, the treachery of Judas, the fall and recovery of Peter, the destruction of Jerusalem, the spread of the gospel among all nations, and his own second coming. To work miracles and to predict future events are the two grand credentials of a prophet. Both of them, therefore, were in an eminent degree possessed and manifested by our blessed Lord as the anointed Prophet of the Father.

vi. One more feature will close this branch of our subject. *Jesus sealed the truth of his prophetic mission by his sufferings and death*. Persecution and death was the frequent if not the usual treatment of the prophets. How pathetically does the Lord apostrophise Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets." (Matt. 23:37.) As a prophet, then, he too must suffer persecution and death, and that at Jerusalem: "Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and tomorrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke 13:33.) He sealed his mission with his blood. Faithful unto God, faithful unto man, he laid down his life not only as a sacrificing Priest, but as an attesting Prophet; and as by dying on the cross he fulfilled that part of his priestly office which his heavenly Father gave him to do, which was to be executed on earth, so, by the same precious death, he accomplished that part of his prophetic office which he was to perform in the flesh to the glory of God.

IV. We now pass on to consider *the present mode in which the Lord sustains the prophetic office in heaven*.

Our blessed Lord had a work given him to do on earth, as he himself declared: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34.) And thus, toward the conclusion of his earthly ministry, he could appeal to his heavenly Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4.) But though he did not bow his sacred head, nor lay down his precious life, until he could say, "It is finished," we must not thence conclude that the gracious Lord laid down his covenant offices when he breathed forth his spirit on the cross. We know that it was not so with his priestly office, for the Apostle says, "We

have" (now have) "such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" (Heb. 8:1;) and again, "And having" (that is, now having) "a High Priest over the house of God." (Heb. 10:21.) That Jesus, as "having an unchangeable priesthood," and being a priest "who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life," (Heb. 7:16, 24,) "ever liveth to make intercession for us," is the hope and help of all our approaches to the throne of grace. Thus we have the fullest, clearest evidence, without and within, in the word and in the heart, that Jesus is still executing his priestly office in the courts above. So also with regard to his kingly office. Though he never ceased to be King, for as he was "born King of the Jews," (Matt. 2:2,) so, even in death, the title put upon the cross proclaimed him "Jesus, the King of the Jews;" still, it was chiefly after his resurrection that the regal sceptre was put into his hand. Thus when he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, he said to them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) And this royal sceptre he still wields as crowned King in Zion, for "he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1 Cor. 15:25.) In a similar way, then, the blessed Lord did not lay down his prophetic office when he laid down his precious life, for the Church's glorious Head has never parted with one atom of his grace or his glory, but resumed it with his other covenant characters after his resurrection. Of this we have the clearest proof in the intercourse which he held with the disciples before his ascension. Thus, in his conversation with the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, we read that, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27.) And similarly; as regarded the rest of the disciples, we read, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24:45-48.) The opening of the understanding of the disciples to understand the Scriptures—what was this but fulfilling his office by which he still taught them after the resurrection as the anointed Prophet of the Father?

1. But as the blessed Lord was about to withdraw his personal presence from his disciples, and to go to the Father, that he might sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high, there was a necessity that whilst he still retained his prophetic office there should be a change in its mode of administration. This he fully and clearly opened up to his disciples in his last discourses with them, where he promised them "another Comforter," even "the Spirit of truth,"

who should "teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them." But though the mode of administration is changed, that it is still Jesus who teaches is plain from his own words: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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." (John 16:12, 13.) "*I have yet many things to say unto you.*" Does not this show that Jesus still had many things to say to his disciples? And when should he say them but from the right hand of the Father when he had baptized them with the Holy Ghost and with fire? Till that full and heavenly baptism they could not bear the weight of instruction which he had to impart. But again, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John 16:25.) What time was that of which he said that when it came he would show them plainly of the Father? Not between the resurrection and the ascension, for though he was seen of them forty days, and spake to the disciples of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, (Acts 1:3,) yet his visits were but occasional, and their minds were as yet unprepared for a fuller revelation of the Father. Clearly then the time was from the day of Pentecost, when they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. We see, then, plainly that though there was necessarily a change of ministration, yet that the blessed Lord still continued to fulfil his prophetic office after his ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high. To show the nature, and to give them an earnest of this change before he left the earth, "he breathed on his disciples, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:22.)

2. But as the Lord before his ascension gave his disciples a charge to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and as he promised to be with them even unto the end of the world, it was necessary that there should be a continued supply of the Holy Spirit to ratify that promise in raising up, commissioning, and qualifying a series of heaven-taught ministers to feed in each successive generation the Church of God. Our gracious Lord, therefore, as the Head of his body the Church, when he went up on high, received gifts for that express purpose. This was spoken by the mouth of prophecy many hundred years before its fulfilment: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Psa. 68:18.) But what these gifts were the Apostle unfolds in his divine commentary on that prediction: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led

**captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12.)**

**Jesus, then, is still the Prophet of his Church, and is still executing this office at the right hand of the Father. But his own personal ministry having ceased when he himself withdrew his presence from the earth, he carries it on now, 1, by sending forth his Spirit into the heart of his people to testify of himself; and, 2, by qualifying, commissioning, and sending his servants to preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.**

**V. But this brings us to our fifth and last point in our Meditations on the Prophetic Office of the Lord Jesus Christ, viz., *its bearing on the experience of the people of God*. Whatever the blessed Lord is in himself to his Church and people, it is only so far as he is spiritually and experimentally made known to the soul of each individual believer that any personal benefit or blessing is derived from him. Thus the Apostle declares that he "of God is made unto us wisdom;" (1 Cor. 1:30;) but if there be no discovery or revelation of him as such to our soul; if he do not himself teach us by his Spirit and grace; if we are not personally and individually taught and brought to sit at his feet and hear his word; if we do not take his yoke upon us, and learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart, he is not made "wisdom" to us as living members of his mystical body, nor do we derive any benefit or blessing from what he thus is to the Church of God. It is so with every other office that he sustains in the courts above. Is he a High Priest over the house of God? It is only as the efficacy of his atoning blood is made known to our conscience, and our prayers, as perfumed by his meritorious intercession at the right hand of the Majesty on high, enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, that we derive any personal benefit from his high priesthood. So with his kingly office. Unless he reign and rule in us, and sway his gentle and peaceable, yet powerful sceptre over our hearts, we are but his subjects in name, and are utter strangers to the influence of his constraining love. Indeed, all profession which does not spring out of a real, vital, experimental knowledge of, faith in, and love towards the Lord of life and glory, is but a miserable delusion, which, to those who live and die in it, will end in destruction and perdition. If, then, we profess to receive the Lord Jesus as our risen and glorified Prophet, how needful it is to search and examine what individual and personal influence this belief has upon our heart and conscience. To this point, then, we shall now direct our readers' attention.**

**We have already shown that our blessed Lord, as now sustaining the office of Prophet to his Church and people, teaches them by his Spirit. This is no detraction from, or derogatory to his prophetic office, for such is the Unity of the divine Essence, that though the Persons in the blessed Trinity are Three, yet the work of each is the work of all, and the work of all is the work of each. As the Apostle says, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (1 Cor. 12:4-6.) Thus, the Father teaches; (John 6:45;) the Son teaches; (John 16:25;) and the Holy Ghost teaches. (John 14:26.) But though in this sense each of the Persons in the glorious Trinity teaches the Church of God, yet we must bear in mind that they only teach it in consequence of the gracious Lord being the Mediator between God and men. Only because the Son of God has redeemed the Church by his own precious blood, is risen from the dead, gone up on high, and is in the presence of God for us, is any divine teaching imparted to the members of his mystical body. The gift of the Spirit depended on Jesus being glorified. (John 7:39.) It is still, then, he who speaks from heaven (Heb. 12:25) to the souls of his dear people, for his words, as applied by the blessed Spirit, fall with power upon their hearts, and thus become life and spirit to their fainting souls. Thus it is still true, "My sheep hear my voice," though the good Shepherd is enthroned in the highest bliss, and his bodily presence withdrawn from the earth.**

**But before we can personally realise the blessedness of having the Lord himself thus for our teacher, we must be made to feel and that deeply our ignorance, our darkness, our unbelief, our thorough helplessness to procure or produce any saving knowledge, either of himself or of any divine truth connected with him. This deep and abiding conviction of our ignorance and helplessness is the first fruit of the first moving of the blessed Spirit on the rude and wild chaos of our heart, enlightening the eyes of our understanding to see, quickening the soul into divine life to feel, and planting in the conscience that fear of the Lord which, as the beginning of wisdom, trembles at this discovery of our ruined condition.**

**But as it is so important to make straight paths for our feet here lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, let us consider this part of our subject a little more clearly and closely.**

**One of the four promises of the New Covenant is, "I will put my laws into**

their minds, and write them in their hearts." (Heb. 8:10.) This putting of his laws into their minds, and writing them in their hearts, is the fulfilment of the general promise to the Lord's family as opened up by the Lord himself, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." (John 6:45.) To share, then, in divine teaching is to possess a sure and blessed evidence of being a child of God. But the question still arises, What are the marks and what the effects of this divine teaching? In a day like the present when "many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased," it is easy to be deceived with the mere natural and notional knowledge of the letter of truth, and mistake light upon the word for the light of life in the soul. The distinction between them is better felt than described; for as you cannot explain light to a person born blind, or the sound of music to one that is deaf and dumb, so you cannot by mere words lay open the deep mystery of divine life in the heart; nor indeed do we claim to ourselves an unfailling discernment.

"For neither man nor angel can discern  
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks  
Invisible, except to God alone."—*Milton*.

But whether we can clearly discern the difference between natural and spiritual light or not, or whether we can or cannot clearly describe it, the fact, the grand, the all-important fact still remains the same; that there is in the regenerated family of God a light, a life, a teaching, a power, an unction, a knowledge, a savour, a heavenly blessing, which may be imitated and counterfeited, but still remains unapproached and unapproachable by all but the elect of God. This is "the anointing which teacheth of all things, and is truth and no lie," that peculiar "unction" which is "from the Holy One," and whereby the saint of God "knows all things." A few marks, then, and evidences of this divine teaching we shall attempt to show; but in so doing we shall chiefly confine ourselves to the peculiar bearing which the prophetic office of the risen Lord has on the work of grace.

1. *Conviction of sin*, it is evident, is the first mark and effect of divine teaching. "When he is come, he will reprove (margin "convince") the world of sin." (John 16:8.) This conviction we see in those who were pricked (or, as the word means, "pierced") in their heart under Peter's sermon; (Acts 2:37;) and in the case of the Philippian gaoler. Indeed, what knowledge can there be of salvation by the blood of the Lamb if guilt and condemnation have never ploughed up the heart and made deep wounds in the conscience? As Hart truly says"

**"What comfort can a Saviour bring  
To those who never felt their woe?  
A sinner is a sacred thing,  
The Holy Ghost has made him so."**

If we read, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound," we read also, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." (Psa. 94:12.) Thus to be taught out of the law, so as to know its curse, condemnation, guilt, fear, wrath, and bondage, is a blessing, for it breaks up the fallow ground of the heart, prevents sowing among thorns, and opens the furrows deep and wide to receive the pure seed of the gospel when it comes with power to the soul.

2. The second mark and effect of this divine teaching is that which the Lord himself has given: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, *cometh unto me.*" (John 6:45.) To come, then, to Jesus for pardon and peace, for mercy and deliverance, for teaching and instruction, is the Lord's own mark of being taught of God. And to show us that this is a spiritual coming under heavenly drawings, he declared, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." It is by these secret drawings of the Father that we come to Jesus. The eyes of our understanding are spiritually enlightened to see his glorious Person at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and we come to him as the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. As it stands on this sacred ground, at Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the blessed Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the soul; faith is raised up to believe in the things thus presented to view; hope anchors in them as divine realities within the veil; and love flows forth to embrace the Person and work of the Son of God as full of grace and glory, as all its salvation and all its desire.

But as we are now showing the special bearing which the prophetic office of Jesus has on the experience of a child of God, we shall trace this out as connected with his coming to Jesus as the risen and glorified prophet of the Most High. As such we have already shown that he now teaches us by his Spirit.

3. The blessed Spirit, then, as a needful preparation for his own divine

instruction, convinces us of our *ignorance*, of the veil of unbelief that is by nature spread over our heart, and of our utter inability to take it away. So great is this darkness, as a matter of personal inward experience, that, like the darkness in Egypt, it maybe "felt;" so deep this ignorance that all knowledge or capability of knowledge seems utterly gone; so strong, so desperate this unbelief that it seems as if thoroughly incurable. And yet amidst all this deep and dense cloud of ignorance, darkness and unbelief, rays and beams of light every now and then break through, which, though they seem at the time only to show the darkness and make it deeper, yet really are a guiding light to the throne of God and the Lamb. There Jesus sits enthroned in glory, not only as an interceding High Priest to save, not only as an exalted King to rule, but as a most gracious Prophet to teach. We read, "Nevertheless, when it (that is, Israel) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." (2 Cor. 3:16.) Thus, in soul experience, as the veil is felt to be thick and strong over the heart, there is a turning to the Lord with prayer and supplication that he would take it away; and as he, in answer to prayer, is pleased to do this, light is seen in his light, his truth drops with savour and sweetness into the soul, and the word of his grace sways and regulates the heart, lip, and life.

4. As, then, the veil of ignorance and unbelief is taken away, and the heart, under divine operations, becomes as the wax to the seal and the clay to the potter, there is raised up an earnest desire to *know the mind and will of God*, that we may be instructed into the one, and do the other. But Jesus, as the anointed Prophet of the Father, has revealed to us the mind and will of God. In his holy example, in his meek, humble, and devoted life, in his suffering death, and especially in his gracious words, as filled with the light and power of the Holy Ghost, Jesus has revealed the mind of God, for in seeing him we see the Father, and in hearing him we hear the Father. Now, the Apostle says, "We have the mind of Christ;" (1 Cor. 2:16;) and again, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5.) But this mind of Christ can only be in us by the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit, for "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;" and as thus taught and blessed of the Spirit, we become spiritually-minded, which is life and peace. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit;" (1 Cor. 6:17;) and as thus baptized into his Spirit, there is union and communion with him. Thus the Lord breathes, as it were, his mind into the soul, that it may see as with his eyes and feel as with his heart, hate what he hates, love what he loves, be warm for his truth, zealous for his honour, and earnest for his glory.

So also with *knowing and doing the will of God* from the heart. (Eph. 6:6.) It

can only be learnt at his feet who did it with a perfect heart, who submitted himself wholly to it in the gloomy garden and on the accursed tree; and who now, at the right hand of the Father, enables his people to do what that will commands, abstain from what that will forbids, and bear what that will imposes.

5. The *ministry of the gospel*, as flowing out of and connected with the prophetic office of the Lord Jesus, has here also a spiritual bearing on the experience of the saints of God. We have before shown that when Jesus went up on high he received gifts for men, and these gifts he poured forth in sending apostles, prophets, &c., to testify of himself. Thus every servant of Christ, whom he teaches by his Holy Spirit, and sends into the gospel field to labour in his service, is a witness to the present life of Jesus as still a Prophet to his Church and people in the courts above. When at Damascus gate Jesus spoke from heaven for the first time to his chosen vessel Saul, he said, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." (Acts 26:16.) "In the which *I will appear* unto thee." Do not these words show that by fresh and continued appearances of, and communications from Jesus, Paul's ministry was maintained? Again: "And he said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." (Acts 22:21.) He has not ceased, nor will he ever cease, to send labourers into his harvest; for his own gracious promise connected with the ministry of the gospel is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." When, then, he qualifies and sends one of his own servants, all his experience first and last, his knowledge, understanding, gifts, abilities, success, and blessing, are all so many standing testimonies that Jesus still speaks in and by him. What he is as a blessing to any of the living family he is by the grace of God and as if the spring were to cease to flow, or were diverted from its course, the brook at once would fail, so, were Jesus to withdraw the continual supplies of his grace to his servants, their gifts would wither, their ministry dry up, and they become like a summer watercourse, which, "when it is hot, is consumed out of its place." (Job 7:17.)

So also with the gracious *hearers* of the ministry of the word; they too have a share in the blessing which Jesus sends down as the risen Prophet of his Church. When the ministry of the word is made life and spirit to their soul, when the gospel comes "not in word only but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," when the hard and stony heart melts into

contrition and love, under the voice of the Beloved speaking through his sent servant, then the hearer as well as the minister has an evidence that Jesus still lives and lives to bless.

6. We might name also the *precepts* of the gospel which Jesus has prescribed, the *ordinances* of his house which he has instituted, the whole course of *holy obedience* which he has enjoined, as closely connected with his prophetic office. But as we purpose, with God's help and blessing, to view him in a subsequent article as King in Zion; and as this part of our subject will fall more conveniently under the consideration of his kingly office, we shall not now dwell on these points. We could not indeed, altogether pass them unmentioned by; but our present space as well as the reason already alleged prohibit us from entering further upon them.

7. We might also instance as closely connected with an experience of the prophetic office of Jesus the *inward possession and practical exemplification of that wisdom* which is "from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Indeed all that in a believer is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; all his excellence\* as a saint, all his praise in the churches—all, all flow out of his union and communion with Jesus as a risen Head, and are all connected with the teaching which he gives, and the supply of grace which he ministers. How fully, how blessedly is the whole of this divine teaching summed up in Paul's prayer for the saints of God at Ephesus: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; 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 fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Eph. 1:17-23.)

\* The word translated "virtue" (Phil. 4:8) means properly "excellence."

With this prayer, which may the Lord fulfil in our readers' hearts and ours,

**we close our Meditations on the prophetical office of Jesus.**

### **3.—THE LORD JESUS AS THE ENTHRONED KING OF ZION**

#### **I.**

**In our past Meditations we have, though in scanty measure and with feeble pen, attempted to set before our readers a few leading features of that surpassing grace and glory which the Lord Jesus Christ bears as anointed of the Father to be the interceding High Priest and the teaching Prophet of his Church and people. We now approach the consideration of that still greater and more glorious title which he wears as *Zion's enthroned King*.**

**But O, at the very outset, how unworthy, as well as unable, do we feel ourselves to be to set forth in any suitable, any becoming manner the glory of that exalted Sovereign who sits at the right hand of the Father as Head over all things to the Church! When the sun veils its rays behind a cloud we can look upon its milder glories with undazzled eye. But who can gaze on its meridian beams in all their undimmed splendour? Thus when the Son of God veiled the brightness of his eternal glory by assuming a tabernacle of flesh, faith can view him as a suffering yet sacrificing High Priest in the garden and on the cross with undazzled, though with sympathising, eye. In a similar way, when Jesus still speaks as a Prophet in the word of his grace: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," faith can now sit at his feet and hear his words without being overwhelmed with his glory. But when we look up and attempt to view him sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high in all his exalted dignity and power as King of kings and Lord of lords, then we feel as if dazzled and overborne with a sight and sense of his surpassing glory. In the days of his flesh, the beloved disciple could lean on the bosom of Jesus and stand by his cross; but when in Patmos' lonely isle he appeared in his majesty so that "his eyes were as a flame of fire," and "his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength," John fell at his feet as dead. Yet if he has made us willing in the day of his power, has brought us to his feet in all humility to touch the sceptre of his grace and own him Lord of all, we may, in company with his saints, "speak of the glory of his kingdom and talk of his power, to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom." (Psa. 145:11, 12.) And as we have undertaken to set forth the covenant characters of the Lord Jesus, we must not now sink under the sense either of his glory or of our own insufficiency, and throw aside our pen as we are tempted to do, but endeavour, as the Lord may enable us, to trace out what is revealed to us in the word of truth of his present dignity as *Zion's exalted King*.**

**But as we desire to present the subject before the mind of our readers with as much clearness and distinctness as possible, we shall arrange our views and Meditations upon it in the following order:**

- I. The eternal purpose of God the Father to glorify his dear Son, and exalt him as Lord and King.**
- II. The execution of this purpose in the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of the Son of God.**
- III. The nature, object, extent, and duration of his kingdom.**
- IV. Its future development and glorious manifestation.**
- V. The practical and experimental bearing and influence which the royal power and authority of Jesus have on believing hearts.**

**I. To glorify his dear Son, to set him at his own right hand in kingly majesty and sovereign dominion over all things in heaven and earth and under the earth, was the eternal purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. As the Son of the Father in truth and love, Jesus is "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his Person." That this glory, then, of the Father might be seen and reverently adored by the sons of men; that a view of it here by faith and hereafter by sight might fill millions of redeemed saints with immortal joy; that all the love, beauty, blessedness, holiness, and happiness of a Triune Jehovah might shine forth in the glorified humanity of the Son of God; and that by virtue of their union with him he might dwell in his elect as his Father dwelleth in him, that thus they all might be one, (John 17:21, 23,)—this was that mystery of eternal wisdom, love, and grace which was hidden in the bosom of God from before the foundation of the world. For this purpose all things were created; and that this purpose might be fully accomplished are they still preserved in being. Redemption by atoning blood being a part—an all-important part of this wondrous scheme, Jesus suffered, bled, died, and rose again to fulfil it, and now sits at the right hand of the Father in royal dignity and power, fully and finally to accomplish all that yet remains to be done.**

**But that we may not darken counsel by words without knowledge, we shall endeavour, as far as we possibly can, to take the Scriptures for our sole guide. It would it become us to seek to penetrate with unhallowed gaze into the purposes of God were they not revealed in the word of his grace; for though "secret things," that is, things purposely hidden from view, "belong unto the Lord, yet those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children**

for ever." (Deut. 29:29.)

**i. In opening then this subject, we shall tread as closely as we can in the footprints of revelation, and commence with the witness of the *New Testament*. We will take first *our Lord's own testimony of himself*.**

**1. At the last supper, just before the gloomy hour when he was to pass into Gethsemane, Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, *as my Father hath appointed unto me*; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:28-30.)**

**2. So when he stood before Pilate, and the Roman governor in all the plenitude of his power and authority asked, "Art thou a king then?" what was his meek yet firm reply? "Thou sayest," that is, sayest truly, "*that I am a king*. To this end was I born." But to show that his kingdom was not of this world, he had previously declared, "Now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36, 37.)**

**3. To these plain testimonies of the Lord concerning himself we may add the promise given to Mary by the angel Gabriel: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32, 33.)**

**4. In full accordance, then, with this angelic testimony, as "King of the Jews" was he born and worshipped by the wise men of the East; (Matt. 2:2, 11;) as "King of Israel" was he owned and worshipped by his believing disciples, (John 1:49,) and as "King of the Jews" was he crucified, and proclaimed as such in the three then best known languages, that Hebrew, Greek, and Roman might read his title\* firm and good, standing on high in the fixed purpose of God, in spite of protesting chief priests in whose heart the gnawing pang of guilty fear would fain have altered the title to a more qualified declaration.**

**\* We do not remember to have seen the remark, though sufficiently obvious, that it was this title that arrested the attention and was blessed to the soul of the dying thief, the Holy Ghost arising up faith in his heart that Jesus then and there crucified before his eyes was indeed the Son of God and King of Israel, and as such had a kingdom beyond death and the grave.**

ii. But we shall now direct our readers' attention to the intimations given in *the Old Testament* of the kingly reign and authority of Jesus. Declarations of greater or less clearness of the eternal purpose of God to give his dear Son a kingdom are scattered through the whole of these scriptures with so liberal a hand that we can only select a few.

1. The first clear intimation of it, if we except the typical appearance of Melchizedek, king of Salem (Gen. 14:18,) and the prophecy of dying Jacob that "Shiloh would come, and to him should the gathering of the people be," (Gen. 49:10,) is contained in the thanksgiving song of Hannah: "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them; the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his *king*, and exalt the horn of his *anointed*."\* (1 Sam. 2:10.)

\* This is the first mention of the title which Jesus was to bear as the "Messiah," or the "anointed" Prophet, Priest, and King of his people—that being the word in the original. Its second mention is in Psa. 2:2.

2. But the clearest intimation given to the Church not only that she should have a King but that God's own eternal Son should be that King is contained in that Psalm of Psalms, Psa. 2, where the fixed decree is brought to light and written as with a beam of dazzling glory to assure the friends and confound the enemies of the Son of God. Sitting upon the throne of his glory and looking forth to that time when counsel should be taken against the Lord and against his anointed, the God of all power and might asks by his Spirit, "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." (Psa. 2:1, 2.) Their rebellious hearts cried out, "We will not have this man to reign over us. Let us break these bands asunder, and cast away those cords which would bind us in any subjection or in any submission to the Person and work, the reign or rule of the Son of God." But vain is their rage, idle their counsel. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." "Yet (in spite of all their wrath and rebellion) have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Then the Son meekly answers, "I will declare the decree." This decree was the result of the eternal counsels of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, hidden in the bosom of a Triune God from before the foundation of the world, and then first brought to light in the page of revelation from his mouth who, as revealing the mind and will of the Father, is eminently and emphatically "the Word." "The Lord hath said unto

me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Then the Father speaks: "Not only have I set thee—already set thee, as my King upon my holy hill of Zion," but, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." In this Psalm, then, we have the first as well as fullest and clearest view given to the Old Testament Church of the purpose of the Father to exalt the Son of his love to be Lord and King.

3. **Psa. 8**, as opened up and commented upon by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, gives us a view of the humiliation of the Son of God and his subsequent exaltation. "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." (Heb. 2:6-8.) The Apostle, in his spiritual interpretation of this Psalm, brings Jesus before our eyes as the man who was "made a little" (or for "a little while," *margin*.) "lower than the angels"—as indeed he was by assuming the flesh and blood of the children, human nature being in itself intrinsically inferior to angelic. But the Holy Ghost in the Psalm,\* as interpreted by the Apostle, looked not only beyond the original thought of the Psalmist, as he first contemplated the starry heavens, in all their midnight oriental splendour, and then viewed man in his first creation, as made a little lower than the angels, and yet crowned with glory and honour, as invested with dominion over the works of God's hands—the Holy Ghost, in inspiring this Psalm, looked, we say, not only beyond this primary intention of the Psalmist, but also beyond the humiliation of the blessed Lord to his glorification at the right hand of the Father, and testified to his regal dignity by the words, "Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."

\* We have often thought, and indeed may say we fully believe, that the inspired writers of the Old Testament did not themselves always fully see or understand the meaning of their own language. The Holy Ghost so influenced their mind and guided their pen that fuller, deeper truth was lodged in and conveyed by their words than they knew of. Thus when David cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psa. 22:1,) he was crying out under the hidings of God's countenance from himself. But the Holy Ghost had a deeper meaning by them, even the dolorous cry of the suffering Son of God. The inspired penmen knew indeed that the sufferings and glory of Messiah

were intimated by the Holy Ghost, but their views of both were dim and feeble. Yet they sought to penetrate into the mind of the Spirit, as Peter speaks: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Pet. 1:10, 11.)

**4. A similar testimony was given by the Father to his sovereign purpose to exalt the Son of his love in those memorable words which the Lord himself quoted in the days of his flesh, (Matt. 22:41-45,) "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Psa. 110:1.) The right hand is the place of dignity, power, and authority. To set his dear Son there in all the grace and glory, power and authority of his Person as God-man—the Son of God incarnate, that in him all the perfections of Deity might shine, that the invisible, self-existent I AM, who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto, might come forth, as it were, out of this unapproachable shroud of dazzling, overwhelming light, and appear in a form in and under which he might be seen, known, believed in, loved, worshipped, and adored by millions of redeemed men and elect angels, was a part—a leading and principal part of that "counsel of the Lord which standeth for ever," of "the thoughts of his heart" which will endure "to all generations." (Psa. 33:11.)**

**5. But though the Psalms, and especially such as Psa. 72, 89, 96, 98, 149, contain intimations more or less clear of the fixed purpose of God to set his dear Son on the throne of his glory, yet nowhere in the inspired page do we meet with such plain and positive declarations of this eternal counsel as in the prophet Isaiah. The promised reign of Messiah shines with steady light all through the pages of Isaiah; but, we shall direct our readers' attention chiefly to chap. 49, which contains, so to speak, a holy dialogue between the Father and the Son on the subject of his work of redeeming love, and the reward promised him in consequence. The chapter opens with the address of the Son to the isles, as preparatory to the expression of his complaint, and the Father's gracious answer: "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." (Isa. 49:1-3.) The blessed Lord here**

prophetically intimates to the distant isles—may we not say, to our own favoured isle among them?—his then future incarnation as called from the womb to be God's servant, and as even from the bowels of his virgin mother bearing a name which should be above every name. He then speaks of the words of authority and power which the Father had already in eternal purpose given him to kill and make alive in making his mouth "like a sharp two-edged sword;" and then brings to view the protecting hand of his heavenly Father in hiding him from all the malice of earth and hell in the shadow of his hand. He next intimates, that the Father,—who, by giving him a prepared body, had made him "a polished shaft," (*i.e.*, a sharpened arrow,) would hide him in his quiver till the appointed time when he would send him forth from his right hand to execute judgment; for the Father had, in eternal counsels and covenant transactions, said to him, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."\* But foreseeing his rejection by Israel after the flesh—that he would come unto his own and his own would receive him not, he prophetically utters the language of complaint: "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." Still meekly submitting to his Father's will, and finding a sacred joy in leaving in his hands the result of his sufferings and work, he adds, "Yet surely my judgment," (*i.e.*, the decision of my righteous cause,) "is with the Lord, and my work," (or "reward,"\*\* *margin*,) "with my God." But even if Israel after the flesh should reject him, this would not alter his glory: "And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." (Isa. 69:5.) The Father then answers: "And he said, 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 unto the end of the earth." (ver. 6.) Here is contained that gracious, that blessed promise of which we Gentiles are now enjoying the fulfilment. Should Israel after the flesh reject, yea, crucify their promised Messiah,—will that foreseen rejection disappoint the purposes of Jehovah? No. It is already foreknown, already fore-provided for. The incarnate Son shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. To the poor Gentiles, despised and abhorred by the proud Jews as out of the covenant, and therefore without God and without hope in the world, he shall be a light to guide elect sinners into the way of peace, yea, shall himself be God's "own salvation unto the end of the earth." Then comes that glorious promise of the exaltation of his dear Son as Lord and King, of which the first fulfilment began when Jesus, after his ascension, took the throne, but of which the full accomplishment awaits the further unfolding of

**the purposes of God.**

\* We need not suppose that these words contain an exact representation, or are a literal transcript of the solemn transactions between the Father and the Son; but they convey to our mind, under a prophetic form, certain realities which it was the eternal purpose of God to accomplish, and which have been already partially and will one day be wholly fulfilled.

\*\* The word translated here "work" is rendered by "wages," Lev. 19:13, and "reward," Psa. 109:20. It means literally "reward for work," and thus blessedly represents the work of redemption by the Son of God and the reward given him. See Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 12:2.

**With this promise, being unusually pressed for time and room, we shall conclude our present paper: "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee." (Isa. 49:7.)**

## **II.**

**It is sweet to view by the eye of living faith the eternal purposes and fixed counsels of the Father to exalt and glorify the Son of his love. That Jesus should be eternally glorified; that he should wear the crown so anciently promised, so righteously won; that he should sway, as if with those very hands that were nailed to the cross, his righteous sceptre over all things in heaven and in earth—a sceptre of grace to his friends, a rod of iron to his foes; and thus fully accomplish the counsels of God's heart and the sure word of his lips, is the desire and joy of all who love his name. To them, therefore, the contemplation of the fixed purposes of God to exalt his dear Son and put all things under his feet is full of sweetness and blessedness. An "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure;" deep counsels of eternal wisdom; fixed purposes of grace and glory; the word and oath of a God who cannot lie; the infinite knowledge of an omniscient, and the boundless power of an omnipotent Sovereign,—these deep mysteries, which are hidden from the wise and prudent, are revealed to the babes who long to be taught and love to learn. They see and feel what a sin-worn world the present scene is; what wreck and ruin everywhere meet the enlightened eye; what misery, what**

crime, what contempt of all divine authority; what rebellion against every restraint of law or conscience; what open defiance of all check on pride or passion, everywhere abound. Viewing, then, this state of things, and seeing, as wealth increases and population advances, what an influx of foreign ways and manners, of modes of thought and reckless ungodliness, seems more and more rushing in as with an overflowing tide, the child of grace is almost tempted to lose sight of Him who sits above the waterfloods, and to feel or fear as if the god and prince of this world were the real master of the scene, and the great controller of events. As a relief against such unbelieving, God-dishonouring, infidel thoughts, faith is sometimes enabled to look through and beyond all these dark mists of the valley to those unclouded heavens where the Son of God sits at the right hand of power. The present reign of Jesus cannot be seen by the eye of sense. Indeed we have no evidence that Jesus reigns at all but by watching and discerning his hand in providence, believing the word of his grace, or feeling the power of his resurrection in the heart. These are the three witnesses against all the persuasions of sense and the cavillings of the reasoning mind,—the grand sustaining props of the soul when the floods of ungodly men make it afraid. But the chief witness is the sure word of promise, the sworn oath of the Father to the Son, as recorded in the Scriptures of truth: "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." (Psa. 89:3, 4; 34-36.) As, then, Abraham, the father of the faithful, "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform," so faith rests upon the sure promises of God that the throne of his dear Son shall be established for ever. Were sense and reason not opposed to the fulfilment of this sure word of promise, there would be no need of a faith like Abraham's—against hope to believe in hope.

Meanwhile, may it be our happy portion to touch for ourselves the sceptre of his grace, to submit to his sovereign will, and whoever may say, "We will not have this man to reign over us," to yield ourselves to his unseen, yet not unfelt authority as Lord and King in our hearts and consciences.

But as we have shown, in our last paper, from the word of truth, the eternal purpose of God the Father to glorify his dear Son and exalt him as Lord and King, we shall now consider, with his help and blessing,

## **II. The *execution* of this purpose in the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of the Son of God.**

**Our blessed Lord, speaking of himself, said, "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.) Under this figure, the corn of wheat, the Lord intimated his death and resurrection, and the fruit which was to spring out of them. Using the same figure, the Apostle says, "But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him." (1 Cor. 15:38.) Thus, in order to carry out God's eternal purposes to glorify his dear Son, it was needful that he should take a body chosen and prepared for him by the Father. He was to be exalted to regal dignity and power, not merely as the Son of God, but as the Son of man, or rather as the Son of God and the Son of man in one Person. In this mysterious and most blessed union of Deity and humanity in one glorious Person lie hidden boundless treasures of grace and glory. To be a King he became incarnate. In reply, therefore, to Pilate's question, "Art thou a King, then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest (that is, sayest truly,) that I am a King. To this end was I born," (John 18:37.) The road to royalty, to a throne which should endure as the days of heaven, lay through the Virgin's womb. The eternal Son of God must become in time a man, that he might reign as God-man for ever and ever. He must come down to earth, that all power might be given unto him in heaven and in earth. (Matt. 28:18.) He must be made lower than the lowest, that he might become higher than the highest; must serve, that he might rule; wash his disciples' feet, that a crown of glory might be put upon his head; take upon him the form of a servant, that God might "highly exalt him and give 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." (Phil. 2:7-10.) Through the disobedience and transgression of man, created in the image of God to be his representative on earth, God's lower creation became marred and defaced. Sin, the spoiler, entered Paradise. With sin entered death; and with death disorder, wreck, and ruin spread themselves far and wide over this once fair domain which God himself pronounced very good, until earth has become a very Aceldama—a field of blood. How dishonourable, then, would it have been to the ever-living God had Satan been thus permitted to triumph. Would it not have been the boast of devils and the wonder of angels, that the arch-fiend of hell should have, as it were, outwitted by his skill all the wisdom of Omniscience, and defeated by his power all the strength of Omnipotence? To destroy, we all know, is easier than to create. A child may, by accident or**

thoughtlessness, in a moment break a priceless vase; a madman set fire to the accumulated wealth of ages; a vile assassin take at one thrust a life precious to a whole nation. But if to destroy be so much easier than to create, how much more difficult is it to restore what is destroyed! What skilful hand shall repair the shattered vase? What art can give us back the precious manuscripts, the antique cameos, the statues of a Phidias, the paintings of a Raphael? What Promethean skill renew the murdered statesman's life? Here the skill of man fails; here the mocking devil seems to triumph, and to gather up fresh strength to go on with that infernal work whence he borrows his name, "Abaddon," the destroyer. (Rev. 9:11, *margin.*) But where man falters in despair and Satan shouts in triumph, the wisdom of the All-wise, the might of the Almighty, the grace of the All-gracious, eminently shine and display themselves with infinite lustre before the eyes of all created intelligences. Over man Satan prevailed by craft and infernal skill; but by man—by that very nature which he sought utterly to destroy, shall he be baffled, defeated, overwhelmed with shame and everlasting contempt. He was allowed to bind wretched man in the chain of sin till the iron entered into his soul; but by man shall everlasting chains be bound round him unto the judgment of the great day. As Apollyon, the destroyer, shall he destroy the image of God in man; but by man shall that image be restored, and not only so, but raised to a glory, a brightness, and a lustre to which it never could have attained by its original creation. Pride and envy, inflamed by desperate malice against God and man that human nature, inferior to angelic by creation, should be promoted to the favour from which he had fallen, urged on Satan to plot the deadly deed. He would ruin and destroy that nature. The image of God should not shine upon earth. He would mar and deface it; he would pollute with his own infernal spawn the very nature on which that image had been stamped; would debase it to the lowest hell; would fill it with bestiality and filth, blood and crime, till, as sunk below the brute creation, God should loathe and abhor the work of his own hands. In this hellish plot he was, in the inscrutable wisdom of God, allowed so far to succeed as to make the world what we now see it, a hideous wreck and ruin, festering and sweltering, like a huge carcass, in its own corruption, till the burning flames of hell seem to be the only place into which it can be cast out of the sight and presence of a God of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity. But O the depths of eternal wisdom and surpassing grace! Into this very time-worn scene of sin and woe, just as the spring-tide of iniquity had risen to its utmost height, and the whole world seemed flooded with evil as with the waters of a second deluge into this wrecked and ruined world, and what was far worse, amidst these degraded and debased wild beasts of men, the Son of God came in the flesh. From the

bosom of the Father did the Son of his love come forth to repair the waste places, the desolations of many generations. On this very sin-stricken earth, this abode of misery and crime, did the feet of the Son of God in our nature rest. This vale of tears he trode with holy steps, in the world but not of it, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. According to ancient promise, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law." (Gal. 4:4.) In that sacred humanity—real flesh and blood, the flesh and blood of the children, though not like theirs fallen, but holy and pure, the eternal Son of the Father stood in the gap and repaired the breach, took a holy portion of that nature which sin and Satan had defiled into union with his own divine Person, obeyed in it the law, enduring the curse, offered up his holy body and soul as a sacrifice for sin, laid down the life which for that purpose he had taken, and raising his incorruptible body from the tomb, took it with him into the courts of bliss, there to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. O the wisdom and power of God! O the unfathomable depths of mercy and grace! O the unsearchable treasures of goodness and love! O the opening visions of eternal glory! Satan baffled! Sin blotted out! The image of God restored! Human nature raised to inconceivable dignity by its personal union with the divine Person of the Son of God! The fallen Church washed, justified, sanctified, and glorified with all the glory of her Head and Husband, and an eternal revenue of glory brought to a Triune Jehovah—to God the Father for his eternal purposes of wisdom and love; to God the Son for his unspeakable condescension in the work of redemption; to God the Holy Ghost for his forming the sacred humanity of Jesus, and sanctifying the elect of God to know his grace, be conformed to his image, and partake of his glory.

But carried away by the grace and glory of a theme so precious, we have rather anticipated our subject. We proposed to show the connection between the incarnation and death of Jesus and his exaltation to royal dignity. We have thus far, then, showed that, in the boundless depths of the wisdom of God, his dear Son took flesh that as our great High Priest he might put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. But the same boundless wisdom and grace which provided the sacrifice assured him of a crown as his reward. This was a part of "the joy set before him, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame." Death was not only necessary as a part—a main part of the sacrifice which he, as Priest, offered, but as a requisite for the glory with which he, as King, should be crowned. In fact all his three offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, required to be sustained and magnified by his sufferings and death. What an example of meekness and martyrdom, what lessons of suffering and

**patient endurance of the deepest agony and shame are seen in the dying Prophet; what precious blood in a dying Priest; what grace in a dying King! How this last shone forth so conspicuously that the dying thief acknowledged him as King, and begged for an interest in his kingdom.**

**But there was another reason why the road to the throne lay through the valley of the shadow of death. Our blessed Lord had "to destroy death and him that had the power of death, that is the devil." But this was "through death." (Heb. 2:14.) Through sin death had come into the world, and had no sooner entered than it set up its throne on the earth, for "it reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them (that is, infants) who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," which was a voluntary act of disobedience, but as overwhelmed in his original sin, they had fallen under the power and authority of the grim king of terrors. The sceptre had therefore to be wrung out of his hand. But, according to the eternal appointments of infinite wisdom, this could only be by the Son of God submitting to die. He therefore took a nature which could die—not in itself mortal, but capable of dying by a voluntary act. No man took his life from him. The Lord of life could not be robbed of life by the creatures to whom he had himself given breath. But he could lay down the life which he had taken by a voluntary submission to the reign of death. He could thus snatch the sceptre from his grasp, destroy and disannul him, and by the same act of meritorious obedience break to pieces the reign of Satan, "who had the power of death," as ever terrifying by it the children of God, whom by this terror he held in cruel bondage. It deserves our utmost attention and prayerful consideration to see, by the eye of faith, the display of wisdom and power shining forth in the way in which the all-wise God sent his dear Son "to destroy," or as the word is in the original, to unloose "the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8.) Satan had, so to speak, spun a ravelled knot when he cast the cords of sin round man's heart. This tangled and tight drawn knot could not be cut through as by a sword of omnipotent power; but had by infinite wisdom and patience to be unravelled through its whole length. The work which Satan had done was to be undone. Disobedience had to be repaired by obedience—the voluntary obedience of the Son of God, and therefore of infinite value. Sin had to be atoned for by sacrifice—the sacrifice of the nature which had sinned, in union with the Person of the Son of God, and therefore deriving from it unspeakable efficacy. Death had to be destroyed by the ever-living Son of God submitting to die. The law must be magnified by being obeyed by him who by his divine Person is above law. The Lawgiver must be the law-fulfiller. He who is the ever-blessed One must be made a curse; and the holy One of Israel, who know**

no sin, must be "made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Who will set the briars and thorns against me in battle?" asked the Lord; "I would go through them," is his answer. (Isa. 27:4.) So our blessed Lord went through these thorns and briars set against him in battle. He thoroughly went through all that he undertook; and by going through unravelled the work of Satan.

Let us explain this more distinctly, as a point full of truth and blessedness. Thus he went through *temptation*—wholly through, for he "was in all points tempted like as we are," (Heb. 4:15,) and by going through every possible temptation which can beset us, threaded, so to speak, the whole avenue of temptation from beginning to end. So he went through the whole of the *law*, rendering a perfect obedience to it in every demand of unfailing love to God and his neighbour. So he went through the whole of *suffering*, for "he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," experiencing every possible form of suffering that was compatible with a holy nature. And, in a sense, he went through the whole of *sin*—not as a personal transgressor, for he was perfectly holy in body and soul, "a lamb without blemish and without spot," but by imputation, feeling the weight, grief, and burden of all the sins of his elect people. So also did he go through the whole *wrath* of God, for he drank the cup of his indignation against sin to the very dregs. We can only glance at these things, but they are full of the deepest import, and might, with God's help and blessing, form a theme of most fruitful meditation, for they embrace the whole of the work which the Father gave him to do.

But in thus going through, and by going through undoing the works of the devil, it is desirable to bear in mind and have, as it were, before our eyes that the blessed Lord went through all that we have mentioned in his *complex Person as God-man*. Thus his sacred humanity, in union with his Deity, went through the law, temptation, suffering, and death—the human nature tasting each and all in their utmost intensity, but the divine sustaining, dignifying, ennobling, and bestowing unutterable value, merit, and validity upon every thought, word, and act of the suffering and obedience of the holy humanity, for there was but one Person, though two natures, and therefore all the acts were personal acts. As an illustration of this, look at the actings of our own soul and body. These are distinct, but as united in one person are viewed as one. Thus, as our blessed Lord went through the whole work which the Father gave him to do, his Deity, being in union with his obeying, suffering humanity, stamped each successive movement, as he went through it, with all the value and validity of Godhead. If this is difficult to understand—or at least realise,

for who can understand it?—revert to our figure. Is not the mind of an artist stamped upon his work? Does not our soul impress itself and express itself by our body? So Deity stamped value and validity on all the acts of the Redeemer's humanity. This is beautifully alluded to, Psa. 45, in the description of the bridal garments of the Church as the queen: "The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of *wrought gold*. She shall be brought unto the King in *raiment of needlework*." The gold was to be wrought into her clothing, the raiment to be of needlework, intimating that her robe of justifying righteousness was wrought, as it were, as in needlework, stitch by stitch; yet that every thread was embroidered with gold. Here we have the thread of the humanity in union with the gold of Deity, and yet each in such close union that the thread is but one. In gold thread the beauty, the value is in the gold; yet how close the union. Gold by itself could not be made into embroidery. So Deity cannot suffer, bleed, or die; but humanity can in union with it. It is this union of Deity with humanity which made the work of redeeming love so unspeakably glorious, and so meritoriously efficacious. As Hart says:

"Almighty God sighed human breath."

It is indeed a mystery; but "great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." O glorious mystery!"

"The highest heavens are short of this;  
'Tis deeper than the vast abyss;  
'Tis more than thought can e'er conceive,  
Or hope expect, or faith believe."

Yet what or where would redemption have been, unless Deity had imparted value and validity to every thought, word, and act of the obedient, suffering humanity.

Our blessed Lord, then, passed through death seemingly conquered, but really a conqueror; seemingly overthrown by Satan, but really his overthrower; seemingly covered with shame, but only to be crowned with glory and honour; seemingly under the curse of God, but really enduring the curse that he might be made a blessing; as a servant, obedient unto death, for crucifixion was the mode of punishment for slaves, yet that he might be exalted in that very nature which there suffered, bled, and died to a throne of immortal glory. Thus, too, he lay in the grave, that as by dying he might rob death of his sting,

so by the tomb he might spoil the grave of its victory. But death could not hold the Lord of life, nor the grave enchain the hand that held the keys of hell, as the Apostle preached, and as faith believes: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts 2:24.) He fought, he won, and to him as the overcomer was the crown given: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 2:21.)

But the question may arise in the mind, *When*, that is, at what particular period, did the blessed Lord enter upon his kingly office? We have already shown that in his other offices there was an *initial* entrance before his *full* assumption of them. Thus, as Priest, he entered initially into the priestly office at his circumcision; as Prophet, he entered initially into his prophetic office when, a child in the temple, he sat among the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. But he did not enter fully upon his prophetic office till after his baptism, nor upon the priestly till he consecrated himself in the prayer recorded John 17. In a similar way he entered *initially* upon his kingly office at his birth, for he was "born King of the Jews;" (Matt. 2:2;) but he did not enter *actually* upon it until after his resurrection, for then it was that "all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) But it was more especially when he went up on high, and sat down at the right hand of the Father that the sceptre of royal dignity and power was put into his hands. In Psa. 24 we have a beautiful description of Zion's anointed King entering into the courts of bliss as he returned victorious from the conquest over sin, death, and hell: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory." Then did God highly exalt him, and give him a name which is above every name.

### III.

In bringing before our readers our thoughts and Meditations on the Kingly Office of the Lord Jesus Christ we have thus far attempted to trace out, in full harmony, we trust, with the word of truth, two prominent, though as yet preliminary, features of its peculiar character, and have shown, 1. The *eternal*

*purpose* of God the Father to glorify his dear Son, and exalt him to his own right hand as Lord and King; and, 2. The *execution* of this purpose in the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of our adorable Redeemer.

The point at which we somewhat abruptly stopped in our last chapter was the *exact period* at which the blessed Lord entered upon the full exercise of this royal dignity and power. We drew, as our readers will doubtless remember, a distinction between the initial and the full assumption of his kingly authority, and showed, from his own words to the disciples, that "all power in heaven and in earth" was not given unto him until after his resurrection and just antecedently to his ascension and glorification. Until then, though his Son, he was the Servant of the Father, meekly doing his will, and finishing the work which he had given him to do. (Isa. 42:1; 49:3; John 17:4; Heb. 10:7.) Even among his disciples, in the days of his flesh, he was "as he that serveth;" (Luke 22:27;) and "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8.) He was then "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" who "hid not his face from shame and spitting." Out of his mouth there went not then "a sharp two-edged sword," (Rev. 1:16,) but "prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears." (Heb. 5:7.) "His visage" then, as viewed in vision by the evangelical prophet, "was so marred more than any man;" (Isa. 52:14;) for "his countenance" was not yet, as seen by the beloved disciple in the Isle of Patmos, "as the sun shineth in his strength." (Rev. 1:16.) Lots were then cast on his vesture; (Matt. 27:35;) for on it was not yet written, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev. 19:16.) The kiss which touched his sacred cheek was the kiss of a base traitor, (Matt. 26:49,) not that of loving, loyal, submissive allegiance. (1 Sam. 10:1; Psa. 2:12.) The crown of thorns then pressed his brow, not the diadem of glory; a reed, not a sceptre, was put into his right hand; and the knee bowed before him was not the knee "of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," but the knee of mockery and scorn. (Matt. 27:29; Phil. 2:10.) Yet was there a joy set before him; and this was the joy of being "set at the right hand of God 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 in that which is to come;" in seeing of the travail of his soul, and having "all things put under his feet, and made the Head over all things to the Church." Eph. 1:20-22.) But when exalted to the throne of glory, then was fulfilled the promise, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." (Psa. 110:1, 2.)

**This present kingly power is mystically represented in the word of truth by his sitting on Mount Zion; for that is "the city of the great King," (Psa. 48:2,) and as such typified the royal dignity and sway of Jesus.\* As thus mystically his royal residence, Zion became the perfection of beauty, for out of it God had shined; and out of it now sends forth the rod, or sceptre, of his strength. (Psa. 50:2; 110:2.)**

**The peculiar glory and blessedness of this exaltation of Jesus is that it is in our nature. As one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, he ever was King; for "by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. 1:16, 17.) He who created all things must be the King of all things; he who is before all things must rule all things, as their rightful Sovereign; he by whom all things consist, that is, continue in daily being, must needs ever sway over them his protecting sceptre. But this is not the regal dignity which Jesus now wears, nor the peculiar sceptre put by the Father into his hands. The peculiar glory of his kingly office is that the sceptres held by *human* hands—by those very hands through which the nails of the cross were driven. Yes; that very hated Nazarene, against whom "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together;" that very abhorred Jesus, against whom the maddened crowd, in their bitter enmity, cried, "Crucify him, crucify him;" that despised One of men, and rejected of the people, whom they, in their judicial blindness, did "esteem stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" that "very Man of Sorrows," who poured out his soul unto death, and who was numbered with the transgressors, now seated on his throne of glory, reigns with sovereign sway, and must reign until he hath put down all rule and all authority and power. This exaltation to the right hand of power was the promised reward of his humiliation, sufferings, and death. (Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 12:2; Rev. 3:21.) But as we shall have occasion to enter more fully into this subject before we close our Meditations, we shall now proceed to our next point:**

**III. The nature, object, extent, and duration of this royal dignity, as now invested in the Person of the risen, ascended, and glorified Son of God.**

**i. And first, the *nature* of his kingdom. This, like the place where it is exercised, and whence it issues its royal mandates, is *heavenly*. Our blessed**

**Lord, when he stood before Pilate's judgment bar, declared that his "kingdom was not of this world." It is, therefore, a kingdom, not earthly but heavenly; and as such possesses peculiar characteristics which entirely distinguish it from all other kingdoms.**

**We will take a glance, therefore, at some of the peculiar features of this heavenly kingdom:**

**1. It is eminently a *spiritual* kingdom. When our blessed Lord went up on high, he received gifts for men, as is declared in those exulting words of the Psalmist, "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men,\* yea, for the rebellious also; that the Lord God might dwell amongst them." (Psa. 68:18.) These gifts were spiritual gifts, different measures of heavenly grace, as the Apostle explains: "But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. 4:7, 8.) So also testified Peter, on the day of Pentecost, when the risen Lord, as he had promised, baptized his disciples with the Holy Ghost: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:32, 33.) This blessed Spirit was not given, in his full measure of heavenly gifts and graces, till Jesus was glorified. (John 7:39.) Comforting, therefore, his sorrowing disciples, their gracious Master said to them, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7.) The disciples seem themselves to have expected a temporal kingdom. This anticipation of worldly dignity and of a throne erected on earth's base clay manifested itself in the request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee: "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." (Matt. 20:21.) And, what we should have less expected, even after his resurrection, when the cross and the sepulchre must have, as one would think, for ever dispelled their dreams of a temporal throne, the eleven disciples asked their risen Master, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6.) Thus even those faithful few who had walked with him in intimate union for several years, who had heard his heavenly discourses, and more particularly listened to those spiritual lessons uttered in their ears after the last supper, and his closing prayer so filled with holiness and truth,—even these believing, affectionate disciples seemed to turn their eyes to the**

restoration of the fallen national and natural kingdom of Israel. They did not see, until baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, how poor, how low, how unbecoming the glory and dignity of the Son of God it would have been to sway an earthly sceptre. What is its chief glory, but that it is a spiritual kingdom, administered by spiritual means, for spiritual persons, and unto spiritual ends? To subdue hearts, not to conquer kingdoms; to bestow the riches of his grace on poor and needy sinners, not, like Solomon, to heap up gold, and silver, and precious stones; to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, not to spread ruin and desolation over countless provinces; to be surrounded with an army of martyrs, not an army of soldiers; to hold a court where paupers, not peers, are freely welcome, and where the court dress is not "changeable suits of apparel, mantles, and wimples, and crisping pins," but "the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints;" to issue not pensions, but pardons; and to grant to favoured objects not stars and garters and ribands, but "bands of love," and "the morning star" of his dawning smile, (Hos. 11:4; Rev. 2:28,)—such are some of the objects of the King of saints. Say that the Lord after his resurrection had appeared in majesty and glory to put to flight the Roman armies; say that he had made Jerusalem his metropolis, and subdued all the nations of the earth; would *that* have been a conquest worthy of his coming from the bosom of the Father, or in harmony with his agonies in the garden, and his sufferings and sacrifice on the cross? To reign spiritually over believing hearts; to quicken and regenerate, save and sanctify, pardon and bless the objects of his eternal love; to conform them to his suffering image, and make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, what would the highest, greatest, and most glorious earthly conquests have been in comparison with such and similar spiritual triumphs of his grace?

\* There is a beautiful marginal rendering of the words, "for men," (and, indeed, is the exact literal version,) "*in the man,*" that is, in his pure and sacred humanity which he now wears in union with his eternal Deity.

2. As being, therefore, a spiritual kingdom, it is a kingdom of *grace*, for in it, as administered by its heavenly Sovereign, grace "reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life." (Rom. 5:21.) This is one of the chief blessings of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus to the right hand of power, that the throne on which he sits is "a throne of *grace.*" (Heb. 4:16.) Thus, having finished the work on earth which the Father gave him to do, he is gone up on high to carry into execution those purposes of grace which brought him down. To begin, carry on, and complete, from heaven his dwelling place, the work of grace on

thousands of his chosen saints here below; by grace to pardon their sins; by grace to subdue their iniquities; by grace to purify their hearts by faith; by grace to sanctify their affections and fix them on things above, where he himself sitteth on the right hand of God,—such and similar conquests of his all-victorious grace make Jesus unspeakably precious to those who believe. But what heart can conceive, or what tongue recount the daily, hourly triumphs of his all-conquering grace? We see scarcely a millionth part of what Jesus, as a King on his throne, is daily doing; and yet we see enough to know that he ever lives at God's right hand, and lives to save and bless. What a crowd of needy petitioners every moment surrounds his throne! What urgent wants and woes to redress; what cutting griefs and sorrows to assuage; what broken hearts to bind up; what wounded consciences to heal; what countless prayers to hear; what earnest petitions to grant; what stubborn foes to subdue; what guilty fears to quell! What clemency, what kindness, what long-suffering, what compassion, what mercy, what love, and yet what power and authority does this Almighty Sovereign display! No circumstance is too trifling; no petitioner too insignificant; no case too hard; no difficulty too great; no suer too importunate; no beggar too ragged; no bankrupt too penniless; no debtor too insolvent, for him not to notice and not to relieve. Sitting on his throne of grace, his all-seeing eye views all, his almighty hand grasps all, and his loving heart embraces all whom the Father gave him by covenant, whom he himself redeemed by his blood, and whom the blessed Spirit has quickened into life by his invincible power. The hopeless, the helpless; the outcasts whom no man careth for; the tossed with tempest and not comforted; the ready to perish; the mourners in Zion; the bereaved widow; the wailing orphan; the sick in body, and still more sick in heart; the racked with hourly pain; the fevered consumptive; the wrestler with death's last struggle—O what crowds of pitiable objects surround his throne; and all needing a look from his eye, a word from his lips, a smile from his face, a touch from his hand. O could we but see what his grace is, what his grace has, what his grace does; and could we but feel more what it is doing in and for ourselves, we should have more exalted views of the reign of grace now exercised on high by Zion's enthroned King.

3. But it is a kingdom also of *life*. A living King needs living subjects. The dead in sin, the dead in profession, have neither part nor lot in the matter. "Death cannot celebrate thee." "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." (Isa. 38:18, 19.) Jesus is "the way, and the truth, and the life;" and as such says to his people, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Thus he appeared to John in the Revelation, calming his fears when he fell at his feet as dead:

**"And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." (Rev. 1:18.) To give life, and that more abundantly; (John 10:10;) to be "the resurrection and the life, so that he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet should he live," (John 11:25,) was a part of his divine mission. As, then, the kingdom of the beast is full of darkness and death, (Rev. 16:10,) so the kingdom of Jesus is full of light and life, for he has declared that he is "the light of the world;" and that "he that followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12.) The nature of this kingdom is beautifully unfolded in Psa. 21.\* "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Then hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips, for thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." (Psa. 21:1-3.) It will be observed that among the blessings thus asked and granted was *life*. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and over." (Psa. 21:4.) This life is his mediatorial life, and, therefore, a given, not a self-existent life. As he himself declared: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John 5:26.) Of this mediatorial life he gives to his people; and thus they live by him and on him, as he lives by the Father, according to his own words: "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.) This life quickens, animates, and sustains the Church of Christ as she comes up from the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved. Thence comes all her union and all her communion with her risen Head. She lives by it in him, and he lives by it in her. Thus Head and members are one; for as in the natural body the life of the head is that of the members, and this oneness of life makes them one, so is there one life in that mystical and spiritual body of which Christ is the glorious Head. But the subject of Christ as our Life is too wide for our present limits, for it embraces all those communications of divine life which make and manifest his people to be a living people, and comprehends every breath of spiritual life in their hearts from the first cry of a convinced sinner to the last hallelujah of an expiring saint.**

**\* Psa. 21 is a kind of pendant, or what is sometimes called a complement to Psa. 20. In Psa. 20 the Church, fore-viewing the sufferings and sacrifice of Messiah, thus prays on his behalf to his heavenly Father: "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice." (Psa. 20:1-4.) She has a confidence**

that the Father will accept his burnt sacrifice, will "grant him according to his own heart"—the salvation of his people, and will "fulfil all his counsel"—the counsel of peace "between them both." (Zech. 6:13.) In this anticipation she says, "We will rejoice in thy salvation," &c., and adds, in the confidence of faith, "Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed"—that is, his Messiah, his Christ, the very name which Jesus bore, and by which he is still called. But as in Psa. 20 the Church viewed the suffering, sacrificing Messiah, so in Psa. 21 she views the triumphant, reigning Messiah; and sees the Father setting a "crown of pure gold on his head," thus exalting him as King to his own right hand. She sees all his petitions granted, "honour and majesty laid upon him," and himself made "most blessed for ever." Thus the two Psalms, as it were, fit into and mutually explain and illustrate each other. Psa. 20 is prayer, Psa. 21 is praise; Psa. 20 sees the cross, Psa. 21 sees the crown. In the one we see what Jesus was; in the other what Jesus is. Read in this point of view, they cast much light upon both the past and present work of Christ; and especially show the deep interest and sympathy which the Church takes and feels in both his humiliation and exaltation.

**4. For a similar reason we can only just briefly remark that the reign of Christ is in its very nature a kingdom, also, of *light*, (1 John 1:7,) as opposed to the power of darkness; (Col. 1:13; Eph. 5:8;) a kingdom of *liberty*, (John 8:32, 36; 2 Cor. 3:17,) as opposed to the reign of bondage; (Acts 15:10; Gal. 4:24, 25, 31;) a kingdom of *love*, (1 John 3:1, 16,) as opposed to the reign of enmity and alienation; (Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21;) a kingdom of *peace*, (Isa. 9:6, 7,) as opposed to war and strife; and a kingdom of *holiness*, (Isa. 35:3; Dan. 7:22; Heb. 12:14,) as opposed to a reign of sin and uncleanness. (Rom. 5:21.)**

**5. But its peculiar characteristic and chief glory is that it is an *inward kingdom*. "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21.) "The King's daughter is all glorious within." (Psa. 45:13.) This internal kingdom is that "kingdom of God," of which the Apostle declares that it "is not meat, and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17.) It is, therefore, "not in word but in power;" (1 Cor. 4:20;) requires a new and spiritual birth to see it and enter into it; (John 3:3-5;) is the special inheritance of "the poor in spirit;" (Matt. 5:3;) is entered into "through much tribulation;" (Acts 14:22;) "suffereth violence, and is taken by force;" (Matt. 11:12;) and, when received in faith, is "a kingdom that cannot be moved." (Heb. 12:28.) It is, therefore, not a kingdom of outward grandeur, but of inward grace; not one of temporal majesty, but of spiritual authority; not one of visible pomp and show, but of invisible influence; not a display of rustling**

robes, clashing bells, pealing organs, painted windows, medieval architecture, white-robed choristers, intoning priests, surpliced processions, and all that sensuous appeal to the mere natural feelings and passions of the human mind, whereby Satan, as an angel of light, deceiveth the nations, but a holy, heavenly, spiritual reign of the Lord of life in a broken heart, a contrite spirit, and a tender conscience. Happy those who, illuminated from above by a heavenly light, and made alive unto God by a new and divine life, are not to be imposed upon by the baubles of an empty religion; who, knowing the truth for themselves by the teaching and testimony, work and witness of the blessed Spirit, cannot and will not "call evil good or good evil, nor put darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." Happy those who see, feel, and know the difference between form and power, deception and reality, a name to live and Christ formed in the heart, the hope of glory! Happy those to whom the King of kings has extended the golden sceptre of his grace, whom he has made willing in the day of his power, and on whose hearts he sits enthroned as their only Lord and Sovereign.

Having dwelt at such length on the *nature* of the reign of Christ at the right hand of the Father, we must defer to our next chapter the consideration of its object, extent, and duration.

#### IV.

In viewing with believing eyes the Person and work, grace and glory, qualifications and offices of the blessed Lord, we are apt to fix our faith upon them more in reference to *ourselves*—to our own personal salvation and consolation, than as eternally designed to manifest the glory of God. It is, indeed, as seeing him fully and wondrously suited to all our wants and woes that we are first led and enabled to believe on the Son of God unto eternal life. A High Priest who has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and who, as now at the right hand of Power, is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him," well suits a self-condemned, guilty sinner; a kind and condescending Teacher, at whose feet we may humbly sit to hear his words dropping with unction into the heart, is well adapted to those who feel their ignorance, and long for heavenly instruction; and a King who cannot only manage for them all their temporal and spiritual affairs, but—harder work still!—can rule over their stubborn wills and subdue their iniquities by his Spirit and grace, well meets the case of those who sigh after deliverance from the power and prevalence of a body of sin and death. But though these

benefits and blessings, which come down to the people of God out of the mediatorial life and fulness of the Lord Jesus, are in themselves exceedingly great, and, as realised by heart experience, unspeakably precious, yet are they really but second and, as it were, subsidiary to higher and more glorious purposes. No final object can be so dear to God as his own glory. To fill heaven and earth with his manifested glory must be a purpose of greater moment with the Lord than to save and bless a ruined race. To forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin is a part of God's glory; (Exod. 33:18-23; 34:5-7; Numb. 14:17, 18;) but the glory itself must be greater than that of forgiveness, of which it is but a part. Thus after the Lord had said to Moses, "I have pardoned, according to thy word," he added, "But, as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." (Numb. 14:20, 21.) The glory of his holiness, of his justice, of his power, of his faithfulness, of his love, and all the other perfections of the divine nature, must be equal to that of his forgiveness of sin, not to mention the essential glory of his eternal existence as a Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the Unity of the undivided Essence. To reveal this glory, that thus it might be seen and admired both in heaven and earth, was the eternal purpose of the Most High, even of him who has said, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. 46:10.)

But as God is essentially invisible, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see, this glory could only be revealed in the face of his dear Son, who is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person." This is John's express testimony: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18.) In almost similar language speaks the Apostle Paul: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6.) We see, therefore, that to glorify his dear Son was the eternal purpose of God; for in glorifying him he glorified himself, as our Lord declares: "I have glorified thee on the earth;" (John 17:4;) and again, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (12:28.) But the glory of the Father and of the Son are one, according to the words of our Lord's intercessory prayer: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:4, 5.) Thus we see that the Son of God glorified his Father on earth, and that the Father now glorifies his Son in heaven. And as he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places that he might be thus glorified in

him, so the main purpose of the present royal dignity of Jesus is to manifest that glory.

These few remarks may perhaps prepare us to enter more clearly into the consideration of that part of our subject which now lies before us, viz., the object, extent, and duration of the royal dignity of Jesus at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

i. The *object* of this regal sway demands first our consideration.

In that sublime and most affecting prayer which the Lord Jesus offered up to his heavenly Father on the eve of his sufferings in the garden and on the cross, he himself unfolded one special object of his present possession of supreme authority and power: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (John 17:2.) From these words of the gracious Lord we gather two things: 1, that the Father has given him power over all flesh; 2, that it was necessary he should possess this supreme authority in order to bestow the gift of eternal life on as many as the Father had given him. The execution, however, of this latter purpose, implies and involves several others, which we shall now, therefore, attempt to unfold.

1. *The execution of God's will upon earth* is intrusted to the hands of the risen and exalted Son of God. God's open will is made known to us in the Scriptures, and this must ever be our guiding rule, for secret things belong unto the Lord God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. 29:29.) But besides this open or express will, God has a secret will, not revealed, at least not plainly and clearly revealed, as is his positive will in the word of truth, though there doubtless are dim intimations of it, could we see them.\* But as all our readers may not see the distinction we make between the open and the secret will of God, let us explain our meaning a little more distinctly. One instance may suffice as an illustration of the distinction between them. It was God's *open* or expressed will that when he sent his dear Son, Israel after the flesh should believe in him as the promised Messiah; but his *secret* will was, that his people by outward covenant should reject him, and nail him to the accursed tree, that redemption by atoning blood might be accomplished, and also that the Gentiles should be the firstfruits of the Saviour's finished work. Now, as the secret will of God thus sometimes differs from his open will, who is so fit to carry into execution this hidden will as the Son of his love, of whom we read, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son?" He that ever lay in his bosom as his dear

**Son must fully know all the mind of the Father, for he declares, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." (John 10:15.) To carry out this will demands infinite wisdom and infinite power, as well as an infinite knowledge of the mind and purpose of God. But in whom shall we find this union of infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power but in the exalted Son of God? To bring the subject more fully before your mind, take as an instance the execution of the secret purpose of God to save his elect people from all their sins and all their foes. Consider for a moment the countless complications of events connected with the execution of this purpose! Look at the millions of human persons and of human passions which lie in the path as obstacles; the opposition of all the powers of earth and hell; the dreadful state of alienation and enmity into which the elect are sunk; the several and special call of every vessel of mercy; the temptations, trials, and deliverances of each, all which need infinite wisdom to know and almighty power to meet,—do but consider these complicated circumstances, and what a view will it give you of the present reign of Jesus as carrying into execution this secret will of the Father. We have named but one instance, but that is sufficient to give us some little idea of the authority and power committed to the hands of Jesus as enthroned King in Zion.**

*\* Thus, in the instance of God's secret will mentioned by us in a following sentence there were intimations of the rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles, as the Apostle shows, Rom. 9:24-29; 11:8-10, though these obscure hints were overlooked, and really did not affect or contradict God's open and expressed will.*

**2. Another purpose of the exaltation of the blessed Lord to the throne of mediatorial glory is that he should be a *living Head of influence to his Church*. This, is beautifully set forth by the Apostle in that heavenly prayer which he put up for the Church of God at Ephesus at the close of the first chapter of his Epistle: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:19-23.) In what grand, noble, eloquent, expressive language does the Apostle here set forth the exaltation of Jesus, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion" in earth,**

heaven, or hell, and "all things" past, present, and to come put under his feet," that he might be a glorious Head of life, power, and influence to the members of his mystical body. It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell—a fulness of all grace and gifts as well as all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Out of this fulness he is ever supplying the members of his mystical body; for from him, as an ever-living Head, "all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. 2:19.) It is only by this union with Christ as a living Head, and by receiving supplies of grace and strength out of his fulness, that we come experimentally and feelingly to know that he lives at the right hand of the Father. We may indeed believe it to be so from the testimony of God in the written word, but we have no such evidence as the Lord speaks of when he says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you;" (John 14:20;) or that which John means when he declares, He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." (1 John 5:10.) This is the grand, the vital distinction between the living and the dead, that the living have union and communion with a living Head, whilst the dead are "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." (Eph. 4:18.) This blessed truth and divine mystery of union and communion with him, the Lord unfolded to his sorrowing disciples in those heavenly discourses, before his sufferings and death, which the Holy Ghost has recorded by the pen of John—John 14, 15, 16. But we shall merely refer to one passage in them as chiefly illustrating our present point: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14:18, 19.) Let us seek to enter into the meaning of our Lord's gracious words here. His bodily presence was now to be withdrawn from the world. It had despised, it had rejected him. It knew him not, it valued him not. It had proved itself utterly unworthy of his continued presence; it should therefore be deprived of that blessing; it should "see him no more." This polluted earth should no more be trodden by his holy feet. His miracles of mercy should cease; his words of grace and truth should be no more heard; and as the world had no powers of sight but the bodily organ of the eye, when he left the earth it ceased to behold him. "But ye," he says to his disciples, "*but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also.*"

Our Lord in these words unfolds two mysteries of his heavenly grace—sight and life. The believer sees, the believer lives. But whom does he see, and by whom does he live? He sees Jesus, he lives by Jesus. He sees by a spiritual sight, he lives by a spiritual life, for Jesus is his life; and because Jesus lives, he

shall live also. Thus the child of God carries in his own bosom the clearest proof and sweetest evidence that the Son of God is risen from the dead and reigns supreme in the courts above, for he sees him there, he feels him there. His anointed eye, like the eye of Moses, sees him who is invisible;" (Heb. 11:27;) and his believing heart, rising up on the wings of love, seeks those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. (Col. 3:1.) In the parable of the vine and the branches, this mystery of vital godliness is more fully and clearly unfolded, especially in the words, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:4, 5.) A living Head in heaven is the great object of our faith. Without faith in him, there is no union with him; without union with him, there is no communion with him; without communion with him, there is no fruitfulness; without fruitfulness, there is a casting into the fire as a withered and dead branch. Such is the circle of divine life and fruitfulness in the mystery of faith; such the issue of barrenness and death in the mystery of unbelief. Let us trace it a little more distinctly. Jesus lives at the right hand of God; because he lives, he quickens into spiritual life the members of his mystical body; as a fruit of this quickening power, they live; they see him; they believe on him; they have union and communion with him; they live a life of faith upon him; and bring forth fruit to his praise. The whole mystery of this life is contained in the experience of the Apostle: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.) But as this life of faith on the Son of God is exposed to countless fluctuations, and is opposed by countless inward and outward foes; as it has no power to maintain itself, but, like fire, must go out if left untended; and as the extinction of this life would involve the oath and promise of God and the faithfulness of his dear Son, it needs the Almighty power of the enthroned King of Zion to maintain it in being by continual communications of grace and strength out of his own fulness.

3. Another purpose of the regal sway of the Son of God is to *subdue all things unto himself*. When the Father raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, he virtually put all things under his feet. This was the promise made in Psa. 8, as spiritually interpreted by the Apostle: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou

hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." (Heb. 2:7, 8.) When God created Adam, he gave him dominion over the works of his hands. This dominion, however, he forfeited by transgression. But the dominion given to the first Adam is bestowed in a much larger measure on the second Adam; for to the first Adam was granted dominion only over all things in the earth, but to the second Adam of "things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. 2:10.)

But though this dominion is virtually and absolutely given him, and though he sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, as a sure pledge of the Father's absolute gift, yet its full accomplishment is still incomplete. This is clearly intimated by the Apostle in the last clause of the words quoted by us from Hebrews 2:8: "But now we see not all things put under him;" and in that remarkable passage: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have ut down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him." (1 Cor. 15:24-27.) We shall have occasion, in the course of our Meditations, to dwell somewhat fully on these words; but the point to which we wish to call present attention is, the declaration in them that Christ "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." But why this necessity? Because the Father has virtually put all things under his feet, both by promise and by performance; by promise when he said, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;" and by performance when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. He *must*, therefore, reign till he has fully executed the Father's purpose and the Father's promise. Were he to leave the throne before he had "put all things under his feet," where would be the faithfulness of God; where the promised reward of Jesus? But we must bear in mind that as the reign of Jesus is a *spiritual* reign, so the enemies put under his feet are the *spiritual* enemies of his people. Their enemies are invisible, and therefore the power exercised against them is invisible also. We see sin and wickedness universally prevailing; a most cruel, bloody, and fratricidal war\* desolating some of the fairest provinces of the earth, and by its consequences affecting millions of our own countrymen; Satan raging as if his time were short; vital godliness at a very low ebb; churches torn to pieces with internal

strife; few faithful ministers in the land, and these often walking apart as if half afraid of, or half jealous of each other; error widely spreading; and popular preachers either pandering to the worldly spirit of their hearers, amusing them with jokes and anecdotes, and entertaining them with lectures, or arresting attention by novel interpretations of Scripture, and running a reckless tilt against established truths. When, then, we survey a scene like this, our hearts may well sink, and our faltering lips may almost say, "*Does Jesus reign? Why, then, do these objects meet our eye so opposed to his holy government? If 'all things are put under his feet,' why is the world, why is the Church what we cannot but see they are?'*" To silence this questioning spirit, which the more it is indulged the more perplexing it becomes, let us bear in mind the great truth which we have endeavoured to enforce, that the reign of Jesus is eminently a spiritual kingdom, and exercised for his spiritual people. Thus it is not consistent with his present counsel to put down in an open manner, by visible acts of authority, the enemies of his people, but to strip them of so much of their power as affects the salvation and sanctification of his own loyal subjects. To set this in a clearer light, let us bear in mind that an evident distinction may be drawn between the partial and the full display of the present power of Jesus. A king may possess in himself absolute power, and yet restrain himself in the exercise of it. So with the Lord Jesus Christ as King in Zion. None who believe in the power of the Lord Jesus as the exalted God-man can doubt his ability to sweep away from the face of the earth every vestige of sin and misery. But he does not do so. Sin still reigns rampant, and the cry of misery rises up on every side. We must come, then, to one of these two conclusions, either that Jesus does not reign with supreme authority, or that his power is for wise purposes not fully put forth. The first conclusion is infidelity; the second agrees with the views that we have put forth of the spiritual reign of Jesus. And to this agrees the testimony of the written word, for we read: "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 hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." (Rev. 11:15-17.) From this prophetic declaration it is plain that until "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ," which they are not now, the Lord has not "taken to himself his great power and reigned," that is, has not displayed his sovereign authority in visible manifestation. It is now spiritual, and therefore invisible, but not the less real because at present necessarily partial. Were it otherwise,

this world would not be a place of temptation and trial, nor should we be conformed to Christ's suffering image by walking here as he walked. View this point, then, of real though partial authority and power as exercised by the Lord, in relation to the various enemies of his people. Take, first, that enemy of God and man, the arch enemy Satan. By his death, Jesus "destroyed," or, as the word rather means, broke his power; (Heb. 2:14;) and when he ascended up on high "spoiled" him and all his associated "principalities and powers, making a show of them openly." (Col. 2:15.) Does not this look like a complete conquest of the powers of hell? Yet Satan is still permitted to blind the minds of them which believe not, (2 Cor. 4:4,) and hurl his fiery darts against the children of God. Satan could fill the heart of Ananias with evil, (Acts 5:3,) and hinder Paul from good. (1 Thess. 2:18.) Can we reconcile these two statements? Is he destroyed who can blind and ruin the sinner? Is he spoiled who can distress and hinder the saint? Yes; but not fully nor finally. He is virtually destroyed as regards the saints of God, because he cannot destroy them, either body or soul; he is spoiled, if not of all power to hinder or distress them, yet of that overwhelming authority which he is allowed to exercise over the world as being still its god and prince. Thus we can understand how the kingdom of Christ is a real kingdom, and his power a really exercised power, though not at present triumphant in full and open manifestation. But though thus wisely and necessarily limited as to conspicuous display, as regards its spiritual exercise it is full and effectual. Take as an instance, more fully to elucidate this point, another enemy which is put under his feet—*death*. The consideration of this may give us a still clearer insight into the nature of the authority exercised by the Lord in his kingdom than the one already adduced. That beautiful chapter, 1 Cor. 15, will throw great light on this part of our subject: "For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. 15:25, 26.) Observe the connection here between the reign of Christ till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and the destruction of the last enemy, death. As death is still destroying, he is not yet destroyed, that is, in the full sense of the term. But he will be *fully* destroyed. When? At the resurrection; for then, and not till then, "will be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." But is there no destruction of death till his final destruction? Surely. When, by a manifestation of pardoning love, the sting of death is taken away, is not death then spiritually destroyed? Many a dear saint of God has shouted on a dying bed, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory?" even at the moment when Death is stinging him to death, and the victorious grave is about to claim for its prey the worn-out body.

\* The civil war in America.

We need not pursue further the train of thought. The examples we have given, and to them we might add those of the world and of sin, sufficiently show that the apparent incompleteness of the Lord's triumphs over his enemies, the wide prevalence of sin and misery, and all the opposition made to his authority and power, are no valid arguments against the reality of his reign, or the exercise of his government. It is full and complete for all its intended purposes. If more were needed, more would be displayed. Is it not enough that he reigns spiritually in the hearts of his people; that he controls the power of all their enemies; that he subdues their iniquities; that he sets a limit to the strength and subtlety of Satan; that he deprives death of its sting, and robs the grave of its victory; that he keeps back the raging waves of an ungodly, persecuting world; defeats all devices against his Church; and brings every member of his mystical body through all the storms of time and waves of corruption to the eternal enjoyment of himself? Is not this a real kingdom? Is not this supreme and successful authority? And is not the exercise of this sovereign government, invisible though it be, as effectual as if it were more openly displayed and shone more brightly and conspicuously before the eyes of men?

But here we shall pause, reserving to our next paper our considerations upon the extent and duration of this kingdom of the Son of God, the nature and purpose of which we have thus far, however feebly and imperfectly, attempted to unfold for the edification of our readers and the promotion of the glory of a Triune God.

V.

The nature and object of the Mediatorial kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ having thus far formed the subject of our Meditations, we shall now, with God's help and blessing, attempt to unfold the two next points which we proposed for consideration:

*its extent and duration.*

Both these points involve difficulties, and have been the subject of frequent as well as warm controversy. But without flinching from expressing our views on the subject, we shall endeavour, whilst we avoid doubtful and controversial

points, to tread as closely as we can in the footsteps of Scripture, and advance nothing which is not, at least in our judgment, in strict accordance with the inspired testimony.

By the extent of the Mediatorial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, we may understand two things:

1. The *present*,
2. The *future* extent.

Both of these points will demand our careful and prayerful consideration, that we may advance nothing inconsistent with the word of truth or the dignity and glory of the blessed Lord.

The *future* extent will come more conveniently under head IV., in which we propose to consider the *future development and glorious manifestation* of Christ's Mediatorial kingdom; and its *duration* will fall also better into its place when we have taken a view of his future glory. We have, therefore, now chiefly to examine the *present* extent of the Mediatorial kingdom of Jesus. One word will express this extent—*unlimited*. Nothing short of, nothing less than this, will be in accordance with his own words: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) What possible limit can be assigned to "all power in heaven and in earth?" All power in heaven includes dominion over all the angelic host above; and all power on earth embraces absolute, uncontrolled authority over all men, things, events, and circumstances beneath the starry skies.

But the question may, perhaps, arise, "Did not the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, already possess supreme dominion over angels and men, and so over all things in heaven and in earth?" Surely he did. But his power and authority, as the Son of God, are distinct from his power and authority as now exercised at the right hand of the Father. The peculiar glory of his Mediatorial kingdom is that the Lord Jesus reigns *in our nature*—not simply, therefore, as the Son of God, but as the Son of man. This Stephen saw in the vision of faith: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55, 56.) This was also the prophetic view given to Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds

of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7:13, 14.) Exactly similar are the declarations of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:19-23.) "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." (Phil. 2:8-11.) These testimonies demand our careful and particular attention, as in them are locked up some of the deepest mysteries of our most holy faith; and we will therefore bestow upon them, before we proceed further, a few moments' attentive consideration.

The Holy Ghost has set before us in the word of truth the blessed Lord as the object of our faith under three distinct points of view:

1. What he *was from all eternity*—the only-begotten Son of God; the Son of the Father in truth and love.
2. What he *became in time*—the Son of man, by taking upon him the flesh and blood of the children.
3. What *he now is*—the exalted God-man at the right hand of the Father; still the only-begotten Son of God, still the very and true Son of man; but uniting both these distinct natures, the divine and the human, in one glorious Person, and thus crowned with glory and honour, and sitting as a Priest on his throne in the highest heavens.\* It has been our aim and desire to set him before the Church of God under these three points of view, so far, at least, as we have seen him by the eye of faith and felt him precious. In one series of papers, we

**endeavoured to set him forth in his Deity and Sonship, as the Son of the living God; in another series, we attempted to unfold the mystery of his sacred humanity as the Son of man; and in the present series, now coming to a close, to bring him before the Church in his Mediatorial grace and glory as the enthroned Priest, Prophet, and King of his redeemed people. May he graciously smile on this feeble attempt to set forth his praise, and more and more reveal himself to both writer and reader as the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.**

**\* These three points are all embodied in one verse, as spoken to his disciples by our gracious Lord: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again I leave the world, and go to the Father." (John 16:28.) "I came forth from the Father;" there is his eternal Deity and Sonship. "And am come into the world;" there is his sacred humanity. "Again I leave the world, and go to the Father;" there is his present glorified state as God-man.**

**It is, then, in his glorious complex Person as Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, that he now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and in him, as thus exalted to be the head over all things to the Church, faith believes, hope anchors, and love embraces. To look to him, even at times, from the very ends of the earth; (Isa. 45:22; Psa. 61:2;) to call upon him; (Acts 7:59; 9:14; 1 Cor. 1:2;\*) to confess and bewail at his feet our grievous sins and innumerable backslidings; to seek after clear and renewed manifestations of his glorious Person and finished work, of his atoning blood and dying love; to desire the promotion of his glory, not of our own; that his will should be accomplished in and by us, and not that our own wretched inclinations and sinful desires should be gratified to our fancied present pleasure, but real future injury; to live to his praise; to listen to his voice, and obey it; to be separated from the world and worldly professors and enjoy union and communion with him; to walk in his footsteps; and when this life, with all its sins and sorrows, comes to a close, to die in his loving embrace—is not this to live a life of faith in the Son of God, and thus "to know him and the power of his resurrection?"**

**\* It was a special mark of the primitive believers that they "called on the name" of Christ, that is, addressed their prayers to him as God. Thus Saul came to Damascus "with authority from the chief priests to bind all that called on his name;" (Acts 9:14;) and Paul addressed his epistle "to the Church of God at Corinth," &c., "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." (2 Cor. 1:2.) So the**

heathen writer, Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, the Roman Emperor, written about A. D. 102 or 103, giving an account of the early Christians, says, "They are accustomed on a stated day to meet before daylight, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ as God." It was this worship of Christ, as the exalted Son of God, which drew down upon them such a load of shame and persecution. That they should worship as God one who had been crucified as a common malefactor, was unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which were called, it was Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1:23, 24.)

**But though we do not tie ourselves strictly down to a prescribed line of thought, and do sometimes avail ourselves of the liberty implied in the very word "Meditations" to wander, not, indeed, from the truth, nor even from the subject, but from a rigid adherence to a fixed path of discussion into the green pastures of musing contemplation of the grace and glory of the Lord the Lamb, yet we feel that we have rather digressed from our point, which was to show the *present* extent of the Mediatorial reign of Jesus.**

**We have already pointed out that in all the office characters undertaken by our blessed Lord, there was an initial entering upon them on earth prior to their full assumption as now exercised by him in heaven. In his priestly office there was an absolute necessity for this, as the Apostle so cogently argues: "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. 8:3.) What he offered was himself: "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth 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 hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:25, 26.) As, then, the blessed Lord entered initially into his priestly office when he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, so he entered initially into his kingly office whilst here below, before his full assumption of it as now administered by him at the right hand of the Father. Thus we see the subjection of all things to his dominion, even in the days of his flesh, as an earnest and pledge of all power being given to him at his resurrection in heaven and in earth. At his rebuke, as Lord of the elements, stormy winds and roaring waves were hushed into a calm. At his approach, diseases fled, for there went virtue out of him and healed them all; under his creative hand, food for famishing multitudes multiplied itself, without stint or limit; at his bidding, water was at once changed into wine; at his commanding word, the paralytic started up from his year-long couch, and the dead from his grave-**

borne bier. He had but to speak, and the deaf heard, the blind saw, the lame walked, the leper was cleansed. Was not this to walk on earth as its King and Lord? Yes; as Lord of the sea, he walked, in calm grandeur, upon its waves; as Lord of the earth, he bade the grave give back the buried Lazarus; and as Lord of hell, cast out devils, and made those infernal spirits cry out as in terror, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" If, then, his dominion and authority were so unlimited in the days of his flesh, before he ascended the throne of his Mediatorial glory, what possible limit can be assigned to them now? But as our views of it are too often sadly narrow, and our faith in it proportionally weak, let us endeavour to show in some detail how wide, how unlimited is its present extent.

1. First, then, view it as extending over all *persons*; and bear in mind that this includes enemies as well as friends—those whom he will one day break with a rod of iron and dash in pieces as a potter's vessel, and those who serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. We are very apt to lose sight of the unspeakable benefits and blessings which we enjoy in the Lord's exercising kingly authority over all persons, and especially those in high places. Our beloved Queen, our temporal rulers, our judges, magistrates, and all administrators of government; our justly-prized and inestimable constitution; our just and moderate laws; our civil and religious liberties; and all, in fact, that we enjoy as citizens of this highly-favoured country, we owe to the real power of our exalted Lord. How plainly does it declare this under his name as "Wisdom," in the word of truth: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even "the judges of the earth;" (Prov. 8:15, 16;) "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water he turneth it whithersoever he will." (Prov. 21:1.) Similar is the testimony of the New Testament: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God;" (Rom. 13:1;) "Submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." (1 Pet. 2:13, 14.) Thus all civil authority is of God; and, as the Lord of life and glory sits at his right hand in the plenitude of his power, we cannot err in ascribing to his royal authority every temporal privilege that we enjoy. And not only in this favoured island, the Queen of the isles sitting on her sea-girt throne, the envy and admiration of surrounding nations, but everywhere on this earthly globe, as far as waves roll, winds blow, sun shines, or stars hold on their nightly courses, does the sceptre of Jesus sway the destinies and control the designs and actions of men. If, amidst all the turmoil

and confusion of passing events, it be difficult to realise this, consider the consequences which would result both to the world and the Church, were no such supreme dominion exercised. Look for a moment at the fierce, we may say ferocious, passions of carnal men, and see what earth would soon become were they left unchained in all their natural ferocity. Without the restraints of law and government, which, as we have shown, are instruments of Christ's supremacy, men would tear each other to pieces, like infuriated wild beasts, and deluge society with blood and crime. Where, amidst this awful storm, with every element of fury let loose, would society be? Imagine London given up for one day to the unchecked passions of its criminal population, and then ask yourself, "Is there no mighty power which holds in check these worse than wild beasts?" Yes, there is a power as wide-spread as light, as universal as air, as pervasive and far mightier than that which holds the earth itself in its orbit—the supreme dominion of heaven's exalted Lord. Not to believe this, is not to be a believer at all.

But you will, perhaps, say, "If Jesus reign thus supreme, why all this disorder, this misery and crime? why is earth what it is? why this bloody, fratricidal war in America? why this appalling distress in Lancashire, if he hold the reins of government?" But are *you* a judge of order or disorder? Where you see little else but confusion, there may be the greatest order; and wisdom where you would fain tax the Almighty with folly. Are you a prophet, or the son of a prophet? Can you foretell what blessing is to spring out of this horrid war, or this sore distress? Does not a king punish as well as rule? And how can the Lord more effectually punish men than by scourging them with their own sins? It is God's special prerogative to bring good out of evil, and order out of confusion. If you were to watch carefully from an astronomical observatory the movements of the planets, you would see them all in the greatest apparent disorder. Sometimes they would seem to move forward, sometimes backward, and sometimes not to move at all. These confused and contradictory movements sadly puzzled astronomers, till Newton rose and explained the whole; then all was seen to be the most beautiful harmony and order, where before there was the most puzzling confusion.\* But take a scriptural instance, the highest and greatest that we can give, to show that where, to outward appearance, all is disorder, there the greatest wisdom and most determinate will reign. Look at the crucifixion of our blessed Lord. Can you not almost see the scene as painted in the word of truth? See those scheming priests, that wild mob, those rough soldiers, that faltering Roman governor, the pale and terrified disciples, the weeping women, and, above all, the innocent Sufferer with the crown of thorns, and enduring that last scene of surpassing woe,

which made the earth quake, and the sun withdraw his light. What confusion! what disorder! What triumphant guilt! What oppressed and vanquished innocence! But was it really so? Was there no wisdom or power of God here accomplishing, even by the instrumentality of human wickedness, his own eternal purposes? Hear his own testimony to this point: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23.) The "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," in the great and glorious work of redemption, was accomplished by the wicked hands of man; and if so, in this the worst and wickedest of all possible cases, is not the same eternal will also now executed in instances of a similar nature, though to us at present less visible?

But having taken this hasty glance at the authoritative rule of Christ over and in the midst of his enemies, let us now look at his mild and clement dominion over his own people. Here we seem to stand, if not on surer, yet, at least, on plainer and more evident ground. The ancient promise of authority and power given unto the Son of God in prospect of his future exaltation, and of this the Scriptures are full, embraced two things—the subjection of enemies, and the willing obedience of friends: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth." Willingly or unwillingly, all should be made subject to his sceptre; for "they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him" in the voluntary obedience of love, and "his enemies shall lick the dust" in the forced submission of power. This distinction between the willing obedience of friends and the forced subjection of foes runs through many other inspired declarations of the nature and extent of the Mediatorial reign of Jesus. Thus, addressing his heavenly Father, the Lord speaks in ancient prophecy: "Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen. A people whom I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me. The strangers shall submit themselves unto me." (Psa. 18:43, 44.) We prefer the marginal reading of the last clause, "The strangers shall lie, or yield feigned obedience," as closer to the original,\* and more in accordance with the next verse: "The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places." Almost the first act of faith is to obey. It was the first act of the faith of Abraham: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance,

obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11:8.) The faith of the gospel, therefore, is called "the obedience of faith," (Rom. 16:26,) and to believe the gospel is to obey the gospel, as the Apostle speaks: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord who hath believed our report?" (Rom. 10:16.) When, therefore, we believe the gospel, as made the power of God unto our salvation, we obey the voice of the Beloved as speaking in and by it. "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice. Cause me to hear it." (Song 8:13.) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27.) As, then, the good Shepherd speaks, the sheep hear, and, as they hear, they believe and obey. The Prince of Peace sways his sceptre of love and grace over their hearts; they take his yoke upon them, which, by submission, they feel to be easy, and his burden to be light; and thus find rest unto their souls.

\* The word in the original never means to submit, but to lie, to flatter, to feign submission to a conqueror. See margin Psa. 66:3; 81:15.

But this unlimited dominion extends also over all *things*—all events and circumstances, as well as all persons. This is hard to believe, but, were it not so, what security would there be for the salvation of the Church of God? "All things are yours," says the Apostle; "things present and things to come, all are yours." But how and why are all things yours? "Because ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:22, 23.) But how could "all things" be ours, unless all things were subjected to the sovereign sway of Jesus? Again, we read that heart-cheering declaration: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) But how can "all things work together for good," unless these all things are in the hand, and under the supreme control of the Lord Jesus? for were any one thing exempt, that one thing, like a misplaced wheel in a piece of intricate mechanism, might make the whole machinery go wrong, and work for ill instead of good. At the end of the same noble chapter from which we have just quoted, the Apostle enumerates a whole series of dangerous and distressing incidents to a Christian course. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for slaughter." (Rom. 8:35, 36.) He then adds, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom. 8:37.) But how "in all these things" could the suffering saints of God be more than conquerors, if he that loved them had not supreme control over them? Rising in a glorious

climax of triumphant faith, he then declares: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (ver. 38, 39.) "Things present and things to come" must be under the sovereign control of Jesus, as well as "angels, principalities, and powers," or some of them in height, or some of them in depth, or some of them in creation, would be able to separate the saints from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord. Have we not said enough to show from the word of truth what many believe in doctrine, but few believe in real, heartfelt, practical experience, that all things, events, and circumstances are subjected to the sovereign control of the King of kings and Lord of lords?

**IV. But we now pass on to more difficult and delicate ground—the *future* extent of this Mediatorial reign.**

Now, at the very outset, we express our firm belief that this will be beyond all that has been ever witnessed, or seen, or known. To assert, as some are now asserting, that this present is the millennial dispensation, and that we are to have no other, is one of those wild, heady, unscriptural declarations which may be well expected from men who deny the true and proper Sonship of our adorable Lord. Can nothing content them but to strip Jesus of his "many crowns?" (Rev. 19:12.) First, they rob him of his dearest and eternal crown—that he is "the Son of the Father in truth and love," and now they will strike another from his head, and will not suffer that all nations shall call him blessed, or the whole earth be filled with his glory.

That Christ shall reign to an extent hitherto unknown is so clearly revealed in the word of truth that, to our mind, nothing but the most obstinate unbelief or inveterate prejudice can deny it. Whether this reign is to be a personal or a spiritual reign we shall not discuss. It has been the subject of much controversy, and our object is not to discuss vexed questions, but to bring forth out of a believing heart that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to our readers. But we cannot pass the subject by without expressing two convictions, founded, we trust, on the word of truth, as far as it has been opened up to our spiritual understanding:

1. That the reign of Jesus will be from sea to sea and from shore to shore; and
- 2, that this reign, whether personal or spiritual, will be in full accordance with every gospel doctrine, every heavenly truth, and every part of living

experience. We have no idea of a carnal kingdom, or any sympathy with those who by their sensual views of Christ's future reign have done so much to prejudice the minds of God's family against it. Man must ever be what he now is, a poor, fallen, sinful creature, whom the blood of Christ alone can save and the Spirit of Christ alone regenerate. What the blessed Spirit can do, when poured abundantly out, was seen on the day of Pentecost. No carnal paradise, no earthly delights, no worldly thrones or sceptres, no rivers of literal milk and honey, no amount of wheat, or wine, or oil, no abundance of the young of the flock and of the herd can satisfy the souls of those, whether few or many, now or hereafter, who come and sing in the height of Zion and flow together to the goodness of the Lord. Unless their *soul* be as a watered garden, watered with the blood and love of the Lamb, God's people would not, could not be satisfied with his goodness. (Jer. 31:12, 13, 14.) There will be an abundance of earthly peace and temporal prosperity in those happy days when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" but if all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord\* it can be no other glory than that seen by the saints now: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6.) This must be a spiritual glory, according to the Apostle's testimony: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.)

\* Have those who deny or ignore the future reign of Christ and his millennial glory ever considered this passage? "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." (Num. 14:21.) Is all the earth filled with his glory? Is there any present prospect of it? But how solemn the oath of God where he swears by his own eternal being, "As truly as I live." Is not God's oath one of those "two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie?" (Heb. 6:18.) And was not this the very nature and essence of the faith and patience of Abraham that he believed the word and oath of God, "and so after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise?" Whatever faith, then, or patience such men possess, it is quite clear they have not the faith or patience of father Abraham.

But whilst we believe that there will be a display of the future glory of Christ's Mediatorial kingdom such as earth has never yet witnessed, but which all the prophets have foretold in their highest strains, and as with one harmonious

voice, yet would we guard ourselves strictly against forecasting either the time or the manner of its accomplishment. When the disciples asked their risen Master, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" what was his answer? "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts 1:7.) He did not say that the kingdom should never be restored to Israel, but he checked their inquisitive spirit into God's sovereign disposal of the times and seasons, and bade them, by implication, not indulge in vain dreams of an earthly kingdom in which they should hold power and place; but directed their faith to the promised gift of the Holy Ghost and their own personal witness of him—a witness in faith and suffering, unto the uttermost part of the earth. No one thing has cast more contempt on the prophecies of the Old Testament and New than the innumerable rash attempts to settle dates and times for their fulfilment; for when these anticipated dates have been falsified by the events not then taking place, occasion has been taken from these mistakes to throw discredit on the prophecies themselves. We dare not, therefore, fix any date or time for the fulfilment of any one unfulfilled prediction.

Nor, again, do we venture to entertain in our own mind any idea of the *manner* in which the Lord will accomplish what he has promised. But this we will say, that we have no faith in missionary exertions, at least as at present exercised; or any hope that by huge mixed Societies of believer and unbeliever, or any cumbrous, worldly apparatus of subscriptions and donations, patrons, presidents, secretaries, and deputations, or by what are called revivals, or united prayer-meetings, or any similar means, the glory of the Son of God will be made to shine upon earth. No. The Lord will take his own way as well as his own time. No arm of flesh shall put the crown on his head, as no arm of flesh can take it off. Whatever attempts man may make, until "the Spirit be poured upon us from on high," the wilderness will not be a fruitful field. But when he sets his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, then his own way will be at once the mightiest, wisest, and best; and when accomplished, the whole fulfilment of his eternal promises to glorify his dear Son will be not only in the strictest accordance with the word of grace, but in harmony with every glorious perfection of a triune God.

We know by painful experience how unbelief and infidelity fight against this testimony of God to the manifest glory of his dear Son on earth. When, then, we feel so much unbelief within, can we wonder that in these last days there should be "scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the

promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. 3:3, 4.) Fixing the eye of sense on visible objects, and seeing "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," men naturally resist the declarations of God in his word, that there shall be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" and where they cannot and do not openly deny "the testimony of Jesus" which is the very "spirit of prophecy," they so qualify and explain away the express language of the Holy Ghost, as to amount to a virtual denial of his kingdom and glory beyond its present manifestation. No heart is naturally more unbelieving than that which beats in our bosom; but we cannot and dare not resist the testimony of God, which forces itself, as it were, upon us more and more as we examine the sacred page. When, for instance, we read such a testimony as this: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. 11:9,) we ask ourselves, "Are these the words of him that cannot lie?" Surely they are; for they are in the book of God. But are they fulfilled? Is the earth, at the present moment, as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea? How do the waters cover the sea—partially or fully? Who can say that the knowledge of the Lord, that knowledge of which Jesus says it is "eternal life," (John 17:3,) fully covers England, or one town, or one house, or one whole family in it? We must either, then, believe in the future fulfilment of such a promise, or deny that God means what he says. See, then, how the case stands, a case that has often tried us to the very quick. The submission of faith, or the denial of unbelief. There is no other alternative. Which of them, reader, is yours? But take another testimony. "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion, also, from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (Psa. 72:7, 8.) And again, "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." "His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed." (Verses 11, 17.) Are these predictions fulfilled? Do the righteous now flourish? Is there "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth?" Let America testify. Let the fields of Maryland, covered with 30,000 wounded or dying men, proclaim aloud, "Yes, this is the millennium. There is no other. This is the fulfilment of all the prophecies which proclaim, 'All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.' Is not the whole American nation serving the Prince of Peace, when brother meets brother on the battle-field? Is not the knowledge of the Lord covering Maryland as the waters cover the sea, when heaps of dying men strew her plains, and putrid corpses choke up her rivers?" But the booming cannon, the

**bursting shell, the volleys of musketry, the shrieks of the wounded, the groans of the dying, the wail of mothers and widows, and the very blood of the battlefield all cry, "No, no. This is not the domain of the Prince of Peace. This is rather hell broken loose upon earth than the binding of Satan; rather the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath than the pouring out of the Spirit from on high."**

**Wearied, then, and sick at the sight of such scenes of human sin and woe, our mind has sometimes felt a sweet relief in the belief that even this sin-worn world shall not always be what it now is, a very Aceldama, a field of blood and crime; that a day will come when "the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord and his name one." (Zech. 14:9.) Is this beyond the power or beyond the promises of God? "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," the Lord bade his disciples pray. Is that prayer yet accomplished? Is it ever to be? If not, why were the disciples taught to pray for what God never meant to grant? We might fill our pages with similar testimonies and with similar arguments, but we will content ourselves with one already referred to: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7:13, 14.) Is this testimony fulfilled? Do all people, nations, and languages serve the Son of man? Does China serve him, or Turkey? Or, not to mention heathen lands, does France, does Italy, does England serve him? We need not pursue the argument. It is such passages as these, the force of which we cannot evade or resist, which, after many years of thought and examination, as well as temptation, have made us come to the conclusion that if there be no future development and manifestation of the kingdom and dominion of Christ more than what is now seen, the testimony of God in the Scripture cannot be true. But "let God be true and every man a liar." Here faith rests; and here for the present we lay down our pen.**

## **VI.**

**The closing year admonishes us that it is time for us also to bring to a close our Meditations on the Office Characters of the Lord Jesus. Without further preface, then, we proceed to the consideration of the two remaining points**

which we proposed to examine in reference to the royal authority and power now exercised by the risen Son of God as Zion's anointed and enthroned King. These two points were,

1. The *duration* of his Mediatorial Kingdom;
2. The *experimental* influence and practical bearing which a knowledge of his royal sway has, or should have, upon believing hearts.

We shall now, then, with God's help and blessing, attempt to consider both these points in their order.

The *duration* of the Mediatorial reign of the blessed Lord we find most plainly and clearly intimated by the Apostle in that noble chapter which has so stirred and comforted the hearts of thousands of the saints of God. (1 Cor. 15:24.) We there read, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." These words clearly and definitely fix the period of the Lord's present reign as now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. "Then cometh the end." An end therefore is to come. But what end? An end to the present state of things—to the existing Mediatorial dispensation; an end to that peculiar form of government which Jesus now exercises. He is now on his throne of grace; but he has to sit on his throne of glory, according to his own words: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." He is now "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1.) But he is "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." When, then, he shall leave his Mediatorial throne "to judge the quick and dead at his appearing and kingdom;" (2 Tim. 4:1,) then his regal government, under its present form of administration, will cease.

But we must not suppose from this that he will cease to be King. Such a supposition would violate a thousand promises made by the Father to and on behalf of the Son of his love. We will content ourselves with adducing one from the Old Testament and another from the New: "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." Agreeing with this is the promise made by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary: "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his

kingdom there shall be no end." The kingdom then will remain, but the mode of administration be changed. It is now a kingdom of grace, but will then be a kingdom of glory. Christ now reigns *in* his people, but he will then reign *with* his people. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) He now sits as a priest on his throne;" (Zech. 6:13;) but when he appears a second time, without sin unto salvation, intercession will be no longer needed, for he will come and all his saints with him, and raising up their sleeping dust will present them to his Father conformed in body and soul to his own glorified image. The Apostle therefore tells us: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." When, then, he has destroyed this last enemy by the resurrection, his Mediatorial reign will cease, and a reign of glory commence, which shall endure for ever and ever.

V. But we now approach a part of our subject which is of the deepest importance as personally affecting the case and state of every one who professes to believe that Jesus reigns as King in Zion—the *experimental* and *practical* influence which a knowledge of this truth has or should have on believing hearts. If we have no experience of the reign of Christ in our own bosom, and his royal power and authority have no practical effect on our lives, there is little evidence that we know him or the power of his resurrection by the teaching and testimony of the Holy Ghost. We know his royal power only as far as we experience it; we experience it only as far as we act upon it. Thus the evidence of knowledge is experience, the evidence of experience is practice. See then the golden chain which binds truth, knowledge, experience, and practice together, and all to the throne of the King of Zion. He is himself "the truth;" a revelation of him gives a knowledge of it; a knowledge of the truth works an experience of it; an experience of the truth produces the practice of it. Thus truth is *in* Jesus; knowledge *from* Jesus; experience *out* of Jesus; and practice *after* Jesus. Is not the chain complete? What shall we add to or take from it? But do not all the links, so closely bound together, derive alike their union and their power from his kingly sway? And over whom does he wave his royal sceptre? Over believing hearts; for his reign is a reign of grace, and therefore demands gracious subjects; a spiritual kingdom, and is therefore set up and maintained by the power of the Spirit; a rule of love, and is therefore received by faith and embraced by affection. It is impossible, therefore, to dissociate his kingly authority from a gracious experience of its power, or the sceptre of his grace from a practical obedience to its rule. To separate truth from experience and experience from practice is to put asunder what God hath joined together; and woe be to the man who proclaims such a

divorce by his lips or by his life.

Let us, then, with the Lord's help and blessing, attempt to trace out this connection, and to do so with greater clearness we will view them separately, directing our attention first to the *experimental* influence which a knowledge of Christ's kingly authority has upon a believing heart.

i. Few words have been more misunderstood, and, as a necessary consequence misrepresented, than the term *experience*. It has actually been stigmatised as almost synonymous with corruption; and many a proud lip has angrily curled at the word, and many a libellous tongue hurled at it an arrow of contempt. But by the term is meant, at least by those who use it aright, a gracious knowledge of the truth. It thus comprehends the whole work of God upon the heart—every branch of the divine life in the soul. Without it, therefore, there is neither faith nor repentance, neither regeneration nor conversion; and to be without it is to be destitute of the Spirit of Christ and so to be none of his, to be dead in sins, without God and without hope in the world. By an experience, then, of the authority of Jesus as King in Zion we understand a spiritual, gracious, and saving acquaintance with his kingdom as set up in the heart by the power of God. This kingdom is an inward kingdom. "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21.) "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." (1 Cor. 4:20.) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." If, then, it be within us, there must be an internal perception of its presence; if it be in power, it must *do* something for and in us; if it be "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," there must be some spiritual tasting of these heavenly fruits. But before this kingdom can be set up in the heart there must be a breaking to pieces of every other kingdom there. This is beautifully shown in Daniel's vision of the image. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (2:34, 35.) The "stone cut out without hands" represents the Lord Jesus, a reference being intended to his human nature as not formed by ordinary generation; and the breaking to pieces of the feet\* of the image mystically foreshadows the wreck and ruin of everything which stands in the way of the setting up and full development of his kingdom. That Christ, then, may reign and rule in the heart, there must be a previous breaking to pieces of

**all other authority and power. The reign of sin must give way to the reign of grace; idols must be dethroned; rivals banished; lusts subdued; the flesh mortified and crucified; the old man put off, the new man put on. But who is sufficient for these things? Who will pluck out his own right eye, or cut off his own right hand? Who will drive the nails of crucifixion into his own quivering flesh? No one. The Lord, then, must do it all for and in us by his Spirit and grace. The means which he uses is his word, for "where the word of a king is, there is power;" and he himself says, "Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29.) To revert, then, to our figure, upon the toes of sin and self, on which the image stands, the stone falls and breaks them to pieces. This fracture brings down the image, and, with the same crash, the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, so that no place is found for them. In this way pride and self-righteousness, unbelief and infidelity, hypocrisy and vain confidence, carnality and worldly mindedness, sin and self in all their various shapes and forms, whether strong as iron, mean as clay, bright as brass, precious as silver, or glittering as gold, become smitten as with a deadly blow, and scattered to the winds of heaven, so as to form a compact and standing image no more. Now this fall and ruin of self makes way for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the heart. Jesus reveals himself to the soul, thus broken and humbled, as its Lord and King. He thus becomes known, believed in, and loved; and these three things, knowledge, faith, and love, lie at the foundation, and form the root of all gracious living experience.**

*\* We do not say there is not a prophetic sense of the passage besides the spiritual meaning here given.*

**Let us view them separately.**

**1. Unless we *know* the Lord, how can we trust him? for it is those, and those only, "who know his name," who can or will "put their trust in him." (Psa. 9:10.) Indeed, without a spiritual, experimental knowledge of the Son of God, there is no eternal life, for "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:1.) But how can we thus spiritually and savingly know him unless he manifests himself unto us as he doth not manifest himself to the world? (John 14:22.) As, then, he manifests himself, his divine Person and finished work, his surpassing grace, and heavenly glory, his matchless beauty and supreme blessedness, his complete suitability and all-satisfying sufficiency are clearly seen. This is to**

see light in God's light; (Psa. 36:9;) to be enlightened with the light of the living; (Psa. 56:13;) and to enjoy the blessing described by the Apostle: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6.)

2. This revelation of Christ gives a spiritual knowledge of him, and out of this knowledge of him springs *faith* in him; "I know," says the Apostle, "whom I have believed." (2 Tim. 1:12.) Of this faith Jesus is the author, and Jesus the finisher, for it stands "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (Heb. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:5.) But view this grace of faith chiefly as raised up and drawn forth upon the Person of Jesus as King of Zion. What is its first work? To give him a place in the heart. When Jesus reveals himself with power, faith immediately stretches forth its arms, and embraces him, and thus brings him into the soul. This is beautifully expressed by the Bride: "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." (Song 3:4.) It is by faith that Christ dwells in the heart, (Eph. 3:17,) for faith first gives him admission, and afterwards maintains him there.

3. And as faith works by love, *love* next flows forth to delight itself in him who is altogether lovely, and thus to enshrine him in the warmest, tenderest affections of the soul. This is the crowning grace of the Spirit, the richest, ripest fruit of the whole heavenly cluster. As, then, Jesus is thus known, believed in, and loved, by this threefold cord the heart is bound to his throne, and to him who sits thereon in the fulness of his Mediatorial grace and ascended glory.

4. From this knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him, springs *union* with him as the Church's living Head; for the same holy and blessed Spirit, through whose heavenly teaching and unction these graces are communicated, gives and cements by them a spiritual union with thus Son of God. (1 Cor. 6:17.)

5. From this spiritual union with the Lord flows *communion* or fellowship with him: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." This made holy John say, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3.)

6. From this communion flows *fruitfulness*, as the Lord so beautifully opens up in the parable of the vine and the branches.\* How plainly he there declares that "without him," that is, without union and communion with him, we can "do nothing," that is, bring forth no fruit to his praise; but that, if we "abide in him" by faith and love, and he "abides in us" by his Spirit and grace, fruit will be abundantly brought forth to the glory of God. (John 15:4-8.)

\* The whole of this beautiful chain of vital godliness may be found by a spiritual eye, in those wondrous chapters wherein the Lord comforted his sorrowing disciples: John 14, 15, 16, 17. 1. The *glory* of Christ with his Father: 17:5, 11, 24. 2. The *manifestation* of Christ to the soul: 14:21, 22; 16:16, 22. 3. A saving *knowledge* of Christ: 14:19 16:14, 15. 4. *Faith* in him: 14:1, 10, 11, 29; 16:27; 17:8. 5. *Union* with him: 14:20; 15:5; 17:21, 23. 6. *Communion*: 15:4, 7, 10, 11. 7. *Fruitfulness*: 15:2, 5, 16.

ii. We thus see the necessary connection between an experience of the kingly power of Jesus, and all real *practical obedience* to his will and word, all inward and outward submission to his sovereign sway and divine authority. Of this obedience love is the main-spring: "The love of Christ constraineth us." (2 Cor. 5:14.) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3.) Does not our blessed Lord himself say, "If ye love me, keep my commandments?" Nay, so closely is obedience connected with love, that, not only is it made the test of it, but the very manifestations of Christ are closely connected with it. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:21.) Practical obedience; a godly, consistent conduct and conversation; a daily walking in the fear and love of God; a fruitfulness in every good word and work; a living not unto ourselves but unto the Lord; a seeking of God's glory and not our own; a desire to do good to the bodies and souls of our fellow men; and a cleansing ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, by the word of God's grace. All such and similar fruits of faith are generally left out of the Calvinistic profession of the present day. Good works are left to the Arminians. The very word would desecrate, it is thought, a Calvinistic pulpit, and to enforce them would seem to smack too strongly of free-will and self-righteousness to please the pew. But though left out of the ministry of the day, and left out of the practice of the people, they are not left out of the book of God, nor out of the consciences of those who truly fear and love him; and it will be seen in the great day how far they have been safely left out of the profession and practice of many who are considered by themselves

and others champions of truth. But whatever such men may think or say, the word of God bears a sure, an unerring testimony that "holiness becometh the house of the Lord for ever," and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Psa. 93:5; Heb. 12:14.)

Thus far, then, have we seen what a holy, sanctifying influence a true experimental knowledge of Christ as Lord and King has over a believer's heart and life. His throne, though to our unspeakable comfort a throne of grace, is at the same time "a throne of holiness." (Psa. 47:8.) The hill of Zion on which the Father has set his Son is a "holy hill." (Psa. 2:6.) To that holy throne, to that holy hill, sinners are welcome, but not sin. If we serve the Lord it must be with fear; if we rejoice in him it must be with trembling. (Psa. 2:11.)

But it is time for us to bring our Meditations to a close. Our desire and aim in them have been to bring before our readers the Mediatorial grace and glory of the exalted Son of God, as Priest, Prophet, and King, to his redeemed and regenerated people; and in pursuance of this object, we have sought to make our Meditations edifying and profitable, by not handling these sacred topics as mere matters of doctrinal speculation, but as blessed experimental themes of heavenly meditation and practical efficacy and influence. We cannot but feel how weakly, how imperfectly, we have treated these heavenly mysteries; but they have not been handled by us without some thought and care, as well as prayer for divine instruction for ourselves, and a spiritual blessing upon them for our readers. We have not written carelessly for careless readers; but whilst we have endeavoured "to hold fast the faithful word as we have been taught, so as to be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," we have also aimed so to blend experience with doctrine, and practice with experience, as to edify the living family of God. They will be both our best and most lenient judges, for as they, and they only, know the value and blessedness of the subjects which we have brought before them, so they, and they only, will throw a mantle of love over our imperfections.

And now what remains but to beg of the Lord that, as these Meditations on his Office Characters were written to magnify the exceeding riches of his grace, so he would make them redound to the praise of his glory. Amen.