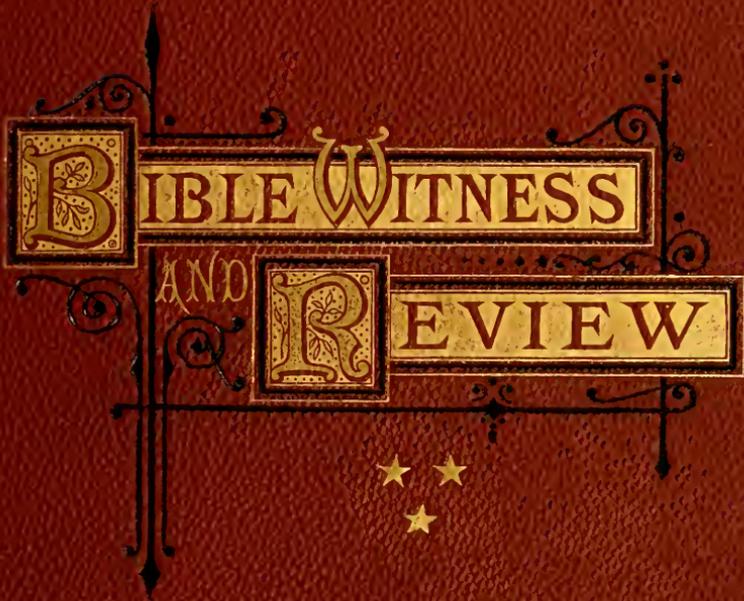


BIBLE **W**ITNESS
AND **R**EVIEW



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FOR
THE PRESENTATION AND DEFENCE OF
REVEALED TRUTH

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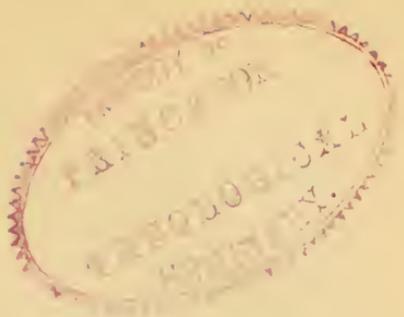
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REDEMPTION.



RESTORATION to a condition of innocence, such as Adam and Eve have alone known upon earth, is clearly impossible. By the fall the knowledge of good and evil was acquired, and man got a nature which is enmity against God (Rom. viii. 7). Continuance for ever in the condition spiritual and physical, which was engendered by the fall, would be dreadful to contemplate. Yet deliverance from it by his own power is what man can never achieve. Redemption, therefore, becomes a necessity, if the consequences of the fall are not always to be experienced by members of the race of Adam. For creatures we are, called into being at the will of the Creator, each alike possessing a soul that never dies, which dwells, whilst the man is upon earth, in a body which never can be annihilated. Were redemption unheard of, how truly wretched would be our prospect! Were it impossible, how had the enemy triumphed, by involving in ruin inevitable the whole race of beings, on the head of which God the Creator had once looked, and saw that it was very good (Gen. i. 31)! But the Bible treats of redemption *ἀπολύτρωσις* by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and assures all who believe on Him that they share in it already (Ephes. i. 7; Col. i. 14), even the forgiveness of sins, whilst awaiting that exercise of divine power, which will effect the redemption of their bodies (Rom. viii. 23). The subject, then, is one of great importance and of world-wide interest, since it concerns Israel, Jerusalem, our souls, our bodies, and the purchased possession, to the enjoyment of which, with the Lord Jesus Christ, believers are taught to look forward (Ephes. i. 14, iv. 30). Far-reaching have been the results of sin, widely extended will be the effects of redemption, but all of God, to whose activity in grace we are,

and for ever shall be, indebted for it. In both Testaments do we read of it. In Old Testament times Israel sang of it. In the present day Christians commemorate it.

But whilst each has known a redemption which can never be reversed, both are taught to await redeeming power in the future. Israel sang of redemption by power. Christians speak of redemption by blood ; and await the exercise of redeeming power on their behalf. Standing that memorable morning on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, an emancipated people, their chains of slavery broken by the arm of Jehovah, beholding their former masters dead at their feet, Israel joined in that song, the first that we meet with as coming from the lips of men in the pages of Holy Writ, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea" (Exod. xv. 1). And the women following Miriam took up the refrain, all joyous together in their first hour of freedom from the galling servitude of their Egyptian taskmasters. Cries of distress had before this ascended up to the Lord, as man's wickedness and unrighteousness had forced them from the heart of his victim (Exod. ii. 23). A song of praise to God from fallen man was never heard, that we read of, till the Lord interposed in power, and sent redemption unto His people. God had to act on Israel's behalf, ere, from lips accustomed to cry to Him out of the depths of sorrow, praise could to Him flow forth. Oppression was the work of Satan and of his instruments ; their redemption could only be effected by God. He alone could fill their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with singing.

But not only will Israel be able thus to speak of the past : for again will they experience the hostility of man and of the enemy, to be followed by redemption, the prelude to millennial blessing : the former to be allowed by God, because, their fathers having rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, they will be under the power of antichrist as the nation's king ; the latter to be accomplished by God in mercy to His faithful remnant. Of this the prophets have written (Isai. lii. 3 ;

Hosea xiii. 14 ; Jer. l. 33, 34) ; for it the Psalmist prayed, and Jewish saints will yet lift up their voice (Ps. xxv. 22, cxxx. 7, 8 ; Isai. lxiv.) ; to it looked forward the godly remnant, of which Anna the prophetess formed part (Luke ii. 38) ; of this, too, Zacharias sang (Luke i. 74) ; and with reference to it the Lord Jesus Christ gave instructions to His disciples when on the Mount of Olives shortly before His death (Luke xxi. 28).

Previous, however, to the exodus, redemption was experienced, and was spoken of as well. Abraham, we read, was redeemed by God (Isai. xxix. 22). Jacob on his dying bed made mention of the angel who had redeemed him **לְמַצַּח** from all evil (Gen. xlviii. 16). Eliphaz the Temanite could speak of it, and remind Job of God, who in famine could redeem from death those subject to divine correction (Job v. 20). Elihu, too, speaks of it, and declares that the sinner even could be redeemed, or delivered **מִפְּתַח** from the pit (xxxiii. 24, 28). But Job surpassed them both in his thoughts of God, when he expressed confidence in his redeemer **וְיֹשֵׁל**, who, then living, would take up his cause at the last, and the patriarch, suffering as he was at that moment in his body, would nevertheless in resurrection see God (xix. 25).

The patriarchs then were no strangers to the thought of redemption, and that at the hand of God ; yet neither its character, nor its measure, as they knew it, would satisfy saints of the Christian dispensation. The character of it, as they experienced it, would not satisfy us to whom the future has been revealed ; for they were temporal deliverances from evil, or divine visitations, which they knew, or expected. Deliverance from the judgment of God for eternity is that which especially interests us. The measure of it, too, would not meet the requirements of our case. For all that Jacob or Job's friends spoke of could not assure the one thus redeemed of entrance into a condition before God at once full of blessing, and enduring.

After the exodus, redemption similar to that above mentioned, saints, as David, experienced (2 Sam. iv. 9 ; 1 Kings i. 29) and Jeremiah was promised (Jer. xv. 21). Redemption from death

the Psalmist knew (Psalms lxxi. 23, ciii. 4) and looked for (Psalm lxix. 18), and Israel will enjoy. Of this, too, Jeremiah could speak (Lam. iii. 58); whilst of man's inability to give to God a ransom for his brother, that death should not overtake him, we are admonished in a psalm for the sons of Korah, in which same inspired composition we are taught that God can preserve His own alive (xlix. 7, 8, 15). By and by redemption of the poor and needy from deceit and violence will be a marked feature of Messiah's reign (Psalm lxxii. 14), when precious will their blood be in His sight. Thus in all ages redemption by God from trouble, danger, or even impending death, could be known and enjoyed, and in this aspect it is of course independent of dispensational position or national connection, its two essential requisites being a human creature in need, and God willing to rescue him from it. The need might be great, and often recurring; the danger might be imminent, death staring the man in the face; the person, too, might be friendless, as far as man was concerned; yet even if fatherless he could find in God a redeemer *גֹּאֵל* *Goel* (Prov. xxiii. 10, 11), as much as the Lord's anointed (Psalm xix. 14), or Job (xix. 25), or the nation of Israel as a whole (Isaiah xli. 14).

But what are we to understand by redemption as set forth in Holy Writ? It is deliverance from a condition, and may be effected in various ways. Hence it differs from purchase, which implies a change of ownership. A slave purchased changes his master, one redeemed changes his condition. If the special subject is the one redeemed, his change of condition is before the mind. If the subject be how he was redeemed, the price paid, the power exercised, according as his redemption was effected by price or by power, will be present to the writer's thoughts. If the former is more particularly treated of, his redemption is especially brought into view; if the latter, the redeemer will occupy a marked place in the mental vision.

As regards God's people, whether earthly or heavenly, they are both purchased and redeemed. In Exod. xv. 13, 16, both are stated of Israel. In 1 Cor. vi. 20, and Ephes. i. 7, we have

authority for the statements in connection with Christians. But purchase may be predicated of people not redeemed, and can now be affirmed of all men (Matt. xiii. 44), though all have not been redeemed (2 Peter ii. 1). As purchased, however, responsibility to serve the Lord attaches to all who have heard of Him, though love to the One who has bought them may not thereby be engendered. A slave purchased of an old master would be bound to serve his new master, whether the purchase took place with his consent or not. It is the ownership which determines to whom the service should be rendered. But who would remain indifferent to the one who has redeemed him? Purchase attests the rights of the buyer; redemption reminds us of the love and compassion of the redeemer.

Pursuing our investigation of the subject, let us first confine our attention to redemption as set forth in the Old Testament, wherein we meet with two terms commonly used to express it, viz. **נָצַל**, to set free what was bound, and **פָּדָה**, to divide or separate, hence to redeem. Two other verbs are each once translated in A. V. to redeem, viz. **פָּרַק** (Psalm cxxxvi. 24), and **קָנָה** (Neh. v. 8). The former of these treats of deliverance, the latter of acquiring possession in order to redeem. Without, then, concerning ourselves any further with these latter verbs, let us turn to the consideration of the use of the two words so commonly employed, **נָצַל** and **פָּדָה**. At times both occur together, *e.g.* "The Lord hath redeemed **פָּדָה** Jacob, and ransomed him **נָצַל** from the hand of him that was stronger than he" (Jer. xxxi. 11). Again, "I will ransom them **אֶפְדֶּם** from the power of the grave, I will redeem them **אֶנְצִלֵם** from death" (Hosea xiii. 14). See also Isaiah xxxv. 9, 10; li. 10, 11; Lev. xxvii. 27, 28, 29; Psalm lxix. 18. Both verbs are used, too, of the redemption out of Egypt, **נָצַל** being met with in Exod. vi. 6, xv. 13, and **פָּדָה** in Deut. vii. 8, ix. 26, xxi. 8. Both, too, are met with where the deliverance, still future, is treated of (Isaiah lii. 3; Psalm cxxx. 8). On the other hand, there are occasions on which one is always used, and never the other. For instance, where the kinsman was required by law to act, we have always the

participle of נָצַל; and wherever the Lord Jehovah is called the Redeemer of Israel or of Jerusalem, it is always by the term נִצְּלָה that He is mentioned. He is the *Goel* of His people, though He can be described as one who redeems פִּדְּהָ *Podch* His servants from the dangers which threaten them (Psalm xxxiv. 22), as well as the One who redeemed Israel from the house of bondage (Deut. xiii. 6). When writing then of what God is in this character, He is always called the *Goel*. When mentioning what He does as such, He can be described as the *Podch*. And when Moses writes (Exod. xxi. 30) of the owner of a malicious ox having to ransom his own life by reason of the homicidal act of his beast, פְּדוּתֶיךָ, ransom, from פִּדְּהָ, is employed. Again, where the redemption of the firstborn is written about, whether of man or of beast, פִּדְּהָ is the verb generally selected; but where houses, lands, or tithes are the subject, נִצְּלָה is met with (Lev. xxv. xxvi.) Hence these two words, though freely used, and often applied to the same things, are not after all interchangeable. The Psalmist, for instance, more often uses פִּדְּהָ; with Isaiah it is just the reverse.

By the law the subject of redemption was brought into great prominence. As a nation Israel had shared in it. As a settled people, in the possession of houses, lands, and animals, they were frequently reminded of it; and were taught subject to what conditions they could exercise the power of redemption on behalf either of themselves, their brethren, their houses, lands, or animals. For all these could be redeemed under certain specified conditions. From the claims of man, and from the claims of God, deliverance could be effected, and that whether they had arisen from the voluntary act of an individual subjecting himself or his possessions to the power of another, or from causes beyond any man's control. We will look at the subject in this order, taking up first those cases where the claims of man were in question, next where the claims of God had to be met, both arising from the voluntary act of an Israelite. After that we will consider redemption from Egyptian bondage, the bringing out Israel from under the power of their oppressors, and the

redemption of their firstborn males from the claim which God made upon them.

And first of the claims of man arising from the voluntary act of an Israelite. These are set forth in Lev. xxv. Suppose a poor man of the race of Israel had fallen into poverty, and had parted with some of his land, its redemption by money was his right, of which none could legally deprive him. Any of his kin could redeem it, or, if able, he himself might do it, on payment of the equitable price (xxv. 27). The Lord thus watched over him, and preserved him from the oppression and the rapacity of the richer man who had purchased it. In the year of Jubilee, indeed, it would go out free, and the poor man would regain possession of it as unencumbered as when Israel first inherited it, yet at any time short of that the portion sold could be redeemed. The poor, the needy, were God's charge. He took them under His protection; for, poor though they might be, they belonged to Israel; and the land in question belonged to the Lord (Josh. xxii. 19), who had the exclusive right, as here exercised, of prescribing the terms on which any should enjoy its produce, or reap the benefit of its fertility. Strictly righteous as between man and man was this provision, yet how gracious! The purchaser bought it on well-known conditions, and no mental reservation nor legal quibble could bar the right of the vendor to be reinstated in his possession before the Jubilee came round. Where else upon earth were such laws in force? Who but the poor Israelite enjoyed such an advantage? But this provision implied ability either in the man, or in his kin, to redeem it. If able himself, or if his kindred were able, it could be done. If not, he must abide the consequences of his act of sale till the Jubilee arrived. How easily but for the privilege of the Jubilee would he have lost his land for ever, then became apparent. And, that he did not lose it for ever, he owed solely to this gracious enactment of his God. His poverty might compel a sale; God could not be blamed for that. Its redemption by the law was permitted, though it could give no ability to those concerned to avail themselves of it. And this is the

principle of law throughout. There must be power in man to reap advantage from it. If in such a case it was lacking, nothing but the Jubilee deliverance could be expected. How precious to Israel will the Jubilee appear, when they shall return to their land, which they have not been able to redeem from the hands of the stranger! How interesting to us is this Jubilee provision, a rehearsal as it were of what God has in store for His people in spite of all their failure!

With a house in a walled city the case was different. Within a year from its sale redemption was permitted. None were to be deprived of the opportunity of changing their mind, or to be taken irrevocable advantage of unawares. If, however, it was not redeemed within that time, it became the absolute property of the purchaser, and the vendor had no further right by himself or by his kin to claim its redemption at all. The reason for this difference between the land and the house in a walled town is evident. The land was the man's patrimony, the house in the city was not. His patrimony the Lord carefully guarded. The house, however, was the Israelite's own, to do as he pleased with it. In the case of the Levites, who had cities with their suburbs assigned to them—for they shared not in the tribal division of the land—their cities and houses could be redeemed at any time, being treated as land, which could not be permanently alienated from the tribe to which it belonged, except under certain conditions (Lev. xxvii. 20, 21); and they enjoyed this further advantage, in that the suburbs of the fields of their possessions could never be sold. They were theirs for an inalienable possession. The Lord specially cared for those whom He had taken up to do the service of the tabernacle, and to minister to Aaron the high priest.

But suppose a poor Israelite had fallen into a condition still lower, and had sold himself to a stranger, or sojourner by him, he could be redeemed from servitude by the payment of an equitable price any time before the year of Jubilee (xxv. 47-55). One of his brethren could redeem him, or any near of kin, or he himself, if able, could effect his deliverance. One of his kin, however,

it must be, if not himself. A friend could not do him this service. In such a case mere friendship, however true and great, had no opportunity to display itself. Relationship alone was the ground on which such a kindness could be shown. A privilege this was, but a right as well. It was a privilege for one of his kin to deliver his poor relation from the yoke of the stranger. It was also a right which could be claimed at law ; and his master, whatever might be his wish, had no power to gainsay it. If the proper price was offered, the master could ask no more. And God fixed the scale which regulated the price. If it was one of the man's kin who paid it, or the man himself, the redemption was accomplished. These conditions complied with, the Israelite was free. But if he had sold himself to one of his countrymen, he had no power to claim his redemption. In such a case he was to serve till the Jubilee (xxv. 40). From servitude to the stranger he might be redeemed, for the poor Israelite was Jehovah's servant. The Lord, however, did not interpose and secure his deliverance, He only allowed it, leaving it to those interested to see if they could effect it. At the Jubilee the poor man would certainly get free. Liberty therefore was secured to him, the only question being how, and when. But why the difference of regulation between the case of servitude to an Israelite and to a stranger? Is there not here something in harmony with the future of the nation? The Lord Himself will act as the *Goel* or Redeemer of Israel who have become servants to strangers ; and will rescue them from subjection to a foreign, not a domestic yoke. The year of His redeemed will come. In that sense it will be to them as a Jubilee. But the moment for action the Lord reserves to Himself to decide, as the *Goel* or redeemer under the law had a right to do. Here again we have a little picture of the future.

Further, although redemption from servitude to the stranger could be demanded as a right, all parties were reminded that it was the special privilege of Israel. A bondsman from among the nations was a bondsman for ever. For him no year of

Jubilee arrived with its clear ringing trumpet sound, sending a thrill of gladness through his heart, and that of his wife and family, if he possessed them. No redemption by money could he claim, no going out free could he anticipate; for though equally with the Israelite he might trace his genealogy up to Noah, and through him to Adam, and although made of one blood with the seed of Jacob (Acts xvii. 26), he was not one of God's redeemed people, so could not share in the privileges of such (Lev. xxv. 44-46). Suppose an Israelite and a Gentile in the service of a stranger in Canaan; both were bound to serve their master; but the Israelite might be redeemed at any moment, or would certainly go out free at the Jubilee, whereas the Gentile had nothing but slavery to contemplate, unless his master voluntarily set him free. His condition therefore might never alter till death released him from his servitude. With the Israelite how different! How precious must that privilege have appeared in the eyes of the Gentile, which his fellow-bondsman the Israelite possessed!

But other claims there were besides those of man. Of these Lev. xxvii. treats. God had a claim on whatever had been sanctified by a vow, provided one legally qualified had consecrated it to God. For a married woman had not this power without her husband's sanction, and the unmarried daughter in her father's house was equally incapable of so acting unless her father allowed it. But a man, or a widow, or a divorced woman, was free to vow without the consent of another to make it valid, and the Lord would certainly require the fulfilment of it (Num. xxx.) His claims must be enforced. The act on the part of the person was merely a voluntary one. No law enforced it, but the law forbade most strictly the breaking of it (Deut. xxiii. 21-23). Men, animals, houses, lands, and tithes could be vowed to God. Of these some could be redeemed, others could not. If a clean beast, of which sacrifices could be offered, was the subject of the vow, that beast was holy unto the Lord, and no exchange was permitted of a bad one for a good one. The very animal sanctified was to be offered upon the altar. If any ex-

change was attempted, God claimed both. Besides this, for things devoted, called *cherem*, as men under certain circumstances, or animals, or a field, no redemption was permitted. Every devoted thing was most holy unto the Lord (Lev. xxvii. 28, 29). Under these circumstances the life of the man was to be taken, whilst the beast and the field were for the Lord, and if they had belonged to any in Israel, were given by God to the priest (Num. xviii. 14). Instances of this law as affecting men we have in the Old Testament. The Canaanites were thus to be devoted (Deut. xx. 17), and their cities Israel vowed to destroy (Num. xxi. 2). So every living thing in Jericho was killed, Rahab and her house excepted. The Amalekites too were to be thus treated by Saul (1 Sam. xv.), and enticers to idolatry in Israel (Deut. xiii. 15). And in fulfilment of such a vow Jephthah slew his daughter (Judges xi. 31). How inexorable was the law Jephthah felt. How dangerous to fail in the observance of it Saul learnt.

If men were vowed to the Lord, but not devoted, a money payment was accepted according to the estimation of the lawgiver. "The person," we read, "shall be for the Lord by thy estimation," which varied according to age and sex. The value of the person vowed having been ascertained, the price could be paid in his stead. If a certain measure of poverty could be pleaded by the one who made the vow, the priest was to estimate the price according to the ability of the man who had vowed to the Lord. The lawgiver had announced from God Himself the ordinary scale, from which no departure could be permitted, except at the discretion of the priest. Thus no man was released from the consequences of his vow, yet God provided that the man's ability should be taken into account. On no man was to be laid more than he could pay, yet the engagement, though voluntary on his part, was binding when once entered into. A solemn consideration this was for the man. A word of warning surely for us, who are taught that we have of ourselves no strength or ability wherewith to pay any vows we might make unto God. Whether the redemption in this

case was optional or imperative does not seem so certain. It may have been imperative. In that case the making such a vow was equivalent to devoting a certain sum of money to God, for the one who made it must have known pretty nearly to what the money commutation would amount. There were, however, instances where persons vowed to the service of God were never thus redeemed. Of such Samuel is an example, lent to the Lord as long as he lived.

For unclean beasts, if vowed to God, for houses, for fields, or for tithes, redemption by price was permitted. Here the priest came in. He valued the thing, whatever it was, and his estimation held good; for as a type surely of the true priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, his estimation was correct: "As thou valuest it, who art the priest, so shall it be;" "as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand" (Levit. xxvii. 12, 14). The value thus fixed, a fifth part was to be added if redemption was to take place, and the former owner thereby recover that which had once belonged to him; but in these cases, unless the one who had owned them exercised his right of redemption they could never be set free. The person who had sanctified them could alone redeem them. With the land the provision was somewhat different; for if the field sanctified originally belonged to another person than the one who sanctified it, it returned at the Jubilee to the original possessor, since no one could permanently alienate the land of another. If, on the other hand, it had been the property of the one who sanctified it, he had the right, till the Jubilee, of redeeming it on the terms prescribed in the law. But should he fail to exercise his right, from whatever cause, it became the Lord's for ever.

In the case, then, where man's claims had to be met, redemption by the individual concerned, or by his kinsman, was permitted. In the cases where God's claims were in question, redemption, if permitted, could only be effected by the one who had made the vow. In both classes of claims redemption depended on human ability, and perhaps, in the case of the

poor brother's land, in his kinsman's willingness likewise. If none redeemed the land, or the poor Israelite, the Jubilee set both free. So that the poor man could always look forward where man's claims were in question. All the time till the Jubilee he might live in a state of expectancy, with the certainty of a release, and re-entrance upon the land of his possession as soon as the Jubilee trumpet sounded. But the Jubilee did not restore the field to the one who had sanctified it to the Lord. Till the Jubilee, unless he had sold the field to another, he had the right to redeem it. But the trumpet which announced to the poor man the recovery of his possessions, proclaimed to the one who, having sanctified his field, had not redeemed it, the irrevocable condition of his property. It was henceforth the Lord's. The claims of God, if unsatisfied within a given time, could never be met. The claims of man, on the other hand, could only last up to a given date. The year of the Lord's redeemed would come, when every one in Israel who had parted with his land to another could return to his own possession. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). Happy was the poor man who had a kinsman to act on his behalf. Happy he would feel if he could deliver himself or his land. But privileged above all other people were Israel; for they could share in the gracious provisions of the Jubilee. Thus God provided that they should not be permanently dispossessed of their inheritance. Restoration was their proper hope, and of that they shall never be ashamed. With a vow it was different. But a vow implied that the man had something to consecrate. It was poverty that made the poor brother part with his land. Out of a man's fulness, whatever was the measure of it, he vowed to God.

Now, is all this but dry and uninteresting law, which once concerned Israel when in the enjoyment of that land of which for centuries they have been dispossessed? Surely there is more in it than that. The regulations, being of God, acquaint us with His ways, and show us how great a privilege those enjoy whose God is the Lord. The Jubilee was, as it were, their pole-star and

their dial. To it they could always turn, regulating their transactions by it, and recalling to mind the time which must elapse ere it could be proclaimed. It however conferred on them no new privilege. It gave them nothing that they had not before possessed. It only provided for restoration to a condition formerly enjoyed. Thus it kept alive hope in their hearts ; and this is a principle in God's ways with His people in all ages. And we who are saved in hope understand what that principle must have been to them. As keeping alive hope in them, it told them that a permanent order of things upon earth had not yet been established, and we know such cannot be until the Lord Jesus shall come to reign. Moreover, it witnessed of the possibility of a man losing his portion in the land ; but it witnessed, too, of the grace of God, who provided for the certainty of his recovering it. He might lose it by his own fault ; he would recover it through the favour of the Lord, by the operation of this law, and this he would owe solely to God's mercy and goodness. What a tale, then, the Jubilee told on the one hand of man, and on the other of God : of man, that he could lose for a time that which God had assigned to him ; of God, that Israel should not be deprived of their possessions in perpetuity.

But whilst the Jubilee witnessed of this, doubtless the provisions for redemption must at times have made the poor Israelite keenly alive to the precariousness of such a hope of deliverance ere the trumpet sounded, since that hope rested for its fulfilment on man's ability, and perhaps on a kinsman's willingness as well to come to his assistance. How much better has God provided for us, who have " an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time " (1 Peter i. 4, 5). Surely those to whom Peter wrote, who had once been Jews, must have noted the difference between being on the ground of law and on the ground of grace ; and the immeasurable advantage in favour of the latter. The law contemplated the possibility of Israel

losing their portion for a time. The strangers scattered abroad were illustrations of it. Grace provided for its safe keeping for ever, and for their safe keeping to enjoy it. What a poor prospect we should have if our redemption depended in any measure on our ability to effect it! Besides this, the regulations about vows, and the strict enforcement of their fulfilment, must have made them see, and should make us see, what a solemn thing it is to enter into engagements with God. For unless the man himself was able to pay that which was requisite, he could not set free what he had once sanctified. To vow to God was no light matter. The man was to feel that. To redeem that which he had vowed might be a very difficult matter. The man had to learn that, and none could help him where the claims of God were concerned; he must act for himself, and in his own strength.

But all these provisions were for a nation in the enjoyment of redemption from Egyptian bondage, and recognised by Jehovah as His peculiar people. They were themselves redeemed before they could act in redeeming power. In the cases already looked at, the need of redemption arose from the person's own act in putting himself or his possessions under the power of another. But redemption was requisite, and was accomplished in setting living creatures free from a condition to which they had been subjected either by God's will, or by God's law. By the exercise of the former it was, that Israel became servants to the Egyptians, and so needed redemption from bondage to their masters. By provisions of the latter, the firstborn males of man and of unclean beasts amongst Israel, which were holy to the Lord, could be set free from God's claims over them. Into this let us now look, taking these two subjects up in the order in which they have been severally mentioned.

First, then, of the redemption of Israel out of the house of bondage. Here we enter upon a subject of great importance, and it teaches us what redemption by God involves. It was new, and something unheard of, that God should redeem a whole nation. The patriarchs had, it is true, tasted of what

God could do in redeeming them individually from evil, but never as a whole nation, set free from servitude to another nation stronger and mightier than they were. Nothing like it had ever before been known (Deut. iv. 34). We can understand a nation rising up in its strength to shake off a galling yoke, and, if unable alone to cope with its foe, interesting others in its behalf. But Israel did nothing of this kind. There was no national movement, no combination amongst them against the common enemy, no rising up with irresistible might, to compel their masters to set them free. All that Israel did was to spoil the Egyptians by borrowing their jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and then marching out of Egypt, and passing through the Red Sea, at the word of command by Moses. They lifted up no arm, they struck no blow, they never even attempted to measure their strength with that of their enslavers. Egypt's power was unbroken when Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, and thence to the Red Sea before Pi-hahiroth ; brought out with a high hand, in the sight of all the Egyptians, who were engaged in burying their dead (Num. xxxiii. 4). Hence it was that Pharaoh and his princes, waking up to that which they had done in letting Israel escape, determined to pursue after them, saying, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made ready his chariots, and summoned his people. All that had been done, had been done of God.

New, too, was the thought to Israel, the lineal descendants of Jacob, that God could act in such a way ; for when Moses, commissioned by the Lord, gave the message, "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem ^{אֶתְּ}יְכֶם ^{בְּ}זְרוֹעַ ^{אֲרוּמָה} מְשֻׁטָה, and I will redeem ^{אֶתְּ}יְכֶם ^{בְּ}יָד ^{אֲרוּמָה} מְשֻׁטָה you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments" (Exod. vi. 6), those heart-stirring words fell on ears dull of hearing. Israel knew not what a redemption of this kind could be. They hearkened not "for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." Their manner of receiving the divine communication evidenced that it was something new. But how like God to act in a man-

ner at once unprecedented, and to man inconceivable! God originates; men and the devil may imitate. All, however, that Moses told them came true. So, when next we meet with the verb לְפָדוּם to *redeem*, it is Israel who, with Moses, make use of it in their song of praise: "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: בְּיָדְךָ יְיָ ; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation" (Exod. xv. 13). Redemption from Egyptian bondage was now accomplished. In Egypt, with the blood on the doorposts, they had learnt how the firstborn within had been sheltered from the visit of the angel of death. At the Red Sea the whole nation experienced redemption by divine power, and they celebrated it. Their chains of slavery were broken, for the arm of Jehovah had been bared on their behalf. Henceforth they were God's redeemed people; and this condition once entered upon, never altered; for redemption from Egyptian bondage never was and never can be reversed. Without effort on their part was all accomplished. It was for God to act; it was for them, in obedience, to march into the bed of the sea, when told to go forward. The effects were immediate; the results were abiding. This their history elucidates, proving on what unchanging ground redemption by God had placed them.

At Sinai, less than six months after the exodus, they made a golden calf to worship, forfeiting thereby all claim to blessing, and deserving punishment; and this God intimated to Moses, when He said, "Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them" (Exod. xxxii. 10). But Moses would not. He interceded for them as the redeemed of Jehovah (Deut. ix. 26). Again, at Kadesh, after they had despised the pleasant land, and murmured against the Lord, and actually proposed to return into Egypt, surrendering in a moment all their privileges and their special position as the Lord's people, Moses reminded God that He had brought them up from amongst the Egyptians in His might (Num. xiv. 13); how, then, should He destroy them with the pestilence? They were His people. Thus, on these two

occasions in their past history, when their sinfulness might justly have entailed their cutting off, Moses, by the ground he took with God, evidenced how well he understood the value of such a plea ; and when again they shall be in the depths of trouble, the consequence of their fathers' sins in having rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost by Stephen and others, redemption from Egypt will still be urged as a ground on which God should be gracious to them (Psalm lxxiv. 2). Thus, at all times, when God is dealing with them as His people, however grievous their sins may have been, or however desperate their condition, the plea of redemption accomplished will prove to be never out of season. God's wrath can be deprecated, and His favour entreated, on the ground that they are His people, whom He brought up out of Egypt.

Nor was it only when judicial dealing was deserved that such a plea was urged. If the body of a man was found in the land, the murderer of whom was unknown, the elders of the city nearest the spot where it was discovered were instructed to say, "Be merciful, O Lord, unto Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge" (Deut. xxi. 8). The people were thus taught the value, and the privilege of their exceptional position as a nation which God had chosen for Himself, and though their deliverance was a thing of the past, they were never to forget it, and were reminded that God would ever acknowledge it. So, later on in their history, when the returned remnant were in much weakness in their land, the wall of Jerusalem broken down, and the gates of it burned with fire, Nehemiah could lay this pitiable state before God, as that of His people whom He had redeemed by His great power and by His strong hand (Neh. i. 10). A thousand years intervened between the exodus and the days of Nehemiah, yet Israel's redemption by divine power was not forgotten ; and the Tirshatha, as he was afterwards styled, had evidence of the validity before God of the plea which was based upon it. They were God's servants and God's people, however much they had

dishonoured Him and wilfully disobeyed His law. And what is so gracious, the Lord Jehovah, by Isaiah the prophet, puts His people in remembrance of that which He did for them in Egypt, as the pledge of that which He will yet do for them (Isaiah xliii. 1). Hence at various times in their history God has sanctioned the mention before Him of redemption from the house of bondage, and in His word refers to it to sustain His people's hopes of divine intervention on their behalf. Who but Israel enjoyed such a privilege? for a privilege it was, as David confessed (2 Sam. vii. 23; 1 Chron. xvii. 21), and the Psalmist attested (Psalm cvi. 10).

There was, however, another side to this question, and it is important that we should remember it. They could remind God in their troubles that He had redeemed them. He reminded them in Deuteronomy, when pressing on them the duty of obedience, that redemption involved corresponding responsibility. It was all of grace at the outset, for none could have claimed it. If, however, they were God's people, it behoved them in a special manner to act in conformity with such a privilege. Obedience is due to Him from the creature, whether redeemed or not; but if redemption has been effected by God in grace, should not the creature that shares in it serve Him with alacrity? In faithfulness to His oath to their fathers the Lord brought them up out of Egypt (Deut. vii. 8). If others on earth were ignorant of Jehovah, Israel was not. If others refused Him the homage and obedience due from the creature, Israel certainly was bound by every consideration to submit to His sway. So on the confines of their land, in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, they were exhorted to keep from evil of various kinds. The Lord knew well what their hearts were. These exhortations display that, and Israel's history but too well attests that no considerations of fear or of gratitude can keep men in the path of obedience and duty. Who had seen the Lord's power as they had? who had heard His voice speaking out of the fire as Israel had? who were bound to Him by the ties of gratitude for deliverance from slavery, who but this people which He had brought out of

Egypt? And yet they had never put away their idols, which had provoked Jehovah's wrath in Egypt (Ezek. xx. 8). In the wilderness too they had their images, and they worshipped the host of heaven (Acts vii. 42). But now in the plains of Moab, having crossed the brook, or valley of Zered (Deut. ii. 13, 14), and the land of their inheritance lying just before them, they are exhorted to guard against all enticers to idolatry, and to put them to death. How should they allow such to turn away their hearts from Him who had redeemed them from the house of bondage? (Deut. xiii. 5). The Lord Jehovah was their God. He had proved it in Egypt, and at the Red Sea. "Who," they had sung, "is like Thee among the gods, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exod. xv. 11). Israel's history, position, and possession of the land would for ever attest that Jehovah was the true God. Indifference, therefore, to Him was not to be suffered for a moment. There could be no question of opinions on such a matter, for their God had shown most unmistakably that He was Jehovah (Exod. xiv. 18).

Again, as the redeemed of the Lord, they had known what servitude in Egypt was; of its oppression they had fully tasted, and had drunk deep of its cup of bitterness and anguish. Hence, when they should be sending forth the Hebrew servant at the end of the seventh year, the year of release, they were to furnish him liberally out of their flock, their floor, and their wine-press; for of that, wherewith the Lord their God had blessed them, should they give to the servant just set free: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondsman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day" (Deut. xv. 15). Men are apt to forget the days of adversity when prosperity smiles upon them. Such was not to be the case with Israel. Affliction's lessons were to be turned to account, and consideration for the poor Hebrew and liberality towards him was pressed on them, as having themselves once known servitude, from which Jehovah alone had rescued them. How much the master was to give is not stated. Liberality is all that is enjoined; thus leaving it to the richer

man to show how much he valued that redemption, the fruits of which he so abundantly enjoyed. And so with oppression of any kind ; the remembrance of redemption from Egypt was to act as an incentive against it. The poor man who pledged his garment, the hired servant, the widow, the fatherless, the stranger—all were to be protected from acts of unrighteousness by any who might be in a position to deal harshly or fraudulently with them ; for the creditor, or the patron, being himself a subject of redemption, was to act as became such an one towards any who were cast upon his compassion (Deut. xxiv. 18).

But Israel forgot all this. Even the wilderness bore witness to their shortness of memory on this point. "They turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy" (Psalm lxxviii. 41, 42). And God brought it as a grievous charge against them, that though He had redeemed them, yet Israel had spoken lies against Him (Hosea vii. 13). And still later in their history He pleaded with them in these words, "O My people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants ; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (Micah vi. 3, 4). God had not forgotten what He had done for Israel, however little Israel had owned their responsibility in connection with it ; and hence the prophet proceeds to remind them how Balaam and Balak's attempts to curse them on Pisgah were frustrated, and more than frustrated, by the direct intervention of Jehovah. They were His people, His redeemed ones ; so the power of evil could not prevail against them.

In what a manner then had God shown the inviolability of the relation He had established between Himself and Israel ! How such grace should have called forth obedience on their part ! But we know how all this failed to effect a real reformation in the days of Hezekiah, or even of his great-grandson Josiah. Still they were God's people. And though in the

post-captivity prophets God never calls them such, except in view of the future (Zech. viii. 7, 8 ; xiii. 9), Nehemiah had not forgotten what they were to God (i. 10 ; ix. 32) ; Cyrus had owned it (Ezra i. 3); and the Lord by Zechariah promises to have mercy on them, as though He had not cast them off, adding, " I will hiss for them, and gather them ; for I have redeemed them " (Zech. x. 8). Far-reaching, indeed, for Israel are the results of redemption. How stable is such a foundation ! How memorable and irreversible is the condition into which the nation, as such, was brought by the exercise of God's power at the Red Sea, delivered for ever from all the claims on their persons and services which the Egyptians had asserted and enforced with rigour ! Practical results, then, should have been displayed. In their daily walk, and in their ordinary matters of business, the redemption out of Egypt should have been kept in their remembrance, and have borne fruit in their life. They could never be in a position in which it could become them to forget it ; and God never left them without a frequent reminder of His intervention in Egypt on their behalf.

By the Passover they were reminded, how God had sheltered the houses of their fathers in Egypt through the blood being placed upon the doorposts. By the redemption of the firstborn males of man and of beast they were to be kept in remembrance how He had destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians, both of man and of beast. So from that time God claimed the firstborn males of Israel as His. On the morrow after the first Passover the Lord made known to the people His claim (Exod. xiii. 15, 16), in words in which the fathers were to instruct their children. The claim once made, provision was thus made for its remembrance from generation to generation, and several times in their history were the people reminded of it. Embodied in the covenant made with them in Horeb (Exod. xxii. 29, 30), it was reiterated in the covenant the Lord entered into with them at Sinai, after they had made the golden calf and forfeited, as far as they were concerned, everything they might have enjoyed if obedient (Exod. xxxiv. 19, 20). Again, ere they

left Sinai, they were reminded of it (Lev. xxvii. 26 ; Num. viii. 17). In their wilderness wanderings the Lord reasserted it, and prescribed the price and the age at which the firstborn of men were to be set free, viz. five shekels of silver when the infant was a month old (Num. xviii. 15-18). In the plains of Moab God's claim was once more set before them (Deut. xv. 19), and was incorporated into the covenant then made by His command with them.

Thus in each of the covenants the Lord inserted it ; and in the four last books of the Pentateuch Moses wrote of it. No book of the law, Genesis excepted, could they read without meeting with the mention of it. The firstborn males were God's. They were His, for He had sanctified them to Himself (Num. viii. 17). Both the firstborn of men and of beasts were alike in this, though there were differences made by the law between them, so that we may divide them into three classes—the first where redemption was imperative, the second where it was impossible, the third where it was optional. In the first class were the firstborn males of men. In the second were the firstborn males of oxen, sheep, and goats,—clean animals of which men could offer sacrifices to the Lord. The third comprised the firstborn males of unclean animals. Children were to be redeemed by money. No life was taken on such occasions in their stead. A money payment only was enjoined ; that paid, the Lord's claim on the child was satisfied, and ceased. Unclean beasts were, if redeemed, to be redeemed by lambs. Here life was taken instead of that of the unclean beast. The animal belonged to God by birth, so the Israelite could not use it for his own purposes unless it had been set free by redemption from the divine claim upon it. As God's, he had no right to it. If he redeemed it, he could have it and employ it in his own service. If not, it was to be killed. Redemption or death was the alternative, but not redemption or judgment. The life of the animal God claimed as His, because He had slain all the firstborn of beasts in the land of Egypt. If the owner gave a lamb in exchange, well and good. If not, the animal's death was demanded, for on no other

conditions except on that of redemption could he be allowed to profane, *i.e.* apply to a common use, what God had sanctified or set apart for Himself. The firstborn males of the flock and of the herd could never be redeemed. They were holy. Their blood, therefore, was to be sprinkled upon the altar, their fat to be burnt thereon, and the rest of the animal was to be the priests' as their portion. Now all this makes it clear that redemption in this aspect was not redemption from judgment. Men were redeemed by money. Clean beasts could not be redeemed at all. Unclean beasts might be redeemed on certain conditions. These directions, however, were to come into operation after they had entered their land (Exod. xiii. 11). Meanwhile, in the wilderness, the Lord maintained His right over the firstborn in another way.

After Moses had numbered the different tribes of Israel, that of Levi excepted, as they lay encamped at Sinai, before starting on their march to Canaan, the Lord gave His servant a second command, having reference only to the firstborn males of the twelve tribes, and then made apparent (Num. iii. 40-51) the reason for not numbering the tribe of Levi at the first, for the Lord was about to take the males of that tribe, from a month old and upward, instead of all the firstborn males in Israel, and their cattle in the place of the firstborn males of the cattle of the other tribes. Thus Levi occupied an important place in Israel, and a large section of the book of Numbers (i.-viii.) is occupied chiefly with the concerns of that tribe. Let us trace it out. In chapter i. we have the numbering of the twelve tribes with the sphere of Levitical service distinctly marked out. In chapter ii. we have the outer circle of the camp described, each of the twelve tribes having their place in the camp assigned them. Next follows, in iii. iv., the numbering of the Levites, and the assignment to the three great families of that tribe of their special service and place in the camp and on the march. Thus the inner circle of the camp was provided for, formed, as it was to be, of the tribe of Levi alone, for had we visited it in the wilderness we should have seen the twelve tribes,

three on each side, encircling the tents of that of Levi, which in its turn encircled the tabernacle, which last was separated from all else by the fine white linen hangings of its court. The camp arranged in order, the command to cleanse it from all defiling objects is next given, with the law of the jealousy offering, typical probably of Israel's history, though yielding instruction also to us (v.) Then follows the Nazarite vow of devotedness to God, the contrast spiritually to conjugal infidelity (vi.); after which we have the form of the blessing wherewith God's High Priest was to bless the people (vi. 22-26); the order of subjects being here suggestive of the rich results to flow to Israel when the Nazariteship of the Lord Jesus Christ shall cease. After this we read first of the offering of each of the twelve princes of Israel, when the tabernacle had been fully set up and sanctified, which really took place previous to the announcement of all that we have passed in review (compare Num. i. 1 with vii. 1), but is introduced here as intimately connected with Levitical service, since the families of Gershon and Merari profited by the oxen and waggons then given to the Lord (vii.) Following this we have the special priestly service in connection with the candlestick, and the consecration of the Levites for ministry in the tabernacle of the congregation (viii.), with the age at which they should go in to wait on their service, and the duration of that service, though all their subsequent life was to be spent in ministering and keeping the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation (viii. 23-26). To carry burdens required strength, and the Lord would lay upon none more than they were able to bear. To minister, and to keep the watch of the tabernacle of the congregation, would be within the compass of a man's power, when more arduous work might overtask his strength. Thus the Lord manifested His care and thoughtfulness for the sons of Levi.

The tabernacle then, and its vessels, and what belonged to it, closely concerned the Levites. They kept the charge of the tabernacle of testimony (i. 53); the charge of Aaron, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of

the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle ; and they kept all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel to do the service of the tabernacle (iii. 7-8). Selected by the Lord, they were duly set apart for their work to minister to Aaron ; given to Aaron and to his sons ; being wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel (iii. 6, 9). Taken for God instead of the firstborn males of Israel, we learn therefrom something of the responsibility, and of the privilege, which attached to that class. Their service, as sketched out, tells us of the responsibility ; whilst the mention of the one to whom they ministered—Aaron, and the mention too of Him whose they were—God, acquaint us with privileges which normally belong to all in that class. They were God's (iii. 12, 45 ; viii. 14, 16). He had said it : "They shall be mine," said the Lord. They shall minister to Aaron, was the word of God by Moses. This last statement is not without significance when we remember of whom Aaron was the type, and who before God now fills the place and performs duties which typically belonged to Aaron, the brother of Moses.

Of the redemption of their firstborn males, then, the twelve tribes were commanded to avail themselves. In this redemption Levi had no part. In common with all the rest, that tribe shared in the redemption from the house of bondage. Differing from all the other tribes, it did not share in the redemption of the firstborn males. What then was the character of such a redemption ? This we have already intimated, and the history of the Levites fully confirms. It clearly was not redemption from judgment, else the tribe of Levi must have specially endured that judgment. But they did nothing of the kind. This redemption was deliverance from the service of God, not from the wrath which they each and all by nature deserved. The firstborn males of Israel were released from the divine claims on them for service when the Levites were taken in their place, and the redemption-money of five shekels a piece had been paid for the 273 males in Israel, in excess of those substituted from

the tribe of Levi.¹ The Levites, on the other hand, could never be released from the service of Jehovah, and surely they never would have desired it. A great privilege, they must have felt, was theirs,—to be allowed to serve. And serving Jehovah, He cared for them, providing for their need by tithes, and the cities, and the suburbs of their cities in the land. The honour, too, and the favour was theirs of ministering to God's High Priest. But what is all this to us? some may inquire. Surely it contains instruction for Christians, who form now before God that privileged class of firstborn ones, for we are part of the church or assembly of firstborn ones, *ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων* (Heb. xii. 23); the characteristic responsibility and privileges of which the directions concerning the duties of the tribe of Levi unfold to us. For all Christians are both priests and Levites. Their priestly service Peter sets forth (1 Peter ii. 5-9) in its double character. Levitical service is more general, but is equally common to all. And as the Levites were to minister to Aaron, so true Christian service, of whatever character (for we cannot confine it to ministry in the word), should never be separated from the Lord, but be done, all of it, unto Him. How varied is the service, Rom. xii. and 1 Cor. xii. can teach us; but as with the Levites, so with us, each is appointed by God to his work. The Lord directed about the Gershonites and the Merarites, as much as about the Kohathites. And though to some it might have seemed more honourable to carry the table and the candlestick, yet, unless the boards of the tabernacle and the curtains had been carried likewise, the Kohathite service of carrying the vessels of the tabernacle would have been labour spent in vain. From the claims of God in service we can never get free. Would any real Christian desire it? But how great is the responsibility of those who are Christians only in name!

¹ The careful reader will remark that the males of Levi really outnumbered the firstborn males of Israel by 27; the number being of all Israel 22,273; of the tribe of Levi, 22,300. The difference may be accounted for by deducting first, the males of Aaron's house, who clearly were not included in the exchange, and next all the firstborn males of Levi, which, as such, were the Lord's already. By this means it may have been that the numbers were arrived at of 22,000 of the Levites being exchanged for the same number of Israel's firstborn males.

By the law, then, as we have seen, the subject of redemption was brought into great prominence. In family matters, as well as in questions concerning Israel's duty to God, it would at times mark out with a distinctness impossible to be overlooked the path of action that should be followed. For not only did it treat of redemption, how it could be accomplished, and when, and the duties of those who shared in it, but it decided also the duties incumbent on the kinsman who was to act the part of redeemer, called in Hebrew the *Goel*, being charged with the responsible service of caring for the interest of those who, by reason of death or other causes, were unable to act on their own behalf. In criminal as well as in civil matters the *Goel* might be called to act. But such a duty only devolved on one connected by ties of consanguinity with the person on whose behalf he was acting. No mere friend could act as the *Goel* or redeemer. Cases therefore might arise where one who had died had no one thus to represent him. Such a condition might be the result of God's judicial dealing, as with Baasha the son of Ahijah, who had no *Goel* to avenge the death of his son at the hands of Zimri or his house (1 Kings xvi. 11). But it might also happen that an unoffending Israelite had died without leaving any representative to act as his *Goel*, and to whom any recompence the law might award for a trespass committed against him could be paid by the offending party. Under such circumstances the Lord claimed that restitution should be made to the priest, for the trespasser was not to be excused making the appointed amends because no kinsman of the injured man could claim it (Numb. v. 8); for the injury, though done to the man who was dead, was really a trespass against the Lord. But where a kinsman existed, he was bound, as circumstances called for it, to act as the *Goel*. In cases of murder he could claim justice to be done. In cases of homicide he would take up the cause, and have it decided by the elders of the city in whose jurisdiction the case lay (Numb. xxxv. ; Deut. xix. 6, 12 ; Josh. xx. 3, 5, 9) ; having always the right of killing the manslayer if he found him outside the city of refuge.

But other duties devolved on the *Goel*, and these were in connection with the land. Instances of such we have in Jeremiah and Ruth. On these occasions it was optional with the nearest male relative to discharge the duties of the office. Jeremiah, when directed by the Lord, bought the land at the hand of his uncle's son (xxxii.) Elimelech's nearest of kin, on the other hand, declined to buy of Naomi, when he learnt that he must also marry Ruth (iv. 6). By this the way was made clear for Boaz, who bought the land and married Ruth; a little picture of Israel's history in the future (how full is the Old Testament of such!) when it will be seen that the land cannot be permanently possessed apart from the restoration of the nation, now as it were dead. The interests of Israel are indissolubly connected with the fortunes of the land. Many might like the land just as the nearest kinsman of Elimelech; but then it will be seen that the one who takes it must have Israel's interest at heart, and raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance. One alone will be found in that day to act as Boaz acted by Naomi and Ruth. So we cannot study the book of Ruth, which gives us the bright side of the picture in the days of the Judges in Israel, without being carried on in thought to the future time of blessing for the children of Israel. Nor should we fail to observe how God has always had this in view.

From the law, as is fitting, we gather what were the responsibilities of the Redeemer or *Goel*. In the prophets we are taught that Jehovah will show Himself in that character on behalf of His people and Jerusalem. Already in measure has He acted as such, as Jeremiah predicted (l. 34), and Isaiah prophetically described (xliii. 14). The overthrow of the Chaldean monarchy was the earnest of the Lord's active interposition as the Redeemer of Israel. And as the *Goel* was concerned with taking vengeance on behalf of his kinsman, receiving what was his due from any who had injured him, redeeming the land of the impoverished one, raising up the name of the dead on his inheritance by marrying the widow, and setting free the man sold to a stranger, so will the Lord Jehovah act on

behalf of Israel and Jerusalem. Ages have rolled by since that memorable night when Belshazzar was slain. Troubles upon troubles have since befallen the Jews and Jerusalem ; but their day of deliverance will come. For Jehovah, the self-existing One, is their *Goel* or Redeemer. Israel, therefore, can never want a kinsman to espouse their cause, and will never be in too low a condition for the Redeemer to interpose. It was when the Israelite was in his lowest possible condition that the services of the *Goel* were called into requisition. And the people will yet prove this. Hence the Lord encourages them : “ Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel, **מִי יִשְׂרָאֵל** ; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel ” (Isaiah xli. 14). And what strength it will be to them to remember who their Redeemer is, viz. The first and the last, beside whom there is no God ; for He is the Maker of all things (Isaiah xlv. 6, 24). Happy people will they be to find themselves in such a case ; for they will be authorised to say, in the language of inspiration, “ As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel ” (xlvii. 4). And if the God of armies is their *Goel*, He will fully avenge their cause, and most certainly set them free from all the claims of man over their persons and their land. The greatness of this privilege, too, will then become apparent, when, notwithstanding their past disobedience (xlviii. 17-19), He will interpose actively and effectively in their favour. And encouraged surely by these gracious declarations, as well as by the remembrance of what the Lord did for their fathers at the Red Sea, the godly remnant of the future will call on Him to act as becomes the one who is to discharge the duties of the *Goel* (lxiii. 16).

But not only will the Lord prove Himself to be the Redeemer of Israel, He will also act in that character for Jerusalem. He will return to her (lix. 20), all flesh shall know it (xlix. 26), and she shall know it (lx. 16) when sucking the milk of the Gentiles and the breast of kings, for the God of the whole earth will be her *Goel*, who will never forsake her again (liv. 5, 8).

Here redemption, as set forth in the Old Testament, reaches

its climax. Israel will enjoy it, and Jerusalem likewise; and creation will be glad when He comes by whom it is to be effected (Psalm xcvi. 11-13, xcvi. 7-9), for creation's interests are bound up with the condition of God's people. God will then rest in His love, rejoicing over Jerusalem with singing (Zeph. iii. 17). Then, too, that which in the reign of Solomon Israel once knew they will permanently enjoy, rest given them by God on every side, with neither adversary to vex them, nor evil occurrent (1 Kings v. 4). And looking into this, one learns how those legal enactments about redemption are figures and shadows of the future in store for Israel. The *Goel* of the law is the shadow of the true *Goel*; a kinsman, indeed, connected with Israel by the ties of birth, of the seed of David after the flesh. Who then was before God's mind when He gave those regulations to Moses? We cannot doubt. It was His Son, the Christ. And those occasions on which the redeemer was called upon by the law to act, were shadowy representations of the intervention of the true *Goel* for Israel, when He shall act for them, reduced as they will be to their lowest possible condition. Shadowy representations we must call them, for the intervention of the Lord in the future will far exceed that which any kinsman has done in the past. Doubtless all that Israel looked forward to when the law was given was entrance into the land, rest under their fig trees, and the enjoyment of the fruit of their vines, and the productiveness of the ground in general. But that never satisfied the desires of God for them. He was not, He will not be satisfied, till the true kinsman-redeemer acting in power sets them and their land free, not for a time, but for ever; for nothing less than permanent blessing in Canaan will meet all the divine purposes and wishes for them. How far beyond man's thoughts are those of God!

“High as the heavens appear above the earth we tread,
So far the riches of God's grace our highest thoughts exceed.”

But, were this all that Scripture teaches us in connection with this subject, what part should we have in it? To what

prospect could we look forward? All that we have looked at concerns Israel. God will redeem Israel out of all his troubles (Psalm xxv. 22), when He shall set them free from the consequences of their iniquities (Psalm cxxx. 7, 8). Gentiles, it is true, will enjoy blessing when the Lord reigns; but the Redeemer is spoken of as the Redeemer of Israel, and so markedly is this the case, that when the nation shall have experienced the Lord's delivering power afresh, they will be distinguished by men on earth as the redeemed of the Lord (Isaiah lxii. 12; xxxv. 10; li. 11). New Testament teaching, however, makes plainer what the Old also sets forth, that He who will redeem them by power had first to die for them on the cross. But we close the Old Testament volume without finding directly taught in it redemption as it concerns us, either that which we now possess, or that for which we wait. Yet we cannot close its pages without remembering the irreversible character of redemption when God is the accomplisher of it, so fully set forth in its writings. Israel's position as God's redeemed people was never altered, though they still await redeeming power. That past intervention to which they were taught to look back, will, as we have seen, inspire them with confidence in the future. Daniel could remind God of it when a captive himself, with the temple laid low, and Jerusalem destroyed; for the Lord's people he knew Israel to be, and that for ever. Hence we get acquainted in the Old Testament with a principle connected with redemption, which, when we get New Testament teaching on the subject, becomes of practical value to us. To that let us now turn.

As we open its pages the hope of Israel's redemption, of which the prophets had written, is seen animating the faithful among them; but there is a difference to be marked between them and their forefathers. The faithful remnant are expecting the fulfilment of the hope, as no longer a distant event, whilst the prophets of old were directly taught of the Spirit that they ministered to men of a generation posterior to their own (1 Peter i. 12). Thus Anna the prophetess, of the tribe of Aser, was well acquainted with the proper hope of Israel, and knew too

those in Jerusalem who were looking for its fulfilment. What, however, stirred her heart, as it had Zacharias' and Simeon's, was the coming of the Messiah into the world, so long waited for, but now at length to be seen and handled in the person of the Virgin's child. Zacharias, on the occasion of the birth of his son, the immediate forerunner of the Christ, looked forward to the near accomplishment of that which the prophets had foretold (Luke i. 68). Anna, after she had seen the child, went to tell of his presence to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem, or, as some would read with B \approx "the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke ii. 38). One sees how the hopes and prospects of the godly remnant of that day were bound up with the appearance of the Christ. The heart of the aged priest was illuminated with joy in the thought of the near approach of the Messiah. The aged prophetess gave thanks to the Lord when her eye lighted on the infant in the temple. Till He came the remnant treasured up the hope of redemption. When He appeared they looked for its fulfilment. And we learn how really their hopes were bound up with the presence of the Christ upon earth, from the sorrowful confession of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus to the stranger, as they thought Him, who had voluntarily joined their company—"We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21). How this told of expectations concerning the virgin's Son, but of shipwrecked hopes and disappointed hearts as well. For all that concerned the blessing of Israel in the future was connected in their minds with the presence among them of the Messiah, and that in the person of Mary's child. Nor were they mistaken in all this. The Lord Himself had taught His disciples to look forward to the redemption of Israel, and had instructed them in the signs which would herald its approach and His appearance (Luke xxi. 28). But besides that, He taught them the need of His death for full redemption to take place. That they had not understood. Redemption by money they were fully conversant with. Redemption by divine power their fathers had experienced. Redemption of the firstborn males of unclean

animals by a lamb the law had set before them. But the need of the Messiah's death to effect the final redemption of Israel and of Jerusalem they had never taken up. The Old Testament had spoken of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ (Psalms xvi. xxii. cii. ; Isaiah liii.) The prophets had predicted the deliverance of Israel and Jerusalem, but the remnant of the Lord's day had not understood the intimate connection there is between His death and their national deliverance. They clearly had not yet learnt how the mercies of David would be made sure (Isaiah lv. 3 ; Acts xiii. 34).

But far more than Israel's redemption is accomplished by the shedding of that precious blood, and the Lord Jesus it is who first in the New Testament opens up to us the subject. Indignation had filled the hearts of the ten at the request made by the mother of Zebedee's children and concurred in by those children, that they should sit one on the right hand and one on the left of the Lord in His kingdom. The Lord's answer was enough both to check their indignation and to rebuke the ambitious desires of the mother on behalf of her offspring. True greatness amongst them was not to be reached by the mere favour of the King, as so often has been the case with earthly greatness and earthly monarchs. He who would be great among them should be their minister, and whosoever would be chief among them should be their servant ; for the path to true greatness lies through the lowliest service, as exemplified in the ways of the Son of man, the highest in dignity in the universe (God, of course, excepted), who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28 ; Mark x. 45). Here we are carried at once beyond the narrow bounds of Jewish interests by an announcement which, if expressed in few words, is rich in thought. The Son of man would give His life a ransom for many. A ransom, *λύτρον*, was needed, and the Son of man would provide it. Now the title here made use of shows that the Lord has to do with men, and not with Israel only. He is the Son of man, and in that character He will appear by-and-by as placed by God over

everything (Psalm viii. 6). His words, "for many," convey no thought of the continued maintenance of dispensational distinctions, but are in keeping with the abolition of them. The fact, too, that He would give His life tells of the self-surrender on His part, and the cost at which the ransom that He speaks of would be obtained. Hence the question is hereby immediately raised, Why should such a sacrifice be required?

Israel had experienced what the putting forth of divine power in redemption could accomplish, and they annually commemorated it. When, however, the Lord brought them out of Egypt, He was dealing with them in pure grace, for as yet they had not been placed under law. But when they had promised to do all that God commanded, and had subsequently broken the covenant, redemption from the condition entailed on them in consequence of their sins required, not merely the putting forth of divine power, but the atoning death of the Lord Jesus as well, in virtue of which their transgressions under the first covenant would be fitly and finally dealt with (Heb. ix. 15). The exercise of power will indeed be needed to effect their deliverance from the thralldom of their enemies; and for that they will look, nor will they be disappointed (Isaiah lxiii. lxiv.; Psalm xcvi.). But ere God can act in power for them, since the people have sinned, redemption, *ἀπολύτρωσις*, of the transgressions that were under the first covenant becomes a necessity. Now nothing less than the death of the Lord Jesus Christ can meet the case; so He died, we are told, for that nation (John xi. 50), though, thank God, not for that nation only. And since He gave His life a ransom for many, it becomes only a question of the sovereign grace of God as to who those are who can share in the effects of that ransom. The Lord speaks of many, viewing the question in the light of those who would avail themselves of it. St. Paul writes that Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom, *ἀντίλυτρον*, for all (1 Tim. ii. 6), viewing the question in the light of God's willingness to save, showing thereby that none will be deprived of the benefits which flow from Christ's death, but such as judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life (Acts xiii. 46).

The Lord's death then avails for all who believe on Him ; and since all have sinned, and do come short of the glory of God (Rom. iii. 23), none certainly are righteous in themselves, and none can justify themselves before God (Psalm cxliii. 2). What resource then have sinners but to hear what the Lord God can righteously do for those who believe on His Son? He justifies them freely through the redemption, ἀπολύτρωσις, that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 24). Now of this redemption Paul treats in more places than one. By His own blood the Lord Jesus Christ, as High Priest, has entered into the holy place once for all ἐφάπαξ, an act never to be repeated, having found, εὐράμενος, eternal redemption, λύτρωσις¹ (Heb. ix. 12). So this can never alter, its validity can never be impeached, its effects can never pass away. It is an eternal redemption, and His continued presence in the holiest, without having any need to come out from thence, as Aaron was obliged to do annually after the service within the veil on the great day of atonement, witnesses to us of that which the Lord has found, who has entered in by His own blood. For whom it avails that verse in the Hebrews does not state. It is what the Lord as High Priest has found, not those who will share in it, to which our attention is there directed. He has found redemption, and such as is eternal in character. The ransoming from a condition of helplessness, and otherwise everlasting ruin, can now be treated of and set forth with confidence, for the High Priest of God, who is in the heavenly sanctuary, has found that which was wanted, and that which can meet in all the depths of his ruin the greatest sinner upon earth. But how helpless was our condition, hopelessly helpless, when nothing less than the entrance by His own blood of the Lord Jesus Christ into the sanctuary on high could procure for us what was required! In the doing of such a work man could have had no

¹ λύτρωσις occurs but three times in the New Testament—Luke i. 68, ii. 38 ; Heb. ix. 12. ἀπολύτρωσις is met with much oftener—Luke xxi. 28 ; Rom. iii. 24, viii. 23 ; 1 Cor. i. 30 ; Ephes. i. 7, 14, iv. 30 ; Col. i. 14 ; Heb. ix. 15, xi. 35. When the redemption itself is the special thought in the writer's mind, λύτρωσις can be used ; when the application of it to those on whose behalf it has been wrought is the subject with which the inspired writer is concerned, ἀπολύτρωσις is the word selected.

part; all must be done by the High Priest himself, and that in a place into which in person we on earth have never entered, and whilst on earth in person can never enter.

Eternal then in its character, what stable ground do believers stand on? No argument can weaken it. The Lord's presence in heaven must silence all reasonings, and set at rest all doubts about it. His estimate of that which He has found is revealed for the comfort and rest of the conscience before God. And the effects which flow from it are twofold, since forgiveness and justification are both inseparably connected with it. How well Paul knew this, and those to whom he addressed himself at Ephesus, where he had laboured, and at Colosse, where he had not! In writing to the saints and faithful brethren in both these places, he stated that which was common to them and to him, that in the Beloved they had redemption ἀπολύτρωσις through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14), according to the riches of God's grace. And writing to all that were in Rome, beloved of God, Paul reminded them that they were justified freely by God's grace through the redemption ἀπολύτρωσις that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 24). Christ Jesus has found it, in Him the Beloved one we have it, and are justified through it. It is a deliverance indeed, deliverance full and final, from judicial dealing at the hands of an offended God, which we all righteously deserved, and which the finally impenitent must for ever endure, for where God's nature is concerned duration of time cannot be taken into account. Hence the question is not whether sins deserve everlasting punishment; but since God is holy, how can He have those who have sinned in His presence, and at home with Him, except on grounds consistent with His righteousness? Then, if men refuse the atonement provided by God, nothing is left for them but punishment. Viewing the question in this light, and this is the right light in which to view it, since God's nature is unchangeable, and man's soul is immortal, punishment for the finally impenitent must be everlasting. Could God have been too merciful to punish sin, redemption, it is true, would not have been needed,

nor would the Lord Jesus have died for sinners ; but in that case God would not have been holy, and righteousness would not have characterised His ways. On the other hand, what security it gives a soul when it learns that God is righteous in saving sinners ! All that He is is vindicated and manifested. Mercy on God's part, unless it is exercised in righteousness, would afford no comfort or security for souls. But now He justifies freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Let the accusation be as grievous as it may, and all perfectly true, yet God will not listen to it if it concerns them whom He has justified (Rom. viii. 33, 34). Once children of wrath they are such no longer, for redemption has been effected.

Forgiveness and justification, these are present blessings ; and the knowledge of justification through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus should set souls free from seeking for justification through keeping the law. We are justified freely by God's grace, if in truth believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. How many souls not settled in grace are virtually looking for something in themselves, or in their ways, to give them assurance as to their standing before God. This is the spirit of legality, against which the Galatians were so earnestly warned. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was taught them, had redeemed *ἐξηγόρασε* those from the curse of the law who had once been under it, He being made a curse for them, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that both, those once Jews and those once Gentiles, might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. iii.) Those, then, formerly placed by God under law had need of redemption from its curse, and they had it. The Jews never got justification by works of law (Gal. ii. 16), and those Christians who had been formerly Jews under law had to be redeemed from its curse, Christ having been made a curse for them, and had to believe on Him to be justified by faith of Him, and not by works of law (Gal. ii. 16). Deliverance from being under law such enjoyed, and justification likewise ; but justification by faith, not by works. Hence, if we share in the redemption that

is in Christ Jesus, all idea of justification by works of law before God must be abandoned as unscriptural, and therefore unchristian doctrine. We are already delivered from the condition we were formerly in, from which nothing we could do of ourselves could have ever extricated us. No charge against us can be maintained before God. We are justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Our condition is already changed, and our title to be in God's presence is certain and everlasting. And if those formerly Jews had to be taken out of the condition of being under law in order to be justified before God, and that on the principle of faith, why should those whom God never put under law virtually put themselves under it, to seek for that which it is impossible on such a condition ever to enjoy? The incongruity of such mistaken teaching becomes apparent; and if the Christian remembers that he is justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, he will learn that he has what he wants, a title to be in God's presence, and that he is in a condition to enjoy the blessing of it; yet not the least allowance is there for the working of man's evil nature, when the doctrines of grace are rightly set forth and maintained.

For, as the Israelites were reminded of their responsibility as redeemed, so we are taught our need of watchfulness, seeing we too are redeemed, and that not by corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain conversation, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter i. 17-19). And the Apostle Paul, writing of the conduct of slaves in the most ordinary duties of life, reminds them of the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for them, that He might redeem them from all lawlessness, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus ii. 13, 14). Deliverance from a condition in which judgment must overtake those abiding in it, we enjoy through the Lord Jesus Christ giving Himself a ransom for us. Redemption therefore from all lawlessness, as the fitting consequence, should be displayed in each one of us. Grace never weakens responsibility; on the contrary, it maintains it. To attempt to discharge our responsi-

bilities to God in order to obtain a standing before Him is the essence of legality. To take heed to our ways because we are partakers of grace is proper Christian conduct.

As far, then, as we have investigated the subject, we have seen that our redemption has been procured by another, and not by ourselves; and that one, even the Lord Jesus Christ, had to surrender His life to procure it, because we were sinners against God; for nothing but His precious blood shed could avail for it. Further, this redemption is eternal in its character, never to be reversed; its effects never to pass away. And as Israel could always plead with God on the ground that they were His redeemed ones, we know what our ground as such is before God, even that which never alters. But as with them, so with us, the grace in which we share involves responsibility from which we cannot be set free. Christ gave Himself to redeem us from all lawlessness, *ἀνόμια*, *i.e.* not only from any departure from the straight and right way, but from any allowance of insubjection of spirit to God.

But in more than the redemption of the soul are Christians to have part. They await redemption in power, which will deal with their body as well. Already purchased (1 Cor. vi. 20), the body will be redeemed, and we await that putting forth of divine power on our behalf called adoption, *υιοθεσία*, even the redemption, *ἀπολύτρωσις*, of our bodies (Rom. viii. 23). The believer's whole person will be rescued from the consequences of the fall. Adoption is ours really now, and the Spirit of adoption, too, we have all received, who can cry "Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15); but the completeness of it involves the redemption of the body as well: so the enemy will never be able to say that he has finally ruined any part of the person of those who are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Body, soul, and spirit, all will share in redemption, as fruit of the travail of His soul, who died for us that we should live with Him, and who of God is made unto us redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). For until the body is redeemed, those words of 1st Corinthians will not have received their full accomplishment. Israel looked for the deliverance of

their persons from the thralldom of their oppressors (Luke i. 71, 74), the consequence of national transgression in earlier days ; we await the final deliverance of ours from the consequences of sin.

How deeply, then, are we interested in the ransom provided by the Lord Jesus Christ, by which there will be effected the full deliverance of creatures like us from the condition engendered by the fall ; yet, great and wonderful as this is, God's thoughts in connection with redemption take a still wider range, even the whole purchased possession (Ephes. i. 14), all of which is to be subjected to redeeming power. Interests, then, how vast and varied, are connected with this topic. Creation, subjected to vanity not willingly, but sharing in the fruits of the sin of its head, shall be set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21). We know redemption of our souls now, and await that of our bodies. Creation has received no part in redemption as yet, but awaits it in the day of the glory of Christ.

The full need of redemption none of us could have surmised, for none of the children of men could have divined the extent of the ruin caused by sin, and the irrevocable condition, did deliverance depend on us, of all involved in it. Man might have groaned, as creation does, feeling intensely the wretchedness caused by sin, without after all having learnt the impossibility of rescuing himself from it. That he had not delivered himself would be patent. That he could not, revelation alone teaches. But did revelation stop there, how awful would be the prospect ! Man, this creation too, ruined, and, for all that we could have known, without any probability of emancipation from the bitter consequences of his sin. God, however, has revealed to us what He has done, and that which He will do, and bids us look onward in hope to the day of redemption, unto which He has sealed us by the Holy Ghost (Ephes. iv. 30), given to all who believe the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation. Marked in this manner by God, as He looks onward to the future, so would He have us to look forward, sharing His mind about it,

and having interests in common with Him in connection with it. Intelligence about the future should therefore characterise us, and the certainty of the fulfilment of our hope should animate us. We are saved in hope, and the God of hope can fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. viii. 24 ; xv. 13). This God desires for us, having given us the Holy Ghost to be the earnest, or pledge, of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, for which the Lord waits, we wait, and for which creation likewise waits.

God, then, by revealing to us what He has done in giving His Son to die, tells us of the depth of ruin into which sin had plunged us. Revealing to us what He will do, we learn to what extent that ruin has spread, and have surely to own that whilst nothing but the death of Christ can meet it, none but God could have thought of and planned such a way of deliverance. And further, we cannot fail to see how deeply interested is God in His human creatures, and in creation likewise. He did not, He does not, sit aloof from all the sufferings and sorrows caused by sin, at rest in the undisturbed serenity of the atmosphere which surrounds His throne. He gave His Son to die. He sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world (1 John iv. 14). Sin had marred the beauty and spotlessness of God's creation. And sin must have been the cause of man's everlasting ruin and misery, had not God provided atonement, and redemption. By the former, the question of our sins has been dealt with ; by the latter, deliverance from the consequences of the fall will be finally effected. God, we repeat, has provided for both ; and His Son, when upon earth, manifested how really the One against whom we had sinned could and did enter into the sorrows and wretchedness of His creatures (John xi. 33, 35, 38 ; Luke xix. 41) ; and, providing for those who believed on Him deliverance from it all, provided too for the praise of His glory, when His purposes shall have been worked out.

What a subject then is redemption ! By the fall its necessity became apparent, if the devil was not to triumph over God.

By the cross its certainty was manifested, because that blood was shed, that death endured, on the grounds of which it could be wrought out. And, as we learn what Scripture teaches about it, the circles of interests affected by it get wider and wider. At first we read of one nation, and that a small one, which shared in deliverance by divine power. Next we learn that saints outside that restricted circle have redemption through the blood of Christ, and shall fully have part in redemption by power. And who can estimate what their number is? Then we hear that to the utmost bound of the purchased possession redeeming power will extend. What that possession is Ephes. i. 10 states. But who on earth can comprehend its vastness and extent? Heaven and earth, then, are to share in it, though not all the universe. There is a region in which it will never be enjoyed, where intelligent creatures must for ever be, but without having part in it. All those under the earth *καταχθόνιοι* (Phil. ii. 10) will have to bow at the mention of the name of Jesus, as much as all in heaven and all upon earth, yet without sharing in the blessed results of His death. The ransom is enough for all (1 Tim. ii. 6); propitiation has been made for the whole world (1 John ii. 2), but as all are not willing to be reconciled to God, so all will not be redeemed. This is the dark side, but there is a bright one on which we may dwell. The happiness of those upon earth, at that day, certain psalms and prophetic writings depict, and specially Ps. cl., which calls for Jehovah's praise to be celebrated with every conceivable instrument of music, and by every creature on earth which has breath. What will be the joys of those in heaven we, who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ whilst in our mortal bodies, shall then fully know. The gladness of creation when anticipating it Rev. v. 13 sets before us. Its gladness in the immediate prospect of it Psalms xcvi. 11-13, xeviii. 7-9, graphically describe. And never shall we forget to whose death we owe it, nor the ransom paid for us to participate in it.

This is made manifest from that scene described in Rev. v. 9, where the elders, addressing the Lamb, make mention of the price at which saints have been purchased, rather than of the

deliverance which they are for ever to enjoy : “ Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : for Thou wast slain, and hast bought [us] to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made them unto our God kings and priests : and they shall reign over the earth.” Purchase, *ἡγόρασας*, rather than redemption, is the theme of the elders here. Of the purchase too, not of the redemption of the hundred and forty and four thousand, who stood with the Lamb on Mount Sion, does the Spirit make mention in xiv. 3. The elders speak of purchase from kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. In xiv. it is purchase from the earth and from men. In each place it is a special company, apart from others of the human race, of which the purchase is declared. All on earth, indeed, have been purchased by the Lord’s death, and hence He has rights over them, as a master would have over slaves. But in chapter v. the saints referred to are said to have been bought by His blood to God ; and in xiv. those there mentioned as bought, are first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. Purchase, then, is mentioned in Revelation ; of it John speaks in this book rather than of redemption, for *ἀγόραζω*, though translated *redeemed* in the A. V. in the passages noted, is not, it would seem, used in the New Testament, nor in the LXX. version of the Old Testament in any such sense. But all the saints of whom we read that they are purchased will enjoy redemption. Saints on earth as well as saints in heaven will know in their measure its blessedness.

But who speaks of all this? It is God. Who provides for it? God. On what grounds can He righteously do it? He gave His Son to die, the Just for the unjust, to take up the question of His people’s condition, and to settle it, that those might for ever rejoice in redemption who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the lost.

THE CHRISTIAN LATREIA.

“ I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” The word (*λατρεία*), translated service, means *service-of-worship*, in such a passage as Rom. xii. 1. It is a word that always points God-wards. There are other words in the New Testament translated worship, which are applied to men, devils, earthly powers, or even inanimate things ; but *latreia*, without exception, is applied to the true God only, or to a supposed god (Acts vii. 42 ; Rom. i. 25). One of the other words (the word *προσκυνεῖν*) is frequently used to others—men, devils, beasts. But *latreia* being a temple word is not used for anything but divine service, let the divinity be supposed or real ; so even in Rev. xxii. 3, when it is said “ His servants shall serve Him,” the meaning is, with *service-of-worship*.

When *work-service* is intended, another word (*δουλεύω*) is used, as in this same chapter, verse 11th, “ *servinḡ* the Lord ;” or as when Paul says, Acts xx. 19, “ *servinḡ* the Lord with all humility ;” or as Gal. v. 13, “ serve one another,” “ with good will doing *service* ” (Eph. vi. 7).

There are also other words for serving, such as Luke xii. 37, “ Will come forth and serve them (*διακονεῖν*).” The sacrifice and *service* of your faith (*λειτουργία*) (Phil. ii. 17). Also, “ After he had *servcd* (*ὑπηρέτησεν*) his generation ” (Acts xiii. 36). There is “ divine service ” (Heb. ix. 1) ; work-service (1 Tim. vi. 2) ; private service, as done in the household (Luke x. 40 ; John xii. 2) ; and public or business service (2 Cor. ix. 12 ; Phil. ii. 17). But our word *service*, in Rom. xii. 1 (*λατρεία*), is always applied to the service of

God (John xvi. 2 ; Rom. ix. 4 ; xii. 1 ; Heb. ix. 1-6). Even the verb (λατρεύω) is always divine service, or what was believed to be so ; for "the hosts of heaven" (Acts vii. 42) were regarded as divinities when worshipped. It occurs most frequently in Hebrews, where we should expect to find it, and where the other word homage (προσκυνέω) never occurs as to Christians (viii. 5 ; ix. 1, 6, 9, 14 ; x. 2 ; xii. 28 ; xiii. 10), which is an additional proof that it is intended to describe our worship-service. And then we have it in Rev. vii. 15, and xxii. 3, and there it ends.

I am thus minute and decided about the express meaning of the word, in order to show that with the sacred writers service man-ward is not the first thing the Spirit contemplates and enjoys, but consecration to God and *worship-service* God-ward. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service*. And be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*"

When the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt it was *worship* that was the first thing spoken of, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let My people go, that they may *serve Me* ;" and we have only to read Exodus v. 3, x. 24-29, to see that this was worship-service. Moses and Aaron said to Pharaoh, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us ; let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and *sacrifice* unto the Lord our God ;" and when he would not hear of them taking their flocks and their herds, they insisted on their having them. "Our cattle also shall go with us ; there shall not an hoof be left behind ; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God, and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." This decision broke off the conference ; the Lord interposed ; Israel was delivered out of the Egyptians' land ; Egypt was judged, and the Egyptians were destroyed. "See my face no more," said Pharaoh ; and Moses said, "Thou hast spoken well,

I will see thy face no more." The material for the sacrifice must go out of Egypt as well as the worshippers. God has come in in judgment of Satan and his world, has not only screened His people from His sword as a righteous judge in Egypt, but has also delivered them out of Egypt, annulling him that had the power of death, and by dying to sin has given all believers the privilege of being dead unto sin but alive unto God in Jesus Christ, and thus being redeemed out of the place by the power of God, working in connection with the death and life again of Christ, they are rescued, emancipated, living saints of God in virtue of Christ, and in their own happy consciousness and joy of faith; the world and its slavery left behind, they can now serve the Lord as those who are brought to Himself, and they have themselves—even their bodies, the former vessels of the slavery of sin—now blessedly made members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, so that they can be exhorted as having power over their "mortal body," not to let sin reign in it, but also thus "yield (present) yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. vi. 11-13): in Rom. xii. 1, "present your bodies." Why bodies? Are we not "waiting for the redemption of our body?" True. But "because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies," and faith holds it as good as done, and acts accordingly. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). Ye are bought with a price; that is the whole man, body and soul and spirit. The whole of Satan's contest is not only about "the body of Moses" (Jude 9), but about the bodies of all the saints. As Pharaoh strove to keep the cattle in Egypt, so Satan would keep the bodies of believers in the world, and allow them to serve God and worship with their souls. It is a striking parallel we have here to Moses' decision with Pharaoh. "There shall not an hoof be left behind." The cattle must go.

all of them : so our bodies also go out of Egypt, for they are the very substance of the sacrifice to be presented. "Present your bodies a living *sacrifice*." Call it consecration if you will, our bodies are not to be left out in our "service," but we, in our bodies, are to present ourselves "a living sacrifice, holy." This is so, for we are made masters of our bodies now in Christ through the power of God's Holy Spirit, just as when we were in the flesh Satan and sin mastered us through our bodies : and, being in the power of the Spirit, it is spiritual work, and "an intelligent service."

And with regard to our "divine service" (*latreia*), there is great importance in insisting on the consecration and sacrifice of the whole man, and that we present our bodies, for you will find the most of God's saints presenting themselves every Lord's day in places where they cannot but know there is no worship on a divine basis or in accordance with Scriptural principles. There was one city in Israel where God had placed His name, and in which His worship was duly performed, and to that centre all the males repaired thrice a year to present themselves before the Lord and worship. They said rightly, then, "At Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." And is there no prescribed worship of God in Christianity? and is it all one whether we in our bodies are found in connection with a worship-service where Christ is served divinely and scripturally, or where the so-called worship is a direct denial of Christianity? Where the service is according to a pre-arranged and established form, conducted by religious officials, appointed and salaried for that purpose, or where a liturgy is used, there believers are not at liberty to be present at all, for that is not God's way of worship. Christ is all in God's church. He is the centre for the worship (Matt. xviii. 20); He and His sacrifice glorifying God and perfecting worshippers as to the conscience are the basis of worship (Heb. ix.) The only power for worship is the Spirit, who dwells not only in each individual, but is with the saints collectively, regulating all and guiding each, so that one and another may be employed

in the service as He may see good to use them ; and the worship being that of the Father (John iv.), none but the children of God can join in it ; and none are acceptable worshippers but those " who have received the Spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father " (Rom. viii.); and as all believers are members of Christ, true worship embraces all saints ; and as all are baptized into one body, we dare not take our place where the principle of religious "bodies" of man's invention is owned, whether unblushingly connected with this "present evil world," or framed according to some other contrivance of man's will ; for the worship of Christianity is on the principle of a complete break with man in the flesh and man's world, and on the principle of being members of Christ, and one with Him, where He is at God's right hand, and all the distance between earth and heaven placed between the worshippers and the world. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into *the holiest* by the blood of Jesus," tells us that our place of worship is outside the world ; and we can no more worship in Egypt than could Jehovah's Israel. Just as Moses said to Pharaoh, "I will see thy face no more," so when the bodies of the saints, the persons of the saved, are presented, there is decision as to having no more conference with the world—"Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds to your proving what is that good and perfect and acceptable thing—the will of God." The not having your fashioning like that of the world which likes something visible, and with a fair show in the flesh—some golden calf—but being transfigured by the renewing of your mind, as Christ's inward glory shone out on the transfiguration hill, then will you have capacity and power to experimentally prove that God has a "will" about "your *service*," as well as about everything ;—"good, acceptable, and perfect." "Present your bodies . . . your *intelligent* service."

How many there are in these days who, when the saints have been visited by the Holy Ghost revealing Christ to His people's minds, have grown so in the knowledge of Him

and of the riches of the grace of God and of Christianity, that they have at length become transfigured, their whole body full of light, with no part dark ; they have ceased to be conformed to the world, and have presented their bodies as God would have them ; have worshipped by God's Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh. Paul had renounced the whole system for the excellency of Christ Jesus his Lord, and there came such power with the call that reached him from the glory, the light that shone around him revealing the glorious Man, that he was from the first completely outside the world to the Christ who had called him, and he found himself a worshipper where he had intended to be a ravener. And to this he refers repeatedly in the most touching terms : "Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained *mercy*. I obtained *mercy* that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." And in Rom. xii. 1 he beseeches "by the *mercies*¹ of God," of which he has just given such a witness to Jew and Gentile in the body of this Epistle, "to present your bodies a sacrifice living and holy, acceptable to God, an intelligent service."

"Present (*παρεστήσαι*) your bodies," as those who once for all are "sanctified by the offering of *the body* of Jesus Christ." This word *present* is "selected as the set expression for presenting of sacrificial animals at the altar." As the worshipper presented his living victim, so we present our bodies "a living sacrifice." For in this "service" we are by grace allowed to be oblivious of the

¹ The other places where "mercies" are mentioned in the New Testament are these: 2 Cor. i. 3 ; Phil. ii. 1 ; Col. iii. 12 (singular) ; Heb. x. 28.

"By the mercies" is literally "*through* the mercies of God," as the powerful means and motive that is to move you "to present your bodies a living sacrifice." In chapter xv. 30, he writes : "I beseech you, brethren, *through* our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." In 1 Cor. i. 10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, *by* the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." In 2 Cor. x. 1, "Now I, Paul, beseech you *by* the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

fact that "the body is dead because of sin." We must regard our former existence in the flesh as non-existent, and we are in the spirit in Christ and Christ in us. Faith places us in the presence of God in Christ, body as well as soul, and so in our "service" we can look for the Holy Ghost enabling us to present our bodies filled with His power. In faith we who believe draw near our very selves in our bodies, which, as indwelt of the Spirit, the Lord's, and not our own, we present a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. We can never say as to fact and walk there is nothing in our bodies but the Holy Ghost, for we are to mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit. But as to our place in Christ and to faith, we reckon *ourselves* dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Jesus Christ; and we in our bodies are free to be used in "the *service* of God."

"Mercies" are here (διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ) the feelings of compassion in God's heart, which have become embodied in the "mercy" which saves the lost (Tit. iii. 5), quickens the dead (Eph. ii. 4), and cares for the saints of God (Heb. iv. 16). Paul speaks of mercy to him in 2 Cor. iv. 1; 1 Tim. i. 13-16. Peter speaks of "abundant mercy," (1 Pet. i. 3), and about obtaining mercy (1 Pet. ii. 10). Paul, in Romans does not speak of "mercy" until chapter ix. 15. Then we have it about twelve times, ten of which are in that portion of the epistle from chapter ix. to xi., in which he shows that the salvation of the Gentiles now does not argue that God has cast away His people, or that He will not make good in sovereign mercy His promises of special place, blessing, and glory to Israel by and by. In the 11th chapter, at verses 31, 32, he shows that both come under sovereign mercy: "That he might have *mercy* upon all." This word (ἐλεος) looks to the *outward act*; "mercies" (οἰκτιρμοί) to the *inward feeling*. Man's misery is met by God's mercy, whether he be Jew or Gentile. On account of the rejection of Christ the Jew is no better than the Gentile, all being dead in sins, as in Ephesians, and God, rich in *mercy*, for His great love quickening together with Christ, saves by grace through faith,—

the entire thing being God's gift ; and if man is looked at in his living sin and misery, as in the Epistle to the Romans, then God's inward feelings of compassion have been so stirred for him in his guilt, condemnation, bondage to sin, law, and death, that He has not spared His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, and with Him has freely given us all things, such as free justification by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom He has set forth a propitiatory through faith in His blood. "The mercies of God" moved Him to deliver Him up for our offences, and raise Him up for our justification, so that, being justified by faith, we might have peace with God, access through Him into a gracious standing before Him, so that the glory of God is made our boast, and God Himself our joy, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. But "the mercies of God" have not left us under the mastership of sin any more than in our sins, but giving us, in virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, to hold ourselves as non-existent, and the whole bondage to sin terminated, we are to Him who is risen from the dead, and bring forth fruit to God. Instead of raising the cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" the "mercies of God" have flowed forth in such wise as to relieve this misery, and put in the place of that cry of misery the "I thank God, through Jesus Christ;" . . . for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death;"—for God has condemned sin in the flesh—and we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit—a new state altogether, with the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ in us—the spirit of adoption given us, we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, to be glorified together—the body to be redeemed ; but meantime we groaning in it according to God, and waiting for the liberty of the glory, when creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Meantime, exulting in the prospect of coming glory, when we shall be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory, being glorified together, God is for us. His compassions have been embodied and expressed in the gift of His Son, who has died, risen, and gone into heaven,

and through whom we have God's own love so commended in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, and so we feel secure, God being for us in love and righteousness, and as we know there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, so we exult in the culminating grace of "the mercies of God," that none can separate us from the love of Christ, from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Such are the outflowings of His mercies to the Gentiles, who may well "glorify God for His mercy;" and chapters ix.-xi. show also His mercies to Israel, for "so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob." "As regards the glad tidings, they are enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers; for the gifts and calling of God are not subject to repentance. For, as indeed ye also once have not believed in God, but now have been objects of mercy through the unbelief of these, so these also have not believed in your mercy, in order that they also may be the objects of mercy. For God hath shut up all in unbelief in order that He might show mercy to all" (Rom. xi.)

Such are the "mercies of God." Is He not "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *Father of mercies*?" These mercies have found their objects in us, and now, having experienced them, what a motive to induce us to a whole-hearted presentation of our bodies—"our intelligent service." As God-taught saints we yield it. It is an intelligent service we render. Salvation is no longer a dark saying and a dim parable, but a revealed and embodied fact and reality. We have the Holy Ghost as the unction, and the risen Lord in the presence of God, and by Him heavenly realities are revealed, and we ourselves are in living fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit—having the enjoyment of the mutual thoughts and affections of the Father and the Son. There is nothing else "reasonable," or in strict accordance with spiritual logic (*λογικῆς*), or exactly as it should be, or at all answerable as a spontaneous response to the

reception of "the mercies of God," save the presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice—holy, well-pleasing unto God. . As the redeemed nation of Israel were supplied with motives for absolute giving up of themselves to God as His worshipping nation, solely in the mercy of God, manifested in their redemption and blessing, so "the mercies of God" to us should lead spontaneously to our presenting ourselves as His worshipping saints, and moving spiritually, as those under the entire control of the Holy Ghost, in the "*intelligent* service" of this New Testament house of God.

When David sat in his house and mused on all God's mercies, his mind got upon the ark of God, and he thought of building a house for it. The Lord did not allow it, but told him it was well that it was in his heart. Instead of thinking on God's mercies to this effect that we are to be used to establish God's worship or secure that the truth shall be perpetuated by our prudence or devotedness towards such an object, let our aim be to hold ourselves in ever fresh presentation before the Lord, that He may establish our hearts in grace, our souls in devotedness, and our minds in the knowledge of His will. Our intelligent worship-service is entirely dependent on God's sustainment, Christ's grace, and the Holy Ghost's presence in power and blessing. But when things are according to the mind of God, as when David caused the Levites to bear the ark, and there was worshipping gladness, and the permanent settlement of the ministry of song, it pertained not to the law, but to "the sure mercies of David." The one who had known first rejection and then exaltation began *the settled* ministry of song in Israel; so ours began with the Lord Jesus. The song in Christianity begins with the seating of the earth-rejected Jesus, crowned with glory and honour, on the throne of the Father in the heavens, and "Thou art worthy" shall be sung in the heavenly sanctuary for ever and ever. There is always light, love, communion, joy in the Lord, and song where God's mind is sought and enjoyed as to His worship, and when praise and thanksgiving are rendered to God from fully consecrated and devoted worshippers, for we joy in God through our

Lord Jesus Christ, and our full cup running over, we offer by Him the sacrifice of praise to God continually, confessing His name.

The basis of our worship is Christ and His perfect sacrifice of Himself—the Lord's supper being the centre of it, as it keeps Him in His death for the glory of God and our redemption visibly before us ; our only power of worship the Holy Spirit ; the object of worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For through *Him* (Christ Jesus) we both have access by one *Spirit* unto the *Father*" (Eph. ii. 18). "The FATHER seeketh worshippers ;" and "GOD is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." Then "let us have grace whereby we may worship GOD acceptably with reverence and with godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 28) ; "Worship GOD" (Rev. xxii. 9).

It would be edifying to inquire into the character of our worship, and ascertain the difference between worshipping *God*, the *Father*, the Lord Jesus, and "by the Spirit of God." A Christian who knows only Hebrews' truth will worship *God* with reverence and godly fear ; not with a childlike sense of relationship, "crying, Abba, Father." In "Hebrews" we never have the Father in our relationship or worship, and it never rises to the height or measure of the full worship of Christianity, for it is *official* not *filial* ; of consecrated "priests unto *God*," not of children and the Father. We do not find either "joy" or "love" in our relationship with God in the epistle. Fear, not love, characterises it (iv. 1, 12 ; xii. 29), "for our God is a consuming fire ;" and in it we are on our way through the wilderness, and having liberty to enter into the holiest we draw near habitually and worship ; the epistle does not look at us as always there, as does Ephesians, which regards us as being before the Father in love, who hath "predestinated us to the adoption of *children to himself*," and in the happy enjoyment of the "Spirit of Sonship," ever in our Father's presence as the loved ones of His own family. "For by Him we both have access by one Spirit to the *Father*," and we are as *children* of God, ever enjoying our fellow-

ship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. The worship of the "holy priesthood" is the worship of *God*, and it is "with reverence and godly *fear*;" but as children we "worship *the Father*," and our *joy* is full. A most desirable state of mind it is to have "*godly fear*" (the same word [εὐλαβεία] is used of our blessed Lord, Heb. v. 7); we cannot "serve *God* acceptably" otherwise; but the Spirit-given cry of "Abba" is essential to the worship of *the Father*, as offered by His "dear children"—His "*loved children*" (Eph. v. 1). There is no priesthood with the Father, and our place as priests is never spoken of where our relationship to the Father is contemplated. Priestly place and worship of God are connected with a pilgrimage condition and the home in prospect; worship of the Father by His dear children and the loving consciousness of a filial relationship are connected with the Father's presence. Worshipping *God*, on the level of the truth in Hebrews, 1st Peter, and Revelation, has an entirely different feeling to our souls from worshipping the *Father* on the basis of the manifestation of His purpose in Christ Jesus, in Ephesians. And if we are true worshippers, and not hollow pretenders, we will not venture to worship out of keeping with our state. The Spirit will guide us into that frame of mind and form of expression which accord with our present condition. There is great danger in leaving off worshipping *God*—where lie the deepest moral glories connected with the adorable Person and atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ—and only worshipping the Father. No reason is there why both should not be observed in due scriptural proportion, as the state of worshippers may permit: but less harm will be done to souls from having the worship of God in excess than from the all but exclusive worship of the Father—although, as has been said, there cannot be the full and proper worship of Christianity unless there be, besides the worship of God, also the worship of the Father. Our Lord has joined both in St. John iv. 23, 24. Here we have the *Father* in relationship, and *God* in his nature; and it is the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ we now worship "in spirit and in truth."

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION.¹



WE have to avoid the wiles of Satan continually. His temptations are ever there in all we pass through ; but there are some things which come more directly from him, errors by which he seeks to deceive Christians and undermine the truth, as Irvingism, Puseyism, Rationalism. And these are to be met as coming directly from him. If we meet them thus we may expect help from God, while if tampered with in a friendly way we cannot. Such is the question which turns up on every hand around us now. Infidelity and the undermining the truth and the authority of the word are rampant. It does not surprise the Christian acquainted with Scripture ; it confirms his faith in it, because he is warned there that it would be so. It is his painful experience however, but Scripture has taught him that in the last days perilous times would come.

The active mind of Germany has been the officina, the workshop, of this in various phases in these latter years—Paulus and Strauss and Bauer, and the rationalists from Semler and Eichhorn down ; and England and other countries have been infected with it. Scotland, through the forms of its church government, has recently been most openly under the public eye.

I have nothing to do with the church matters of that little section of Christendom which made itself conspicuous in Europe by a public claim to purity and disinterestedness beyond others, nor have I to do with what is expedient for United Presbyterians if the question arises there. Their internal affairs are no concern of others, save as the Christian must care for everything that concerns Christ's truth and Christ's people. Nor do I expect them to listen to Dr. M'Cosh advising the rationalists to

¹ A review of Dr. Marcus Dods' sermon *Inspiration and Revelation*, with a preface (Edinburgh : 1877) ; and the *System of Rationalism* of Dr. Ewald, of which it is a popular echo.

leave and set up for themselves. If Satan is at work, as I have no doubt he is, honesty is not what you are to expect. But the question concerns every Christian.

Dr. M'Cosh has told them,¹ what every one outside themselves can see, that the principal dissenting bodies in Scotland, and eminently the Free Church, are on their trial. It is not merely, as Dr. M'Cosh says, "What are the churches to do?" nor is any "shrewdness" required in the matter. The question is, What are those who believe that Scripture is inspired to do when Rationalism (Broad Churchism, as Dr. M'Cosh calls it after its English name) has reared its head and infected the ecclesiastical bodies of the country, and when, as in the case of the Free Church, though it suspended Mr. Smith as professor, they are really trifling with the faith?—the latter, in the last form the question has taken, having shelved the matter by what is called moving the previous question.² I do not trust in churches; I do not know which of them is to be trusted. Is Rome or Greece, is the Lutheran—the very seat of infidelity—or the reformed, who are in the same state? Holland is far worse than Dr. M'Cosh represents it; the well-known converted Jew Dr. Capadose left it a few years ago because it was universally infidel; France is notorious. Will the Anglican, with its Puseyism and Broad Churchism, give me rest? or now, Scotland falling into the same track of heartless indifference to the truth? "Ephraim has grey hairs here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not." The attack on the word of God is not from heathens as of old, or open infidels, but from the bosom of Christendom itself. Men who are called its ministers are undermining the confidence of the simple in what was the basis of their faith, the true basis of all faith, the word of God. "If it were an open enemy, I could have borne it; but it was thou, my companion, mine own familiar friend." They tell you they believe in the Bible, nay, in inspiration, only

¹ In his pamphlet *Broad Churchism in Scotland*.

² This paper having been long delayed, action has been taken since. Being out of the country I cannot state what with accuracy. [It was published in a pamphlet form before the case was decided.—Ed.]

taking up literary questions. It is false; utterly false. None can deny that it is but the *crambe repetita*—the dishing up afresh—what is borrowed from the Eichhorns (though he is now left far behind), the De Wettes, Bleeks, Ewalds, Richms, Grafs, Knobels, Bertheauts, and a host of others, to say nothing of Kuenen, who avows himself a Unitarian and ready to join with Jews, only they would not probably do so at present. I have not read all these. But I have read some of them. It is all one system. Some more insolent and bold, as Graf and Kuenen and De Wette (though there was in his history and views, it would seem, a drawing to the truth of Christ as he went on, which was interesting). But I do not speak of the individuals, knowing none of them. I speak of a regular system unfolded in their books, and now propagated by professors and ministers of the Free Church of Scotland. They differ from each other in details; nay, you must know what edition you read of the principal ones, or you will be stating something false about them.

But this is not really the question. They all develop a system which destroys the authority of the word of God, which denies it comes *from Him to us*. This is attempted to be denied, and covered up, and softened down, not to frighten honest minds, not to say Christian ones, too soon. But this is only Satan's craft, and if they who talk of literary inquiries into the history of the sacred writings believe really that we have God's revelation, they must know that this system undermines it, that it denies that we have God's revelation on God's authority. I shall proceed to show this.

There are two systems in the main, if you take thorough-going destructives as Graf and others (De Wette grew somewhat more sober); that Deuteronomy was the first book written, and in Josiah's time, or a little before, but produced then by the high priest; and that the legal enactments of the Pentateuch were added after the Babylonish captivity, Moses' name being used to secure the priestly influence established in them. I suppose this is not inspiration.

According to Ewald, the great body of these laws was drawn

up by a priest very soon after the building of the temple by Solomon. This is the "Book of Origins." He admired greatly the character of the writing which is the production of a great and elevated genius aroused by the reigns of David and Solomon. This, too, was to enforce the priests' rights and authority. This history includes the creation, to which, being of an elevated mind, he could look back, and went on to the history of the Judges' time, but this is lost, and was very briefly related; for he tells us what parts of it are clearly lost. But he holds there was before this a book of covenants which recorded various covenants of Abraham and Abimelech, and Isaac and Jacob, etc., and Exodus xx. to xxiii. This was written about Samson's time. Even before this there were written documents, as songs, and the book of the wars of the Lord, and of Jasher. After the Book of Origins, the great work of Solomon's time, there were in his earlier editions a third and fourth, in the last a third, fourth, and fifth writer, to complete the recovery and collection of the old traditions, adding and connecting and modifying, and, besides this, one who puts all together and added some passages to make a rounded whole of it.

Bleek is certainly soberer in his judgment of details, but he does not in the least believe in the inspiration of the word of God. None of them ever thinks of such a thing. The difficulty of showing it in positive statements arises, as far as any exists, from their taking it for granted there is none. Nothing of the kind ever crosses their minds. Even Lange, so much thought of, speaks of it in his *Life of Christ* as an obsolete thing which hindered all development of the truth.

But before I show from Ewald and Bleek the real character of the system—and I choose the most capable and respected (indeed, Ewald may be taken as the most complete, and as a representative of the moderate system; as Kuenen, Graf, and others whom I have not read, of the daring and open contempt of the word of God, Bleek as the most sober of all); but, I repeat—for none regard the Scriptures as the

oracles of God—according to none of them can man live, as the Saviour teaches us (quoting Deuteronomy as authority against Satan, and silencing him by it) by words which proceed out of the mouth of God.

But I shall begin nearer home with the sermon of Dr. Marcus Dods and his excusing preface. Dr. Dods goes so far as to admit that when prophets say, "Thus saith the Lord," a revelation has been made *to them*. Would he allow me to ask him, Has none been made *to us*, when the prophets *say*: "Thus saith the Lord?" This you will not find from Dr. Dods. Happily, if we do not find it from him, we can from such words find it out without him. But the whole point lies there; is there a revelation to us? *How* God revealed the truth to the prophet is not, as he would have us believe, in question at all. No one can tell how, save as, in some cases, told us in Scripture (Num. xii. 6, 8). But how the word of the Lord came to them, those to whom it has not thus come are not likely to know. Nor do I believe a prophet could explain it to one who had not experienced it. The question is: Is it the word of God for me as given out by the prophet? Well, if "Thus saith the Lord" be true, it clearly is; though Dr. Dods will not say so. "Similarly of the apostles," adds Dr. Dods, "I, of course, believe they are the authoritative teachers of the church, and that in order to fit them to be so, special revelations were made *to them*." Is what they have written the word of God to us? This is the question. Paul tells us very distinctly how the matter stood. God has given to us "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we *speak* not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And he adds the third step too. "The natural man *receiveth* not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."¹ We may compare the words of the

¹ And note here, there is a difference between revelation and inspiration, a

Lord in the special case of their answering before magistrates : "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." The theory of these doctors is that the gracious Lord would put words in the mouth of His servants for their difficulties ; but in what was to be truth for the church in all times, the basis of its faith, and its security against error, direct communication (I do not say revelation) to us of the truth was not so made by those to whom He made the revelation of it for that purpose.

Dr. Dods does not deny that in the case of the prophets men had revelations made *to them* ; but he does carefully distinguish between this and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and distinctly denies that any revelation is made by them to us. Now, in the case of the prophets, the matter is palpable, and he shirks it in the sermon, and confines it to a revelation *to them* in the preface, and as to the apostles says : "In their case, also, I desire, as Paul himself obviously did, to bring the revelations made by God into the foreground, and to allow the inspired state of the human mind to fall back into a secondary place."

This is very poor special pleading. Of course Paul's business was not to explain a "theory of inspiration." Who thinks it was? But when the revelations were brought into the foreground, who received them then? to whom did they, or do they, become revelations? That I need to be spiritual to enjoy them is true ; or, if it be gospel to a sinner, grace to work in bringing it home to him. But that is another question. But if Paul brought the revelation unadulterated, not corrupting the word of God, for so he calls it, into the foreground (that is, in his communication of it to others, I suppose, according to the measure of their spirituality), they received it ; that is, the revelation he brought into the foreground, the revelation he had received himself. It point for many reasons I should insist on. But revelation is to the divine vessel or instrument ; inspiration is the communication he makes of it. The spiritual apprehension is in him who personally profits by it.

was to this end it was so given to him. "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen." And his boast is that through the Spirit he brought it to others as pure as he had received it himself (see the end of 2 Cor. ii. and iv. 2). Of course the revelation of truth was the thing of importance. But revelation to whom? If to the hearers or readers, it was God's word to them as the apostles and prophets had received it. Thank God!

I only recall here in passing the utter absurdity of a theory, which would tell us that God, willing in grace to give a revelation to the whole church, and, in some respects, to all men, gives it in such a way that, as a revelation, it goes no farther than the one to whom it is communicated. It is a very convenient system for the clergy, who may desire that we should believe all that they give us as authoritative teachers, but a poor case for us Christians that *we* have no revelation from God. Our good friends will say, Were not the apostles authoritative teachers? Surely; but they tell us how and why. "For this cause, also, thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 13). They imparted to *them* the gospel of God. It was "not yea and nay, but in Him was yea;" yea "all the promises of God" were; and Peter took care they should have the things "in remembrance," and John wrote his epistle that they "might believe." There were not only authoritative teachers, which no Christian denies; but we have what was authoritatively taught, and was, and is, the word of God. Either we have what was revealed to Paul or others as purely and as fully as he received it, as he asserts (2 Cor. ii. 17); or, the authoritative teachers being gone, we have no authoritative word of God at all. Nor had they directly then. Nor has, in fact, Dr. Dods any, as I will plainly show a little farther on.

But before I turn to his more direct subject, the historical part, there is another point I may notice, which refers also to the subject we have been upon. Dr. Dods believes the prophets when they say, "Thus saith the Lord." Now in the greater part of the Pentateuch (and he will "contend for the historic credibility of the narratives"), we find, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," very commonly adding, "Speak unto Aaron," or "to the priests," or "to the children of Israel, and say unto them," etc. Is this true? If so, we have, not a revelation of God in history credibly reported, but the word of God revealed *to us*. So in Deuteronomy we find "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel," and then (chap. iv.) he says, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you." Is it true? or did he deceive them or not? If not, all the commandments which are inseparable in the four last books from the history, and the history with them, are the word of God. If it is not true, or he deceived himself, or meant to deceive others, we have no sure warrant for the history, nor any revelation of God at all. If it be true, *we* have the revelation made by God to Moses. I do not insist on the absurdity of a system which makes the words of the prophets in warning to the Jews, and in statements occupied with their history and future hopes as a nation a revelation from God; and the account of the fall of man, the promises, the law, the judgment of the whole world—a subject infinitely more important to us all—no revelation at all. The absurdity of it stares every intelligent Christian in the face.

And now, to turn directly to the historical part of Scripture, Dr. Dods' theory is that God has revealed Himself in certain great acts, as the flood. These are revelation, and we have a credible history of them.¹ Dr. Dods ignores here the word of

¹ In the Bible, then, we meet with two things—God's revelations of Himself, and the literature in which these revelations are recounted and preserved. Speak-

God, and the operation of the Spirit of God in every way, and represents in a way utterly false the documents he is speaking of. Speaking of Paul's writings he says: "I may not be able at once to accept all he teaches; I cannot accept it merely because it comes to me with authority. I can only accept in doctrine that which fits itself in with my previously received ideas and my stage of mental growth." . . . "Having accepted Paul or any one as an authoritative teacher, it is of course at my own risk I disagree with him in any one particular." Can there be a more complete denial that it is the word of God, or *our* having any revelation from God? Who in his senses would talk of disagreeing with God in any particular?

Unless, with strange inconsistency, it be the inferior revelation of prophets, Dr. D. has no revelation from God at all. Next, it must "fit itself in with my previously received ideas, and my stage of mental growth." Could it not possibly correct your previously received ideas, Dr. Dods? If the ideas which Paul gives us are God's ideas, do you not think they might? As to mental growth, I find, if it is mere man's mind, He hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes; He chooses the foolish things to confound the wise. That there is progress in divine knowledge no one denies, and that we need the Holy Ghost to apprehend spiritual things, I fully recognise; but in Dr. Dods' statement, neither as to source nor power, is there the smallest recognition of God as to our receiving what is in Scripture. What Dr. Dods would have is to "apprehend the distinction between these two things—God's revelation of Himself, and the narrative or record of that revelation in the Bible" (p. 12). There is no revelation in the narrative, note. So (preface, p. 6) "All that we need contend for is the historic credibility of the narrative." It will be said, he only refers to "a special theory of inspiration." He does in order to reject the plenary inspiration of Dr. Hodge, but his theory is a theory of no inspiration, but of historic credibility. So far as the historical

ing of the flood, he says: "That is the revelation, and the Bible gives us an account of this revelation."

contents of Scripture are concerned (we have spoken of the prophets and apostolic writings), "revelation stands firm, though there should prove to be no such thing as inspiration." Now this is absurd in principle ; and Dr. Dods' statements false in fact, and false as to the ground of reception. Paul tells us *all* or every Scripture is given by inspiration of God. I do not go through the proofs rapidly summed up in the tract "*Have we a Revelation from God ?*"¹ but no honest man can deny that Christ and the apostles quote all parts of the Scriptures as inspired. Perhaps Dr. Dods may not agree with them ; but if he does not, he does "wait with a warning over his head." He may be assured of that.

But his moral theory is all false. Truth is presented to the conscience, and the conscience reached ; but the effect, according to Scripture, is to believe the message and the messenger. The woman of Samaria did not answer the Lord, when her conscience was reached, Who told you that? by what historical document, or story of another first witness, do you know that? but, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." Her convinced soul recognised the divine authority and source of the word spoken to her. The noble ones of Berea, when it was the general truth of Christ, searched the Scriptures whether those things were so ; they recognised their authority ; "therefore many of them believed." Their inquiry was not whether the new truth "fitted in with their previously received ideas." Most certainly it did not (it is always fresh truth which tests the faith of the heart); but whether it fitted in with the Scriptures, the certain word of God, the revelation of God. Fresh truth which calls for faith never can be part of the historical revelation of God, or it would not be fresh. It will never be inconsistent with, but confirm, what was previously revealed. The truth previously received one may adhere to, and pride one's self in, and reject the new. "The time cometh when he that killeth you will think that he doeth God service. But these things they will do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor Me." I do not

¹ Reprinted from Vol. I. *Bible Witness and Review*.

doubt we have all revealed truth in Scripture. In these "perilous times" we are referred to the Scriptures and expressly as inspired of God—certainly not to my previously received ideas. And we have the promise "they shall be all taught of God." Dr. Dods recognises neither.

Further, Dr. Dods refers to the narrators in the New Testament as claiming no other ground, but that of being eye-witnesses, referring to the common objection of infidels, namely, what is said in the beginning of Luke. Now that the Lord in gracious condescension did use eye-witnesses, so that men should have no excuse for not believing, is most true and precious; but that the credibility of Scripture statements is "grounded not on any inspiration" is utterly false. I will not rest on Origen's comment on Luke's words that the others had taken it in hand as men, and Luke's was divinely undertaken in contrast with that. But, in the first place, Luke states exactly the contrary of what Dr. Dods says: "not," he says, "in any inspiration which could give him a knowledge of events of which he could not in any other way be cognisant, but upon the ordinary grounds of belief in history, namely, that he had his facts from those who were eye-witnesses." "Many," he says, "having taken in hand to set forth the things most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses of the Word, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" (*παρηκολούθηκόντι ἄνωθεν*, the word being the same as that used by Paul to Timothy, 2 Timothy iii. 10, with the addition of *ἄνωθεν*). The others had related the history as delivered by eye-witnesses. But this did not satisfy Luke; so he wrote his Gospel having perfect knowledge of everything. But note here that it is not merely inspiration for the knowledge of facts which is denied, but such a guarding of the writer as should preserve him from writing a false account. It was "the ordinary grounds of belief in history." Now the Lord expressly speaks of both grounds as to the apostles. The Holy Ghost would come and testify of

Christ ; "and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." Nor is this all. In John xiv. the Lord says to His disciples: "He, the Comforter, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Dr. Dods puts as the ground of confidence a spiritual state in the apostles which made them sensitive to everything in Him which was of the highest value. We are in a spiritual region because we are in the hands of spiritual men. They had the Spirit of Christ, and so coincided with Him as to what was important. Now this shows the hollowness of all this theory. Dr. Dods has given up inspiration in the history of Christ, and even guidance, so that they should not commit errors, and we are cast upon the apostles coinciding with Christ, being spiritual men. When? When they saw all the things which passed in His life down here. What does Dr. Dods himself tell us? "We can scarcely suppose that the Evangelists saw all that had to be seen in Christ, *but we can only see through them.*" But then they must coincide with Him, and see as important what He saw as important. Now, through grace they believed He was the Christ and had the words of eternal life, and clung to Him. But will Dr. Dods show me one single instance where they entered into His mind, where they understood Him, or if they did, did not remain entirely opposed to what He told them? "We have no bread," when the Lord warned them against the leaven of Pharisees or others. "Hath any one brought Him ought to eat?" when, rejected in Judea, the blessed Lord's heart was expanding through the opening blessing that reached out beyond it through the conversion of one, a stranger to covenant and promise, and had meat to eat that they knew not of. And when He told them that He should die and rise again, "they were exceeding sorry," and again, "That be far from thee, Lord."

One sole instance we have, a heart whose affections rose with the rising hatred of the Jews just ready to kill Him, and spent the best she had in lowliness on Him ; and this was to be told

wherever the gospel was to be preached—a solitary case, so strange to Him who looked for comforters and found none—and it has been. And even after the resurrection they say on the road with Him, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel ;” and the apostles most closely bound up with Him and with one another saw (were eye-witnesses, Dr. Dods), and believed, for as yet they knew not the Scriptures that He *must* rise from the dead, and went home again and that was all about it for them. And another woman, clinging to His empty grave (all the world was to her if He was not there), is made to the apostles themselves the messenger of the highest privileges the saint can have, from the lips of Jesus Himself. Then, after that, He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures ; but He assured them, too, that “blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.” Were they, before He made them understand the Scriptures?—“Mainly this, that they had the revelation at first hand, that they were the men before whom the revelation was made, and who were so impressed with it, and saw its meaning as to be moved to preserve and perpetuate this impression for the sake of others?” What does John tell us in one case? “These things understood not His disciples at the first ; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were *written* of Him, and they had done these things unto Him” (John xii. 16).

Impossible for anything to be more contrary to Scripture, or I must add greater insensibility to the sweetness and true history of that Bread which came down from heaven, than the statements of Dr. Dods. And, if it were only after He was glorified that they could tell the wondrous tale, and have told it to us, blessed be God ! It was not that they were impressed with it while He was there and saw its meaning ; but that the Holy Ghost was come down from heaven, and they gave us a history of the Son of God, and Son of man, as none but the Holy Ghost could give, or make us understand and delight in.

Dr. Dods' theory and principle are utterly false. Nothing

but the utter darkness of man's mind and heart could give us such a statement as that it was spiritually valuing what He valued that made them competent witnesses ; that it was those who were most in sympathy with the purposes of God and who were most imbued with His own Spirit, who were best prepared to see and recount His revelations. But it is every way false. First, who could tell them of a glorified Christ? They could follow Him to the cloud ; the angels told them He would come again ; but what about Him while He was away? The Comforter would come and take the things of Christ and show them to them. All things that the Father had were His : therefore He said, "He shall receive of Mine and shall shew it unto you." Where were the eye-witnesses now? Yet, sweet as it is when at peace through His precious blood to dwell and feed on that Bread come down from heaven, and attractive in itself even to the sinner, the blessing is to look upon not the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, which are eternal, to set our affections on things above, not on things on earth. Where is our Livy or Thucydides, as they miserably say, for this?

Hence Dr. Dods tells us what we have got by Paul's teaching is, "spirit supersedes law"—rather poor Presbyterian teaching ; but that is all he can lead us to find in it. "This is the ultimate teaching the world needs or can have." Is there nothing of the person and glory of Christ and God's purposes in Him? I find Him telling me that eye indeed "hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him ; but God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak."

Now it is quite clear that all these blessed things on which

our affections are to be set, where our conversation (our *πολιτευμα*) is, are known only by the revelation of the Spirit. For Dr. Dods all is simply "spirit supersedes law." Besides, Christianity is the ministration of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii.), and the veil on Moses is done away in Christ; and thus the sacrifices, the patterns of things in the heavens, and the whole scheme hidden in the shadows of the law, have their true force given to them through a suffering and glorified Christ, sitting at the right hand of God the Father till He comes again, His enemies being made His footstool. With all this history has nothing to do. It is all revealed and understood solely by the Spirit of God. There can be no history of the facts and glory of heaven. What could be heard when one went there could not be revealed at all; and the history we may in one sense have of it has no sense for us till it ceases to be history and becomes shadows of better things which the Spirit opens up to us in them.

But even in the earthly part, to spiritual intelligence the operation of the Holy Ghost in the Gospels, in the revelation of Christ on earth, is as plain as in the heavenly part. The four Gospels reveal Him in four distinct characters, as has been long ago remarked—(1) Emmanuel-Messiah; (2) the Servant-Prophet; (3) the Son of man in grace (after the two first chapters showing Israel's and the remnant's position); (4) the Word made flesh, eternal life in the Son of God, and at the close, the other Comforter, the Spirit, promised. And in each Gospel the Holy Ghost calls up before us, through the mind of the Evangelist, what presents the Lord in the character it treats of. Take the closing scene: all is power and divine in John without suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross; in Matthew the sheep dumb before his shearers, the suffering victim without a comforter all through; in Luke more suffering expressed in Gethsemane, none on the cross: there all was grace and confidence. Mark is substantially here the same as Matthew; he takes the place of suffering instead of active service. The mission of the disciples is distinct in each Gospel. Into all this I cannot enter here,

but it is not as eye-witnesses we have the accounts. Matthew was present when all went backward and fell to the ground, but tells us nothing about it. John was nearer to Christ when in an agony, but it is not his subject. John was one of those that slept, but there is not a word of it. Mark was not, but tells us all about it. Who told them the infancy of the Lord? If we believe Lange, it was Mary, with plenty of nonsense about it. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the Word made flesh, was worthy of one historian, alone capable of writing *His* history, the Spirit of God; happy those who were made the instruments of doing it! No Christian denies that the twelve, at least, were eye-witnesses, and he appreciates God's grace in it in dealing with men. But none but an infidel as to God's revelation denies the operation of the Spirit of God in the testimony they have given.

It remains for me to speak of the history of the Old Testament, before I show what the principles of this school are, a school with which Dr. Dods has fully identified himself, not only in general principles, but in the whole scheme on which these principles are carried out. My reader need not suppose I charge Dr. Dods with agreeing with them in details, for no two of them agree. Dr. Bleek, for example, declares Ewald's as utterly unproved and ungrounded. So Ilgen's, of which I only know by report. But these details merely refer to the dates at which the different histories of which the Pentateuch is compiled were written. There are in the main two schools, one making Deuteronomy the first book, and the body of the Pentateuch worked up after the Captivity, with some Mosaic tradition, but no regular book of law till Josiah's time (that there was no regular book of the law is pretty much Bleek's view too); the others that the body of the laws are Mosaic, though not written by him, save a song or two and register of journey, Deuteronomy, with Joshua coming in their natural order.

But all leave a revelation by Moses entirely out of the question, indeed all revelation; and it is to this system in its actual form,

in the note to p. 18, Dr. Dods gives his adherence, besides insisting in the text on the infidel principle of it. The Bible is not a revelation, but a record of the historic facts in which God has revealed Himself, such as the flood, etc. Now all this is as shallow and poor as can be. We have an ordinary historical account "the ordinary grounds of belief in history." But first, by the historical writers of Scripture, Dr. Dods does not mean what we have actually in Scripture at all—that is merely an account compiled out of them ; at any rate, "not always those who brought the books into their final state, but those, whoever they were, who first recorded the revelations made." One thing is never thought of in any shape—God's having anything to do with the record. The prime requisite is knowledge of these facts at first hand. But this we have not got at all, "Whoever they were!" Some fragments may be preserved, songs and genealogies, and different documents, a very few from the first hand, and these curtailed, added to, fashioned according to the thoughts of those "who brought the books into their final shape." So that what we have got *may* be as to a part of the history from the first hand, whoever he was, but may not be. But at any rate "brought into shape," so that "first hand" we certainly have not!

But there are other serious difficulties. Though there are important facts revealing God's ways, the greater part of the historical books are not composed of facts at all. They are laws, exhortations, promises, warnings, prophecies, institutions, which were the shadow of good things to come—feasts which prefigured great future dealings of God ; things purposely ordered to be patterns of things in the heavens ; God's estimate of men, the conduct of men as laying the ground of God's ways with them, and that often of the deepest instruction and the finest development of motives in men, and in God as to His government : the elements, as in Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of God's future dealings ; personages who came out involving immense principles of God's dealings in otherwise trifling incidents, and principles and relationships which run

through God's ways on to glory, yet with no great revelation of God in the acts themselves, as for instance Melchisedec ; things which "happened unto them for examples, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." There seems a purpose here in their being written. Whose? Of those who first recorded the revelations, in all these details, or those who brought the books into their final shape? or of God in His wise and holy counsel?

But I have some further inquiry to make on this statement that God gave revelations of Himself in His acts, and then we have a credible account of them from eye-witnesses at first hand. Take Dr. Dods' example, the flood. What eye-witness gave us the account of this, or of the Tower of Babel—nay, even of Abraham's altars, of Jacob's wrestling? Did Adam record for the benefit of his posterity his disobedience and sin, and exclusion from Paradise, and the barring of the way back to the tree of life on which the whole history of man, and Satan, and redemption, and mediately or immediately judgment, depends? What "first hand" wrote the ordinary credible history of what passed in the garden? We may go farther, if need be, to do so. Has Dr. Dods got the morning stars and the sons of God who shouted for joy to give us a credible history of creation?¹ Was any one there to hear, "Let us make man in our image?"

But why should I continue? Was ever such senseless stuff? Whether we consider the delicate shades of thought in a thousand cases, small events of the utmost import, statements of what God thought and said, and a multitude of facts which no eye had seen, and all forming part of an immense scheme of God as to man, and His glory in Christ, and gathering together all things in Him, every part of the record, which, thank God, we do possess, shows the gross and senseless absurdity of the whole scheme.

I shall show what the authors of this system, those from

¹ The tabernacle, some of these doctors tell us, could not have been made or exist in the wilderness, did not in the land, as the history of the nation proves, but was invented, being copied from the temple when it was known. This shows the importance of the principle, for it was made after the pattern in the mount, and is so treated in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

whom all this is drawn, and whose system is substantially accepted in Dr. Dods' note, to which I have referred, make of these "Urkunde und Quellschriften," those who first recorded the revelations ; but I thought it best first to take up Dr. Dods' statements themselves as he presents them. He does not go so far as the gravest of them as to the prophets ; he carefully confines himself to the historical books, and I have done so. Divine and interesting as the prophets are, the history contained in Genesis is of far more importance to us. Of this, according to the system, we have no revealed record, but only what rests on the ordinary grounds of historic credibility ; and, moreover, in cases where the whole place of man with God depends on it, and redemption has all its sense from it, we cannot possibly have any such history at all. Does the revelation of the thoughts, and what I may call the private thoughts, of God, rest on the ordinary grounds of historic credibility ? It is puerile absurdity, an infidel rejection of what Christ and the apostles have told and taught us as to these books ; while the saint who has to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, that word which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, has no such word to look to at all.

I turn to Ewald and Bleek, leaving aside Kuenen and Graf, whom I may call openly infidel. Ewald shows at once his view of the matter. The beginning of his "Geschichte Israels" is a dissertation on the nature of legend ; how it develops itself, and the forms it takes under various circumstances ; in fact, a mere abstract statement of what he is going to tell us of the Bible, and drawn from his view of it. I leave aside the references to the Book of the Wars of the Lord, and a supposed account of Moses' life,¹ to one of which the Scriptures themselves refer, as not material, to come to his first larger source of the history, the "Book of Covenants." Here all refers to covenants—Jacob and Laban, Isaac and Abimelech, Abraham and Abimelech—showing restless and unsettled times. This, therefore, will have been written in the time of the Judges,

¹ He refers what is said of Jethro to this, and I think this only.

in the latter half of the period, or more exactly at the beginning of Samson's rule, etc. But Gen. xlix. leads to a closer knowledge of the time. This flows entirely from seeing the twelve tribes as they dwelt scattered in Canaan in the time of the Judges. Nothing could describe in a more lively way their then state than this song. Deut. xxxiii., which was a copy of it made in the time of kingly rule to fill up the felt want in that of Genesis, shows it was made earlier, when Israel's unity was not established. But verses 16-18, where Dan is spoken of most exactly, show us the time, as they clearly refer to Samson's time and his being in the judge's office, describing his heroic dealing against the Philistines; and in a note it is added, as also among the Arabs the image of a warrior as a serpent is largely developed. And the more certainly this position of the tribe under Samson was soon over, so the more surely must such an utterance be written down during the short happy elevation of Samson. So the state of things related in Judges i. is evidently the state of things in the time of the composer—a state already so fully changed under the Kings, that the "Book of Origins" sketches a totally different picture of Joshua's and Moses' days. The stream of accounts handed down flowed more richly, as we might expect, when no more important time had eclipsed them. So the legends as to the patriarchs were taken up into this work evidently circumstantially, and with remembrances whose completeness subsequently constantly suffers. Their time was so distant from that of the composer's that he could there venture on a higher artistic presentation with poetic freedom. That the dying man had a clearer sight, and specially a dying patriarch could cast his view over the future of his posterity, was the view of all antiquity. And so the composer dared to bring in the dying Jacob as a higher voice of pure truths to be spoken of all the tribes. As he had to praise and sharply blame some of them on seeing the state of the scattered tribes with a troubled heart, his spirit takes refuge in¹ the memory of the patriarch Jacob and it. Not only Moses' blessing, Deut. xxxiii., but such utter-

¹ Or "goes off to," flüchtete.

ances as Gen. xlvi. 15-19, xxvii. 27-29, 39 ff. Num. xxiii. f. depend entirely on this model.

Now I ask if, in all this account of the recorders of the first revelation of God, there is the smallest sign of God's Spirit, or of anything coming from God at all? It is purely a human composition, not a contemporary one; and if there be an allusion to an event which the professed author puts forth as a prophecy, it is a proof that it was written at the time prophesied of. That is, there is a complete denial of all inspiration. From this author we have the decalogue, only without the reference to the seventh day to the creation which was added by the author of the "Book of Origins." But that blessing of Jacob's shows a genuine prophetic spirit, so in the conclusion of covenant with God, Exod. xxiii. 20-23. He adopted older songs, already written down, into his work, as Exod. xv. 1-19. Num. xxi. 17, profiting by the above mentioned Wars of the Lord. "On the other hand, it is impossible to think that such verses as Jacob's blessing, Gen. xlix., springs from anything else than mere artistic power in composition."

I add this part as showing what genuine prophetic spirit means. So we must regard a considerable part of the Mosaic laws as got from old writings, which must be from an earlier date as he introduces them as communicated to Moses by God after the decalogue to be laid before the people. "The Book of Jasher" contained songs which furnished abundant materials in historical songs. It was an historical book of instruction without connected history. It was written in the beginning of Solomon's reign. This brings us to the *Book of Origins*, written, says Ewald, at that time. Only I must add (124) that Ex. xx. 23-xxiv. 19 was introduced into the *Book of Covenants*. But what I have given as to the "Book of Covenants" may suffice.

"The Book of Origins," Ewald tells us, was a much larger work than "the Book of Covenants," and more recent, belonging to the reign of the early kings, which gives its whole character and we have much larger fragments of it. The date is clear from the way in which, in the midst of describing the time of the

patriarchs, he is looking at his own time. The author of the "Book of Covenants" had only once made Jacob cast his eyes forward to the latest future, and therewith into the beclouded time of the author (time of the Judges). But the author of the "Book of Origins" (in Solomon's time) is bolder, and in this the voice of God appearing to the patriarchs overflows often in cheerful utterances and joyous promises for the seed or later posterity, as if the time of the author (to which such utterances with the hope that their blessings would yet last to future times properly refer) was one of the rare times which from a mighty train of complete prosperity feel themselves lifted higher, and look forward to yet greater; and we find, among other things, Abraham and Sarah and Jacob would become a multitude of nations, and kings would arise out of them. How then could the blessing be limited to definite and peculiar, and so evidently accidental a blessing as that kings should descend from the patriarchs? This question can never be answered unless we hold fast that the work was composed in the times of the first opening bloom of the kingdom, which furthered Israel's true good.

So the change from kings in Edom to heads of tribes comes from David's conquest of Edom. And the name of Hadad, who fled to Egypt, is found in the name of the last king. But the exact time is learned from 1 Kings viii. 2. Much, no doubt, as we now have it, is worked up by a later hand; still we have much of the authors, and yet it must be before the glorious time of the kingdom was over, and no better termination than "the glory of the Lord filled the house" would be found, so that we may hold for certain that the work was completed in the first third of Solomon's rule. He favours thus Judah, but was a Levite, as the author of the "Book of Covenants" certainly was not. His object in this time of rest was to take a survey of history in its whole compass, bringing it down, however, always to Israel as the central object, following constantly that line of genealogy, but going up to the origin of all history like the Grecians after their conquests over the Persians. But then he goes back to the origin of the various heads of the four ages, Mosaic, Patriarchal,

Noachic, and Adamic : so it is a book of origins. This refers to the expression, "These are the generations" (Toledoth) of such a one as Noah, and then, as in Gen. v. 1, "these are the generations of man" (Adam). But the picture (schilderung) rises up boldly yet beyond all that, seeking to declare (erklären or expound) the origin even of all that is visible in a history of the creation, Gen. i. and ii. 1-3 ; yet this only to be treated as an introduction to the proper work which begins at v. 1. It might give us still oftener the title "These are the generations" (origins), even afterwards as to the tribal genealogies of Israel, if the most of these parts of the work were not at present lost. There is, he tells us, a special charm in these accounts. A not less healthful than strengthening breath of an elevated spirit blows on every feeling reader, which only the author, because he lived through his own time with the warmest participation in it and a treasure of royal thoughts, could understand what was most elevated in antiquity in the liveliest way, and bring forward for posterity with a master hand what lay there not to be lost and elevating, and paint it with increasing attractiveness, without, for that reason failing to recognise the higher happiness which the bloom of the present kingdom afforded. Then attention could be turned also to the whole state of the people as to laws, as it had formed itself gradually since the dark times of antiquity and then existed, but certainly had never till then been the exhausted subject of writing ; for attempts, indeed, at shorter compilations of the most important laws of the people, besides the decalogue, had been made in writing, and many of them might at that time have been long written, as the oldest somewhat circumstantial attempt at a code known to us (Exod. xx. 2, or rather 23 to xxiii. 19) was inserted in the former work (Book of Covenants), and as the "Book of Origins" has adopted two smaller collections of laws. But the smallest trace fails us, and it is in itself improbable that the whole wide compass of all possible (denkbaren, thinkable) legal determinations and holy instructions had ever been made in writing at an earlier time.

He tells us that Hosea (viii. 12) sets out as supposed that,

in his time, and specially in the northern kingdom, a number of books like the "Book of Origins," and not a few highly esteemed, were current, but not in the least heeded by the government. But this stream of myriads of written laws could not be very old.¹ This expression of Hosea's shows that such writings at first had no public recognition, but as free products of skill in authorship were current for centuries among the people, and some of them, perhaps, had won a higher consideration and become holy, and so must we evidently think of the "Book of Origins." This specially as regards the origin of the Mosaic sanctuaries and institutions and the rights of the priestly race, and as it paints all that was of law and rights as having its origin in the first beginning of the olden time (Urzeit); so also in that account sets it forth with so much the greater diligence and development, so that it should be valid at the present time (David and Solomon) as pattern and rule. So it was, he tells us, with the Indian Puranas. So, as the previous writer (Book of Covenants) had his point of departure from the idea of the covenant established in Sinai; so the "Book of Origins" undertakes to show what divine laws and covenants had their origin already in the beginning of the previous ages under Abraham, Noah, and Adam, and how the laws and precepts, like man's race, even from the simplest beginnings onwards have always spread out and been developed (Gen. xvii., ix. 1-17, i. 27-30 are quoted).

Right and law are not in all times the same. They change, especially according to the great changes and windings about of all human history: and yet every valid right must stand on ground above men and bind them as a divine command, as if it took effect through a covenant between God and mankind. And as he had the consciousness that many laws which prevailed in the community had their origin in the olden time before Moses, so he links the explanation of the obligation and use of circumcision to a suited occasion in patriarchal times. So in the proper Mosaic

¹ In the English translation we read: I have written to them the great things of my law. Ewald translates "great things," רַבֵּי myriads, and I suppose does not heed *my* law תּוֹרַתִּי.

history he seizes every occasion to insert what is of law ; expounds, at the exodus from Egypt, in full detail, the laws as to the passover and firstborn ; and puts off the chief subject of Mosaic institutions and laws (the sanctuary and the priestly race) into the short time of the sojourn of the people at Sinai ; partly while according to all fixed remembrance the people were really formed anew under the establishment of the last great covenant of men with God, and partly because of the suitable resting place for the exposition of a great connected collection of institutions and laws ; and specially so as to the sanctuary, the highest centre of the religion and constitution of the people, and as to the ark glorified by being received into Solomon's temple, made after the pattern of that sanctuary. And thus the author starts from that visible sanctuary (the temple) in his sketch of the whole that was to be pictured, and describes it with all that belonged to it as made according to the divine pattern shown and prescribed to Moses ; and then gives the sacrifices and their order and use. Only Numbers xix. ought to be inserted after Lev. xvi.

If we treat now the whole manner and way in which the author puts in order and describes the Mosaic laws in recounting the history, there cannot be the smallest doubt that it is solely on this account that he describes them as communicated from Jehovah to Moses, and through Moses to the congregation, or Aaron, if the contents concern the priesthood, namely, that, as in his time they were in force as holy, an historian could only place their origin in that commencement of the congregation. They had won their force and holiness through long use, and so the author puts them as divine commands. And so he has to seek what goes back to Moses' time, and what gradually or from other causes had come in. The author does not set up to be Moses. And when a prescription in the connected whole of the description applied only to the land not in the wilderness, the author makes Moses announce it prophetically, sometimes with the addition, "When ye are come into the land." He revives the law-giving time, and

depicts Moses and Joshua as models of leaders of the people, himself imbued with the same spirit. And certainly he took much out of the former historical work, or worked it up after his own manner, and took what was already in it, the inimitably described manifestation at Sinai, and with it the Decalogue (where the words Ex. xx. 9-11 are an addition from himself), the rather, as it was necessary in itself. He then praises largely the author for a priestly, law-giving, leading royal spirit, and closes with thus apostrophising the author's elevated spirit whose writings have for centuries succeeded in being taken for those of the great hero Moses himself. "I knew not thy name, and guess only from thy traces where thou walkedst in time, and what thou didst; but these traces lead me irrecusably on not to take thee immediately for him who was greater than thee, and whom thou couldst thyself honour as he deserved. So see that in me there is nothing false and no desire not to recognise thee altogether as thou wast."

Having given Ewald's estimate of the historical books, and where it was of moment, in his own words, as regards the two chief original histories, the rest need not occupy us long. There were, he tells us, a third, fourth, and in the second edition, a fifth narrator, who worked it up. And here remark it is not that there were original documents used, which is possible; but what we have is the work of those who composed the history. The earliest (save a small fragment or two of a life of Moses, and the Book of the Wars of the Lord) was composed in the time of Samson; we have not even the ten commandments as they were originally given. The various morsels of the third narrator are given in p. 145 (third edition). The special excellence of this writer is the uncommonly high and clear view of the work of the prophetic and divine Spirit which appears more or less in different minds, and gives us some of the finest pieces in the Old Testament, as Num. xi. Still though elevated, he is far from the artistic painting and bolder picturing of him (the fourth) who will soon be described. He had much to do with the account of Joseph, but a good deal was woven in afterwards.

He lived in the time of the prophets Joel and Elias, in the tenth or ninth century before Christ, and belonged to the northern kingdom, so that his work was for it what the "Book of Origins" was for Judah. He gives the different bits in the Pentateuch which belong to this writer. I shall only give what shows the estimate of these new German views, which are to replace inspiration and the revelation of divine thoughts and intentions in the word of God. The pieces of the fourth narrator show a high and ripest cultivation of all spiritual powers and capacities of the ancient people which can hardly be surpassed. One may justly maintain that, in the handling of the original early history, this work presents the progress to the extremest freedom of conception and picturing beyond which nothing more is possible as the pure artistic, giving form to, and profiting by, legend; and one recognises easily, in the form of the whole popular life of the time which shines out from it, the commencing of loosening the chains of the old limits of the Mosaic religion, and the powerful rising again of many new thoughts and strivings.

This he compares in a note to the reference to the bright days of Islam after the Crusades, though in a different spirit then. The prophetic spirit which characterises it, flowing out ever wider, over its nearest limits, also completely fills now the original early history and transforms it with the greatest freedom into more beautiful new forms. Thus Messianic hopes link themselves, as we see in the great prophets, the most easily to the historical beginning of all the higher life of the patriarchs. The beginning and end meet—what is between is only development—so that we hardly find more elevated expectations uttered by the great prophets. The third narrator kept closer to tradition, and was in the prophetic point of view what the "Book of Origins" was to the lawgiving; whereas the prophetic thought in this work governs the history as its own field, and handles it from the outset onward with all freedom. To this is ascribed (Gen. xii. 1-3; xviii. 18, ff. xxii. 16-18, xxvi. 4, ff. xx. viii. 13), the fully-formed Messianic hopes, the truth of the infinite grace of Jehovah surpassing everything, along with the deepest sinfulness

and corruption of the earthly (natural) man, the like of the not accidental origin of evil in man, are such luminous thoughts as the sun of that century first elicited from holy ground (that is the ninth or eighth century before Christ). This fourth narrator introduces, losing sight of the difference of times, Mosaic sacrifices, as in the case of Noah, and even in Cain and Abel, without anxiously asking if they belonged to the gate of paradise. The wickedness of Gibeon was the pattern of that of Sodom, as one cannot have originated without the other. And as Amos refers to Sodom and Gomorrah only, our narrator confines himself to these. Through this new birth of old history much has been preserved from legendary traditions, but also through this working up much has been broken up (*aufgelöst*) and become unrecognisable, or thrown away as of no importance.

The fifth narrator belongs to about Joel's time. From him the first great collection and thorough working up of all the previous sources of the original early history proceeded; to him the whole present Pentateuch and book of Joshua must be referred, except the three kinds of additions which were inserted later. So that we have here a narrator who indeed sketches much altogether new with his own hand, and according to his own thought, as the need of his own time seemed to require it, but most of it only out of older writings, either verbally repeated, or here and there somewhat changed, and on the whole is more a collector and thorough worker-up than independent writer and original historian. The distinction of Israel and the other nations is more strongly marked, particularly Edom, Moab, and Ammon, who were then throwing off Israel's yoke, whence the prophecy of Balaam, the Assyrian being looked at rather as a friendly power, Josephus enabling us to trace the place of Amalekites and Kenites then. The ships or Chittim refer to a war of the Phœnicians for the subjugation of Cyprus, whence pirates had been attacking all those coasts, as we read that Elulaus, king of Tyre, conquered those of Chittim, etc. But, through this division of foes and friends of the spiritual religion, which was much more marked then, this historian introduces

a remarkable supplement to the "Book of Origins," in that he sets up in the olden time before the flood an opposition of holy and corrupt, of good and bad among men (Gen. iv). After the previous one had already pursued the origin of wickedness farther up to the first man, and has developed it there at the same time in a prophetic way, he brings in striking pictures of things before the history, as Gen. xv. before xvii., and so on. But he leaves out a great deal of what he had before him. So he sets Jehovah in addition to Elohim (Gen. ii. 5, c. iii), which he had from the fourth narrator, but gives up the unusual dragging double name in the simple relation (Gen. iv.) However freely the fourth narrator has handled the original history, it is never with a law-giving object; for the single time when he brings forward laws he does it only in his usual competition with the old sources (Exod. xxxiv. 10-26), in order to declare the Decalogue and its origins in his own way. Lev. xxvi. is inserted by him, and could only have been written after the dispersion of one kingdom, as we have the sorrowful feelings of the descendants of those dispersed (36-40), so that this could not have been written before the end of the eighth or beginning of the seventh century (B.C.).

Last of all came the author of Deuteronomy in the time of corruption after Hezekiah, and the author desirous, as this advanced age required, to improve the Davidical kingdom yet existing, introduces Moses himself as speaking; and as he conceals himself under the name of Moses, so does he the king, whom he wishes to improve the state of things, under the name of Joshua; but he deals more boldly with history as in so far removed a time.

I need not go farther into the details as to Deuteronomy. Its character and that of Joshua in Ewald's eyes is clear from what has been said. It was written in the latter half of King Manasseh's reign, and in Egypt. It was the book which was the foundation of the reformation in Josiah's time. Deut. xxxiii. is an imitation of Gen. xlix. The song xxxii already written in Jeremiah's time. The wish that Judah should come to his

people shows the time of composition when it was hoped all Israel would be subject to the king of Judah. It appeared as a distinct work, but was wrought up into one with the previous works, already much read. Ewald describes the way in which he who put it all together managed. The Deuteronomist calls the great previous collection the Law of God, or of Moses ; so the old name of the "Book of Origins" and others was forced into the background. So by the later transformations and additions the true old divisions of the "Book of Origins" were made thoroughly obscure, and the whole work such as it became at last, we know not by whom, thrown into six parts. Still, out of the wreck of the older writings and the multitude of later additions, much of what was original glimmers forth, and all later transformations have been able to cast fully into darkness neither the elevated remains of writing of the earliest time, scattered in the work, nor the whole history of the origin of the work—at least with the more accurate search which alone is the fruitful as it is the becoming one.

My reader will now understand what Dr. Dods means when he says of the historical writers of Scripture, "Meaning by the historical writers of Scripture not always those who brought the books into their final shape, but those, whoever they were, who first recorded the revelations made : " only remembering that Scripture is not a revelation ; for Dr. Dods, God's public acts are that, Scripture only an account of them. His "theory of inspiration" as to these books is that there is none at all. We have nothing really from God but old legends, the first a hundred years after Moses, containing a chapter and a half about Jethro, and then a number of books, the two principal writers in the Judges' and Solomon's time, but transformed (*umgestaltet*), worked up (*umarbeitet* and *verarbeitet*) and added to, for centuries, and at last Deuteronomy and Joshua added, and the whole brought into form. Prophecies of events giving the date of writing, because the reference to them showed the writer has these events before his eyes. The result is easily apparent now. What an uncommon fate this great work ran through before it

received its present form! how from a little beginning, with every important change of the whole Hebrew literature on to the end of the seventh, or beginning of the sixth; century, it grew and was changed! In the course of the strong changes and transformations which this great work experienced, much in it has lost its original clearness and peculiarity more and more!

A comfortable look-out this for those who sit down to read the word of God, or even a credible history of God's revelations of Himself!

I turn to Bleek. He is, in certain respects, more sober and moderate than others, but rejects all inspiration avowedly, and in his statements there is no ground left for any at all. I shall quote enough to show this, but be more brief, as the main general principles are already given from Ewald, and as to details none of them agree. Bleek rejects Ewald's system, as Ewald had done one of his own previously formed. Bleek says, "Ewald there (in G. I.) assumes, as we have said, but for the most part without bringing forward any actual proof." And again, after speaking of Ewald's system, he says, "I cannot say, however, that I see anything at all to lead me to this view, but the contrary," etc.

Bleek holds to the notion of Elohistie and Jehovistic documents invented by Astruc,¹ but that with soberer judgment than most, holding that the great body of Moses' laws were made for the desert, as shown by expressions in them, and written contemporaneously with their enactments, but that discrepancies, dislocations, repetitions of the same scenes, prove other hands, and diverse documents to have been made use of in compiling it. But his proofs of Moses' authorship or of that of contemporaneous authorship of the laws from the allusions to the camp and the naming of Aaron, Riehm (*Stud-u-Krit.*) holds not to be at all valid. Indeed we have only to read the various systems of the writers to see how untrustworthy they all are. United in one thing, the denial of inspiration asserted explicitly

¹ Ewald had resisted this, but (it seems) changed his mind; so he says little about it.

by the apostle Paul, whom they ignore, as indeed the Lord Himself, who teaches us to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God; (and where are these to be found if Scripture be not inspired?) not one of them agrees with the other. Each frames a system for himself, and often changes his own, as Ewald himself and Bleek did.

Note here the immense difference as to the intelligence of Scripture involved in inspiration, and the way they are thrown into these false systems by denying it. First, the general purpose of God, the mind of God, is lost. It is the notion or feeling of the individual writer which governs the statements. All true clue to the bearing of the passage is lost, the difference between grace and government under law. But, further, as the denial of inspiration precludes prophecy, where any allusion to subsequent facts is made, this must be written after the things had happened.

Paul tells us further, "these things happened unto them for ensamples (types, *τύποι*), and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Now, if God be the author, I have here, to be sought patiently and humbly, what the admonition is in the things which happened for this purpose; but if a possibly credible history framed by the feelings of the writer be all I have, I cannot look for what the apostle tells me is there.

Again, as an illustration of their dislocations (Num. xix.) the Red Heifer ought to come after the sacrifices in Leviticus. Now this only shows total ignorance of the mind and grace of God in these things. In the beginning of Leviticus we have all the aspects of the sacrifice of Christ in the most exquisite detail, and the exact expression of its divine truth and bearing; but as it is in itself and its various value as the basis of our approach to God. Numbers gives us our journey through the desert, where we are in danger of defiling our feet, and rendering ourselves unfit for communion, though belonging to the Lord and under the efficacy of the atonement through which the Lord imputes no sin. Here, therefore, exactly in its place, the provision for the defilement which interrupts communion is made known.

But, where there is no inspiration, there is no mind of God to be sought for. A mere credible arrangement of facts with human motives gives no ground for it. For these writers, consequently, there is no thought of a mind of God in the book at all. If there is such a thing, therefore, they have wholly lost the clue to the interpretation and order of the books. Thus it is not a question of a theory of inspiration. There is in the book no revelation of the mind of God at all.

Bleek does not conceal this, nor make really any middle system between verbal inspiration and human authorship. Carpzov, he says, holds that the Biblical historians generally received the whole contents of their works both in matter and form by immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and not by means of tradition or independent inquiry. But such an assumption is altogether unnatural and untenable, if we take an impartial view of the contents and form of the historical works in the holy Scriptures. Opinions, indeed, vary as to the exact mode in which the Holy Spirit co-operated, etc.; but it will be acknowledged by all without further question, that, if their history treats of times and events which they had not themselves lived in or taken part in, the knowledge of them must have come to them by means of tradition. . . . But the probability of the purity of tradition handed down from ancient times is always greater if it comes through writings removed as little as possible from the date of the events than when it is merely oral. I have some doubt of this. Oral tradition may be vague, of course, but written accounts of this kind are not sober history but myths, and arranged by priests in connection with their false gods, ancestral worship, and what ministers to their influence. Take the written accounts in Cory's ancient Fragments, or Vedas and Puranas, or even G. Smith's account of the flood, one of the most striking of these legends, or Deucalion's, or the history of the Titans; and see whether written accounts secure accuracy. I shall be told that these are poetry and myths. All of them are not save (which is the very point I insist on), that these ancient accounts always seek the marvellous. Accounts are

handed down, and when by men left to themselves, they make myths of them in every country, and Scripture gives the divine account of events which in man's hands were made myths of.

But there must be more than man to present the truth, the divine view of it, and to give even a certain account of events far back in the world's history. Besides, who is to select the facts which are morally important so as to bring out responsibility, and promise, and law in their order, and lay the foundations of grace in sin and God's sovereign love, giving hope by prophecy, while law and responsibility were insisted on, till the rejection of the Son of God come in love showed that grace only could avail for man ; while the ordering of the sacrifices gives a far fuller view of that of Christ than anything in the New Testament, though when offered, after all, they were not understood? It is a whole which certainly man never put together. I have no objection at all, as I have long ago said in reply to this infidelity elsewhere, to a thousand documents, provided it is God who out of them gives me His mind. But to return to Bleek. He accepts the Elohist and Jehovist theory of Astruc and others ; and the main body of history he accounts with many to be the Elohist one, the same, he declares, as Ewald's Book of Origins. But repetitions of the same story as Bethel, Beersheba, etc., prove it was put together, not written by Moses, or one Mosaic author. But there is more. As to this he is very decided. The idea of inspired prophecy is not admitted. He might assume with Ewald that the interest in Joseph might arise from its being from a northern author, if their composition happened so late as Ewald states it. But if so, how came Judah to receive it? As to God's having anything to say to the history, that is not in question. He then settles that this Elohist writing extended down from the creation to Saul. The references to taking possession of the land of Canaan, and Joseph's bones, so again the promise that kings should descend from Abraham, are proofs of the date at which it was written. This is done in such a way that it may be supposed with great likelihood that he had the fulfilment of these promises before his eyes ; so that it was not

written, at the earliest, before the days of Saul. No other author but one who had set forth the command of Joseph concerning his bones would have related so trivial a circumstance as their burial. The certainty of faith that God would fulfil His promises, noticed withal in Heb. xi., never enters their head. It was doubtless drawn from more ancient accounts by the Elohist writer ; but it was natural that they should be interested in such a part of their ancestors' history, and this was revised and expanded in our book of Genesis. However, Ewald's account of it is lacking in proof and clearly arbitrary. It would seem, however, that the author of our Elohist ground-writing did not employ the materials he derived from the earlier records exactly in the same way as the Jehovistic completer of the work dealt with his sources. Instead of simply appropriating them in all their original peculiarities of form, he adopted them in accordance with his own individuality as an author.

The Elohist "writing endeavoured to avoid introducing references to Mosaic or post-Mosaic circumstances and regulations into the patriarchal times." Thus there is nothing of clean and unclean beasts. Did Noah make the difference or did he not? "It does not certainly admit of a question that the author of the Elohist writing formed his narrative in general accordance with the historical tradition as he found it already existing in ancient, perhaps pre-Mosaic, records. But we should expect from the individuality which he exhibits as an author, if he himself had belonged to a time when David and Solomon had raised the tribe of Judah to such great distinction and pre-eminence over all the other tribes, that the ancestor of that tribe would have come forward far more prominently among his brethren than is actually the case." Ewald's view is quite inadmissible, etc.

The sum of the discussion in which he seeks to refute Ewald is based on the principle that the whole character of the writing is produced by the circumstances in which the author found himself, whether under Saul, as he says, or Solomon, as Ewald holds. But it is too long for me to introduce here. Only all this shows that there is not a thought of God's hand in it

or inspiration, or even God's guardian care, but simply and solely of man. But I will add a few passages to confirm this on Exod. xv. "As to a part of it," he says, "from the context, and the whole relation which this bears to what precedes, it is not likely that Moses would have expressed himself in *this* way immediately after the passage of the Red Sea," etc. Again, "These unmistakable inaccuracies and things not agreeing with the context could not in any way have got into the narrative if the latter had been appended to their laws by Moses himself or a contemporary of his, and, above all, not very easily if the whole were the work of a thoroughly independent historian." "The circumstances attending it lead us to think that the visit of Jethro to Moses is placed too soon in the history; also, that the Mosaic ordinances on the institution of the tabernacle of covenant likewise have too early a place." It is likewise previously remarked that in other respects the narratives are in themselves somewhat obscure and inaccurate, not rightly agreeing at least with other accounts of the Pentateuch.

Now I do not hesitate to say that all this judgment flows solely from ignorance of the divine mind in the passages, and consequent inability to estimate the perfect and admirable order and connection in which the passages occur. They are a series in which that divine order is singularly striking; but those who leave out God in the matter cannot, of course, discern His wisdom or His order in it. "There are several times in Exodus accounts of something being written down by Moses, once in reference to historical matters of fact, and twice as to legal ordinances, yet there is plainly nothing about them which, by its whole internal character, would show them to be genuinely Mosaic. In Lev. xxvi. the author of this admonitory discourse, as it here runs, probably had the circumstance under his notice that the people had been punished, at least partly, by expulsion from their country, and consequently its composition in its present form must have occurred at a later date than that of the Jehovistic. This last is, perhaps not later than the reign of David, and not quite in the latter part of his reign" (vol. i. 299, *Venables' Trans-*

lation). As to Balaam's prophecy, I think it must be assumed that the speeches of Balaam were not literally recorded just as he delivered them, since even a contemporary Israelitish author could not easily have gained an exact knowledge of them. We have reason to suppose that the prophecies received the form in which we now have them through the Hebrew author who composed the whole narrative, and perhaps knew nothing more definite of their purport than that the foreign seer, instead of cursing the Israelites, conformably to the wish of the Moabitish king, had repeatedly blessed them. Can we have a more complete setting aside of God in the whole matter? After further dwelling on the language (Hebrew), and the name Jehovah, neither of which the Mesopotamian would have used, he says: "Now if our assumption as to the authorship be correct, we may, of course, very well suppose that the circumstances by which he himself was surrounded floated across the mind of the Hebrew composer of the narrative, and in this way he came unconsciously to intermingle with it references bearing the marks of his own time, or the wishes and hopes which he entertained." Thus he ascertains the date. He is disposed, though it be difficult, to decide it was in Saul's reign. Hence the Elohist may have written it, otherwise the Jehovist must have met with and adopted it. There might perhaps have existed in the Elohist writing a shorter and somewhat differently-shaped narrative of Balaam's history; and this is pointed out to us in chap. xxxi. 8-16, since Balaam here appears under somewhat different circumstances. . . . It is not to be denied, however, that the last verses in Balaam's speeches present great difficulties. . . . To me it continues to be the more probable view that the conclusion of his discourse ran somewhat differently in the original narrative than it does at present, and that its present form belongs to a later time than the composition of the rest of the account, and of the whole book of Numbers, etc.

To such straits do those reduce themselves who deny inspiration. Denying the possibility consequently of prophecy, they fix the date of composition by the circumstances mentioned in it,

and, when there are several as here, are at their wits' end. But the ridiculous notion of a credible contemporary history disappears as much as inspiration, and what have we got instead of the word of God?

But these, as we have seen, are substantially on the same ground, be it in the sober speculations of Bleek, or the enthusiastic admiration of the more poetic Ewald. The historic books of Scripture are treated as mere traditions worked up by human authors; that is, as human compositions, and if any part has the form of prophecy it is used as a proof that the author lived at the time the event referred to happened, and then put it in a prophetic form into the mouth of Moses or Abraham, etc.

I do not think Dr. Dods, in the very flimsy sermon and excuse for it which he has published, honest on the point. He says, so far as regards the narration of events, in which God has revealed himself, we find the historical writers of Scripture in thorough agreement with criticism, asserting that the prime requisite is knowledge of these facts at first-hand, and quotes Luke, and quotes him falsely, making him say exactly the contrary of what he does say. But what has this to do with the matter in question? This is substantially the inspiration of the Old Testament, where he passes over the fact that in the most important parts of it such a principle can by no possibility apply. There are no accounts written by eye-witnesses, as in a measure, though not as to large and most important parts, in the New Testament. In all the law-giving part of the Old Testament divine communications are asserted to have existed. Jehovah, or Jahve, if they like it better, spake unto Moses. This does not go on the ground of credible witnesses, nor are they facts they could be witnesses of. They are not facts in which God revealed Himself, but words from the mouth of God. This is either true or false. God did speak to Moses or He did not. But it was not that of which any could be a witness save at the first revelation at the foot of Sinai. The great lawgiver might prove Jehovah had spoken by him by making the earth open her mouth and swallow up those who resisted

the authority he had by it. Not God's way, no doubt, in these days of grace ; but this only proved that in the communications there were no witnesses. But this large part of the Pentateuch is not the case of credible witnesses to God revealing Himself in facts, but God giving a revelation of His will by His word without any fact at all. As to the fall and all the circumstances of it, it is the weightiest fact, save the coming of the blessed Lord to redeem us from it, that ever happened in the world ; knowledge at first hand is just nonsense, unless it be first hand from God Himself, which Dr. Dods openly denies.

But Scripture does not simply give facts in which God has revealed Himself. It tells us things in which man has revealed himself when there was no divine fact at all ; in which the devil has revealed himself and will, and his ways, and wiles, till he be cast into the lake of fire, and all the development of the various relationships between God and man till he rejected the Son of God. I may say the whole history of the world as related to God, with all in man and in God, and in Satan that it depended on. Minute facts historically in which God had no part, but on which all depended ; responsibility and life-giving power in all their bearings and relations one to another, from the garden of Eden till glory and judgment ; in innocence without law, under law, under grace, through the cross and the Holy Ghost given ; up to glory and judgment. Who would have the discernment to choose the right facts to give all this ? This theory lowers the whole nature and moral value of Scripture, as it is ridiculous as a theory that we are to have the facts of Genesis from credible eye-witnesses.

I do not think it honest of Dr. Dods to talk about a theory of inspiration : wisely or unwisely, men may have theories about this, in general unwisely I think ; for God's way of communicating, though He has partially in the case of Miriam and Aaron spoken of it, is not much within our ken, nor, as I have said, if I were inspired could I communicate the manner of it to one who was not. If it be said "The word of the Lord came" is clearly direct inspiration, what is the meaning of that as to the manner of it ? But it is not honest, because Dr. Dods

denies as to the historical parts of Scripture that they are a revelation *at all*. God's acts are the revelation ; the Scripture is not God's revelation at all. Those may credibly record His acts ; but this is man's doing. It is nonsense, because the greater part of historical Scripture, and which is used in the N. T. as divine, is made up of what are not God's great acts ; yet all hangs inseparably together—what refers to man's responsibility as well as what God often, consequently, did. It is nonsense, because of the most important part you have and can have no account from first hand eye-witnesses at all ;—moral nonsense, because man would not be competent to choose the important facts on which the whole history depended morally, having, outside Scripture, proved himself incompetent even as to the great facts, by turning the tradition of them into myths, one more absurd than another, and in those most like Scripture connecting it with false gods and wrong principles, and falsifying the facts themselves, as in the recovered Babylonish account of the deluge. It is absurd, because it supposes God meant to reveal Himself to man, and yet did it so that the revelation could not in the most important points, or indeed in any, reach men with any certainty at all. And further, it is, as to the word of God, infidelity. According to Dr. Dods there is no such thing at all.

Let not Dr. Dods flinch ; may his conscience indeed feel the destroying the whole ground of faith for simple souls ! But he expressly declares that the revelation is some act in which God revealed Himself ; that Scripture is at best a credible account of it by man. I see nothing in it but the effect and flimsy reproduction of the more open infidelity of the Germans discussing Hebrew literature ; and the note can leave no question as to its source in any mind acquainted with German writers. But it goes beyond, not their principles, but their statements ; happily for others, unhappily for Dr. Dods, in that he denies that the historical part of Scripture is a revelation at all. I should have a great deal to say to many details of his reasonings ; but I am not going to merge in a controversy of details the

great and vital question, Have we in Scripture (*i.e.* the historical part) a revelation from God? I say the historical part, because Dr. Dods so expresses himself; but it would involve all the words of Christ and the apostles, for they all treat it as such.

I may add, though it be of little moment in view of the all-momentous subject, that Riehm (though differing from Bleek in many details, as all these writers do from one another, constantly rejecting utterly the grounds on which their proofs are based ;¹ yet) in all that is important, entirely agrees with him. Gen. xvii. 6 is a proof that it was written in David's time ! Bleek put it too soon in Saul's ; he is right in holding that Deuteronomy was written in Manasseh's reign ! The Deuteronomist had the four first books of the Pentateuch before him (see *Studien und Kritiken*, 1862) !

I add also that we may see what man and tradition make, not of creation, for none believe in that, but of the formation of things out of chaos Sanchoniathon quoted by Eusebius, (Cory's Fragments).

He supposes that the beginning of all things was a condensed dark misty air, or a breeze of thick air, and a chaos turbid and black as Erebus, and that these were unbounded, and for a long series of ages destitute of form. But when this wind became enamoured of its own principles (the chaos),² and an intimate union took place, that connection was called Pothos (cupid or desire), and it was the beginning of the creation of all things.

And it (the chaos) knew not its own production, but from it with the wind was generated mist, which some call Ilus, mud, but others the putrefaction of a watery mixture. And from this sprung all the seed of the creation, and the generation of the universe. And there were certain animals without sensation from which other animals were produced, and these were called

¹ Thus Bleek of Ewald. Ewald's view is much more involved; much however, in it is incapable of proof and part quite erroneous. Again, the opinion of Bertheau, which is generally allied to Ewald's, and likewise quite groundless. Such passages are common.

² This explanation is Cory's.

Zophasemin, that is, the overseers of the heavens, and they were formed in the shape of an egg; and from mist shone forth the sun, the moon, and the greater and lesser stars. I need not go farther; other such statements may be found, and less absurd perhaps in the records. This is Phœnician. But it is not only for the absurdity I note it, but to remark that we have a vague tradition of the Spirit of God (it is *πνεῦμα*, the same word as wind) moving on the face of the waters, and find what it becomes when His account is not given in its purity by the hand and inspiration of God. It is connected with all the worst principles of the heavenly powers of the zodiac and of astrology; mere human generation, a great principle of heathenism; and in other accounts, as the Babylonish, with the creation of the false gods, the mundane egg encircled by the serpent; and after the flood, of which the tradition was naturally better known, though the facts are falsified and connected with idolatry, the tower of Babel—and the like, but all falsified and turned to the setting up false gods and mythological fables. Out of Scripture where is this credible testimony? how came it there only? The theory is a gross absurdity, contradicted by well-known facts. What a mercy it is to have the blessed WORD OF GOD, and to believe it, authenticated by the Lord Jesus and the apostles! What do men fall into where they have not got it? I have taken my review of Bleek's statements from Venables' translation, and Ewald from the original. I might have multiplied quotations from both, but the system is plain from what I have quoted.

As to Deuteronomy, the author cannot well have been Moses. We have already seen that the Deuteronomic legislation contains those very laws which by their form and purpose are very unlikely to have been promulgated by Moses in this shape, *e.g.* the precept as to kings, and the legal ordinances as to military concerns, to which many others might be added; also that there are certain passages in these discourses of Moses which contain much that it is most improbable should have been spoken by him in this way. The view taken of the high places is a great topic with Bleek and all these writers in connection

with subsequent history. Hence he concludes : " It is evident from what goes before, that it (the date) cannot be fixed until a long time after Solomon, perhaps not before the age of Hezekiah, king of Judah ;" Hezekiah having been the first who rooted out not only idolatry but also the high places. He rejects the postponing it to the Babylonish captivity ; there would have been more reference to it in the threats. He rejects the Josiah fable, and puts it between Hezekiah and Josiah. What is said of the Josiah story he declares often quite uncertain, often absolutely improbable. The blessing of Moses is not from him, as he once thought. It was probably written about 800 in Jeroboam II. and Uzziah. . . . " The purport of most of the sayings, and particularly the conclusion of the whole song, leaves us no room to doubt that it was composed at a time when the Israelitish people, the ten tribes, were, as a whole, in happy circumstances. For if present circumstances can alone account for such being referred to, we must guess at the time of composition." He rejects here also Ewald's view and says, " We may consider with the greatest probability that the author of Deuteronomy was also the last editor of the whole Pentateuch, and that the work received from him the extent and arrangement in which we now have it. . . . We may easily imagine that by his hand perhaps certain things were altered or inserted in the previous books." And I might add from his remarks on Judges, Samuel, Kings, a multitude of similar—perhaps of stronger passages ; but the same principle of human composition and judging. Such is the account by the very soberest of these German speculators on the Pentateuch, on the date by the notices of events, which could only be known by their being in the author's own day. One who rejects the wild statements of the bolder infidels believes the Mosaic laws in general refer to the desert, and rejects the fable about composing Deuteronomy in Josiah's time. Not that we gain much by that, for it was after Hezekiah's ; but inspiration is utterly rejected by all, credible history and contemporary history not believed in ; the most recent part of the history, the Exodus and Moses' time composed

some 500 years afterwards, part of it 700 or 800 years with some traditions no doubt ; and the whole under the influence of the state of things the composer was in and the supposed prophecies drawn from the circumstances in which the composer lived.

And this is called a literary consideration of the Pentateuch, as contrasted with the religious point of view! Contrastd it is surely. Only one must remember that the literary point of view denies all that makes the Scriptural history a religious book at all. The later editors have composed it according to their views, and the writers arranged it according to theirs. God had no part in it at all, as far as appears in either. And I beg my reader to notice that I have not quoted here the more openly infidel, but the most solid and sober. Bleek, translated into English by Canon Venables, who though not agreeing with everything, translates it as a specially valuable introduction to the Bible. But they are all alike in their rejection of divine inspiration. It is not "every Scripture is given by inspiration of God," but no Scripture is. Dr. Dods does not go so far ; he admits the prophets are when they say, "Thus saith the Lord."

Mr. Smith, with versatile inconsistency, which on such a subject is the most culpable want of seriousness, says he believes for other reasons in inspiration, when he has published what he holds to be proof, borrowed indeed from others, that they are mere human compositions ; and draws from and authenticates, unless I much mistake, from the worse class of infidels, that is, those who are more open and impudent in their treatment of Scripture.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE SCRIPTURE ESCHATOLOGY.



THE rapture of the Church having taken place, Jews and Gentiles will again be dealt with as such by God, and judicial dealing and actings in grace will characterise His ways. He will deal judicially with Christendom, as the New Testament says, and Revelation describes : He will deal, too, with His earthly people, and notably with that portion of them known as the Jews. Of this Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and the Psalms especially treat. He will deal in judgment, too, with the whole world, and make all hear of His glory (Isaiah xiii. 11, xxvi. 9, 18, etc.) And when the Lord takes His kingdom, He will reward His heavenly saints ; judge and reward His earthly ones, Israel (Ps. l.) and Gentiles (Rev. vii.) ; judge, too, the living nations for their treatment of His brethren (Matt. xxv.) ; and finally judge the dead (Rev. xx.) But before He rewards His earthly people, He will deal in fearful judgment with the Beast and Antichrist and their followers (Rev. xix.), and with the king of the north ; and certainly, ere He judge the dead, He will deal with Gog and all his multitude (Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix.)

Now for some details :—

Judicial dealing with Christendom, preparatory to the Lord's return, commences with the opening of the seals. War, famine, death, and wild beasts, God's four sore judgments (Ezek. xiv. 21), will be sent among men, and constituted authority within the area of God's then visitation will be broken up, as described under the sixth seal (Rev. vi. 12-17), to the dismay of rulers and all. Meanwhile, God will have been working in grace, and martyrs will have attested their constancy to His

truth (Rev. vi. 9); a work which, then seen as begun, will go on among the twelve tribes of Israel, and Gentiles also, till the Lord appears. Of this Rev. vii. speaks, telling of the sealed ones of the twelve tribes, and of the great company of the Gentiles, to come out of the great tribulation. These last are only seen after they have come out of it (vii. 14). Here, then, God is seen working among the twelve tribes, before the Beast appears in the prophecy, and the special trial of the Jews, as such, begins.

The second judicial dealing of God with Christendom is set forth in the trumpets. The fourth part of the earth felt the effect of the opening of the fourth seal. The third part of the trees, of the sea, and the living creatures in it, and men on it, the third part of the rivers and fountains of water, and of the sun, moon, and stars, feel the effects of the first four trumpets (viii.) In the woe trumpets the ungodly are smitten with terrible judgments, for these are not sealed like those in vii. Hence it would seem that Israel are to feel the effects of this, for in the next trumpet the third part of men which are slain are not part of the Israelitish race.

During the progress of these judgments the Beast of Daniel vii. ix. and of Rev. xi. xiii. will have appeared in his true character. This turns attention directly to the Holy Land, and to the Jews in it. Brought back, the majority in unbelief, and not outwardly owned of God (Isaiah xviii. 5, 6), the temple will have been rebuilt (Dan. ix. 27, viii. 12) to be desecrated by the image of the Beast (Dan. viii. 12; Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14; Dan. xii. 11), placed there by Antichrist, who himself will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. ii. 4). By him, upheld by the Beast, the political head of the Roman Empire, sacrifices to God will be made to cease, the prelude to the destruction of the temple, the place of God's sanctuary, by the Assyrian, or king of the north (Dan. viii. 11; Ps. lxxiv. 7). The Antichrist under the Beast will make true sacrifice to cease, substituting in its place the worship of the image of the Beast. The invader from the north will raze the temple to the ground.

But before this destruction takes place apostasy will have manifested itself among the Jews (Isaiah viii. 21) and in Christendom. The whore will already have been destroyed (Rev. xvii. 16) by the Beast and the ten horns, the Roman Empire in its last form, comprehending seemingly only the *western* part of the old empire; for Antichrist does not form one of the ten kings, and the northern power arises out of the eastern part of the old Roman Empire (Dan. viii. 9-12). The whore destroyed, there will be the way opened for the worship of the Beast by apostate Christendom, since with her destruction vanishes, it would seem, every vestige of Christianity from those who had openly professed to own it (2 Thess. ii. 4).

During that time of apostasy among the Jews there will be a testimony in Jerusalem itself—the two witnesses (Rev. xi. 4-8)—for 1260 days; which is less by 17 days than the last three years and a half of the Beast's reign. He had power to continue 42 months = 1260 days.¹ Martyrs there will be during his persecution (xiii. 15, xv. 2, 3), though probably not confined to Jewish saints; but a company of Jews will be kept on earth faithful throughout it (Rev. xiv. 1-3), who will be able to join in the special song of those in heaven who had been martyred by the Beast. The two witnesses unburied three days and a half will ascend to heaven, when the third woe will quickly come, and all heaven rejoice at the coming of the kingdom in power. 1263 days having elapsed, just 14 now remain for the Beast on earth, during which, I take it, the vials will be poured out, and the Lord (Rev. xix.) appear to destroy him and Antichrist (2 Thess. ii. 8), who, especially marked, out for signal, condign, and everlasting punishment, are cast *alive* into *the* (not a) lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20). During all this history, the ten tribes do not appear within the scope of the prophetic vision, which has for its sphere the Holy Land, and the Roman empire in its last form. God, however, I take it (Rev. vii.), will have been working among them.

¹ During this time his power remains unchecked. At its conclusion, after the witnesses are raised, the mystery of God will be finished, and divine power in judgment will commence its dealings with him and his constituents.

Turning now to that power of the last days, called in Isaiah the Assyrian, and in Daniel the king of the north, the Jews being in their land, he will come down on them to possess it—this, the *real* solution of the eastern question, we have set forth in Old Testament prophecy. The Jews, in weakness and fear, make a covenant with the Beast for seven years (Isaiah viii. 12 ; xxviii. 18 ; Dan. ix. 27), but in the end to no purpose, as God has already forewarned them. For the northern power will enter the land after the apostasy is established by Antichrist, and will capture Jerusalem (Zech. xiv. 1, 2 ; Isaiah xxix. 1-4 ; Ps. lxxix.), and go down into Egypt (Dan. xi. 42-43). Whilst there tidings out of the north and the east troubling him, he returns with great fury. Are these tidings that the Beast has been destroyed by the Lord ? Coming again to Jerusalem the second time, he is destroyed by the Lord (Zech. xii. 1-8 ; Isaiah xxix. 5-7 ; xiv. 23 ; x. 25 ; xxxiv ; Joel ii. 20 ; Ps. lxxvi.), and the prayer of Ps. lxxxiii. is answered.

God's glory displayed in judgment, the ten tribes are then brought back, so the whole nation is restored (Isaiah xviii. 7 ; xi. 11-16 ; lxvi. 20 ; Ezek. xx. 38). The temple, built by the Jews in unbelief, desecrated, and destroyed, will be rebuilt. In Ezekiel we see it, but read not of its *being* built. The prophet sees it all erected. Does the Lord do it (Zech. vi. 13) ? The sessional judgment of Matt. xxv. takes place, perhaps, about this time ; after which Gog invades the land (Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix.), when the people are dwelling securely. That cannot be till after the destruction of the northern power. Perhaps Isaiah xxxiii. refers to this.

Gog dealt with, peace outwardly will remain unbroken, till Gog of Rev. xx. comes against the camp of the saints and the beloved city—Satan's last effort, to be signally and for ever frustrated, and the way at last to be prepared for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. iii.)

THOUGHTS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Epistle of James is not one in which the doctrines of grace are unfolded, although sovereign grace is there recognised (i. 18); but these are given us under the form of God's work *in* us, not *for* us, which is redemption through the precious blood of Christ. It is a practical epistle, a holy girdle for our loins, given in order that the practical and outward life of the Christian may respond to his divine and inward life; and that the law of God may become for him a law of liberty. Redemption is not spoken of, nor faith, as a means of participating in the fruit of accomplished redemption; but many having already professed the name of Christ, the apostle desires that the truth of their profession may be expressed by works, the only witness to others that true faith is working in the heart, since faith works by love (Gal. v. 6), or in the new creature (vi. 15). This new creation, its character and manifestation to others in actual and visible life, is what is depicted by James.

James remained at Jerusalem to feed the flock there, and more particularly the Jewish section of the church. He is frequently mentioned in the Gospel narrative, but always as governing the Jewish flock, and that before its separation from the Jewish nation. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Spirit of God commands them to go outside the camp, that is, to separate from unbelieving Jews (Heb. xiii. 10-13); but hitherto they had remained together, the Christians still offering sacrifices according to the law. There were even many of the priests who were obedient to the faith (Acts vi. 7). Though incredible to

us, yet it is a fact clearly stated in the Word ; and yet all these were zealous for the law.

Let us follow the traces of James, as we read his history in the Acts. The first time we find him, however, is in the Epistle to the Galatians (i. 19), where he is specially mentioned as seen by Paul, when, with the exception of Peter, he had seen none of the other apostles. Then we find him in Acts xv., presiding, so to speak, at the meeting of the apostles and elders held to decide whether the Gentiles should be subjected to the law of Moses. His sentence on that occasion was final, although the apostles Peter and Paul were present, as well as all the other apostles, except James the brother of John, whom Herod had put to death.

Still, the laws determined on by the apostles and elders were the testimony of the Jewish church. God did not permit Paul and Barnabas to decide the question at Antioch. Such a decision would not have terminated the controversy, but would have made two assemblies ; but as soon as the Christians among the Jews and the assembly at Jerusalem liberated the Gentiles, no one could any longer oppose their freedom from the law. It was not a point determined by the apostles on their apostolical authority, although that confirmed the statute. After much disputing in the assembly, the decision was sent in the name of the apostles, of the elders, and of the whole church. Judaism set the Gentiles free from the Jewish yoke.

Here again we find James. He brings the discussion to a close by saying, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God." It is not certain that he was an apostle ; probably he was not one. He was the chief of the Jewish church at Jerusalem. This was why, when the angel of the Lord led Peter out of prison, giving him his liberty, the latter said to those who had gathered together to pray for him, "Go, show these things unto James, and to the brethren" (Acts xii. 17). Again at Antioch, before the coming of certain *from James*, Peter ate with the Gentiles ; but

when they were come, he withdrew (Gal. ii. 12). It is apparent that James shared in the thoughts of many Christians, and also of Peter, though he was an apostle, touching the Jewish idea that still reigned in the hearts of the Christians of that nation, especially at Jerusalem.

Again, when Paul went up for the last time to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 18), he "went in," it is said, "with us unto James, and all the elders were present." He was evidently the head of the gathering at Jerusalem, and represented in his person the power of the Jewish principle which still ruled in the church there, and which God in His patience still endured. They believed in Jesus, and broke bread at home, but they were all zealous for the law. They offered sacrifices in the temple, and even persuaded Paul to do so also (Acts xxi.); and were in no-wise separate from the nation. All this is prohibited in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it was practised until the last days of Judaism.

This principle is the basis of the Epistle of James, the true presentation of the state of Jewish Christians, James himself being in his own person the representative and the life of this system. As long as God bore with it, His Spirit was able to work. We learn from profane history that James was killed by the Jews, among whom he bore the name of the *Just*; and Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that it was for this crime that Jerusalem was destroyed. After its fall the system disappeared. We can easily conceive that true Christians would follow the testimony given in the Epistle to the Hebrews. However that may be, there only remained a little heretical sect or two, which upheld formal Judaism; but these soon disappeared. They were called Nazarenes and Ebionites.¹ But it is unnecessary to investigate these matters.

¹ "*Ebionites*, from the Hebrew *Ebionim*. This contemptuous epithet they received from the supposed poverty of their understanding, as well as of their condition."—Gibbon, *Rom. Emp.*, vol. ii. p. 231. This is a question, though Origen says so. It means merely poor.

This position of James, and the state of the assembly at Jerusalem, that is, of believers outwardly united to the unbelieving Jews, notwithstanding the fact that they broke bread and worshipped apart, simplifies the interpretation of this epistle. It is not a question of its divine inspiration, but of its character. God, in His goodness, has seen fit to present us with all the forms that Christianity has taken ; and among others, this first Jewish form, when Christians were not separated from the nation. We do not here find, therefore, the mysteries of the counsels of God, as in Paul ; nor redemption, as in him and in Peter ; nor the divine life of the Son of God in Christ, and then in us, as recorded in the writings of the apostle John ; but the subject is the practical walk of the poor of the flock, who still frequented the synagogue, and the denunciation of wealthy unbelievers who oppressed the poor, and blasphemed the name of the Lord.

CHAPTER I.

THE epistle is addressed to the twelve tribes. The nation is seen as not yet finally rejected by God. James writes to those of the dispersion, that is, to the Jews scattered abroad among the Gentiles. Faith recognised the whole nation, as Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 31), and as Paul (Acts xxvi. 7) did. Faith recognised it until the judgment of God should be accomplished. In order to understand the counsels and intentions of God, His assembly, the glory of Christ, and our position now in Him, we must read the writings of Paul.

Here the patience of God towards His ancient people manifests itself, although James warns them that the Judge stands before the door. He makes a distinction, too, in the case of believers (ii. 1), although not yet separated from the people ; but their privileges are not mentioned. These they could not enjoy in the company of unbelieving Jews. But they could display in their midst the difference of the Christian life ; and it is of this that James speaks. He does not call himself an apostle,

though practically—not established as an elder, but in virtue of his personal influence—the head of those Christians who had not separated from Judaism. His thoughts are ever of them, and of the walk that becomes them in the midst of the nation. Peter, who writes to a part of the scattered Jews, does not speak of the nation, but calls believers the nation, and that in the midst of Gentiles (1 Peter ii. 10, 11). But James portrays the Christian walk as one that does not surpass what ought to have been found in the faithful of the old dispensation.

It is apparent that he thought of Christians, but of Christians on the lowest step of the ladder that reaches up to heaven. But since as a fact we are on the earth, this epistle is most useful in marking the path and the spirit that ought to characterise our walk, no matter how great our heavenly privileges may be. If the light of our hearts be above, a lantern for our feet is not to be despised, and the more so because we are in the midst of a people professing Christianity, and calling themselves believers. The epistle puts the truth of this profession to the test.

Whatever might be the association of these Christians with the people, the author of the epistle supposes faith in those whom he addresses ; a faith, however, that might practically have been found in a Jew before believing in Jesus ; still, with the addition of this belief, a true faith, produced by the work of God in the heart. As Paul himself, after descending from the height of the revelations accorded to him by God, recognises the faith of Lois and Eunice, and likens the faith of Timothy to that of these women.

But to examine the Epistle itself. Already at the outset, “temptations” were the proof of faith, the discipline of God in favour of believers (vers. 2, 12). As to position, they were associated with the people ; and the object the writer had in view was the profession of the faith and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall see that he apostrophises those with whom they were united, warning believers against the spirit in which they walked.

The Christian Jews were proved, persecuted. This also is what Peter speaks of in his epistle, encouraging them to endure with patience. James (like Paul, in Romans v.) exhorts them to count it all joy when they fall into divers temptations, and this for the same reason as that given by Paul. The trial of faith works patience. The will of man is broken; he has to await the operation of God; and learns his dependence on Him, and that he lives amid a scene where God only can produce the effect he desires, the conquest of the power of Satan. We may frequently desire (even when doing what is right) that the work might be hastened, that difficulties might disappear, and that we might be delivered from persecution; but it is God's will that is good and wise, and not ours. The works that are done on the earth are wrought by Him. Patience is the perfect fruit of obedience.

Turn to what is said in Col. i. 11: "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power (what noble work should such power accomplish!), unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." This is what is necessary to endure all without murmuring, and even with joy, since all comes from the hand of God. It is His will that sustains the heart, not our own.

When the love of God is known, and the will broken, there is confidence in God; we know that all comes from Him, and that He makes all things work together for our greatest blessing. Thus the trial of faith works patience; but patience must have her perfect work, or self-will and confidence in self instead of in God, will be manifested. These work without God, and apart from His will; we cannot wait on Him; or in any case, impatience and the flesh show themselves in us. Job submitted for a long time, but patience had not her perfect work in him. Saul waited a long time for Samuel, but, not resting quietly till he came, lost the kingdom. He did not wait on the Lord with the feeling that he could do nothing without Him, and with his own will. Patience had not her perfect work.

Now affliction is the trial of patience, the operation of God

that acts for us outwardly, and in us by His grace ; and when this work is accomplished, and we are perfectly submissive to God, and desire nothing apart from His will, we are perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Not that we have not to learn as to the knowledge of His will ; the contrary is stated in the following verse (5) ; but the state of soul is perfect as to the will, as to our relationship with God ; and He can then reveal His will, the only thing that we desire (see 1 Peter i. 6, 7).

In the Lord patience had her perfect work. The afflictions which He experienced in the world, He felt profoundly, and that more so than we do. He could weep over Jerusalem, and in view of the power of death, over the hearts of men ; and the rejection of His love was a perpetual cause of sorrow to Him. He upbraids the cities wherein most of His mighty works had been done, but is perfect in His patience. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi.) He upbraids, but at the same time gives thanks. The same thing may be seen in John xii. In both cases, His soul being perfectly in subjection to the will of His Father, expands with joy in the view of all that was the effect of His submission. Christ never failed of the wisdom of God. In us it is very possible that this may be wanting, even when the will is in subjection, and we desire to do the will of God.

The promise then follows that, "if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." The absence of will, obedience, and the spirit of confidence in depending on and looking to God, characterise the new life. In the world we pass through tribulations ; but this life is manifested in these qualities. But confidence must be exercised, or we can receive nothing. To distrust God is to dishonour Him. Such a man is double-minded, and like a wave of the sea, driven of the wind

and tossed. He is unstable, because his heart is not in communion with the Lord ; he does not live in a way to be able to know Him ; and naturally, such an one is unstable. If a believer dwells with God, in nearness to Him, he knows Him, and understands His will ; he will have none of his own ; and will not desire to have any, not only from obedience, but because he has more confidence in the thoughts of God about him than he has in his own will.

Faith in the goodness of God gives courage to seek and to do His will. In Christ Himself we have a perfect and lovely example of the principles of divine life. Tempted by Satan, He has no will of His own, and is not moved ; but declares that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This is absolute and perfect obedience. The will of God was for Him not only the rule, but the only spring of action. Then, when the tempter desires Him to throw Himself from the temple in order to see if God would be true to His promises, Jesus will not consent. He is certain about it already, and waits quietly for the strength of God, when the opportunity shall present itself in the way of His will. This faith and this confidence, is the proof that the soul is in nearness to God, and that it dwells in intimacy and communion with Him. Such an one will know what it is to have the assurance that God hears his requests. This is what fashions the soul in the difficulties and trials of the present life, so that it can exclaim, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

Verses 9-11 are a kind of parenthesis. Though the new man belongs to the new creation, and is the first-fruits of it, yet here below he is in a world the glory of which passes away as the flower of the grass. Thus the brother of low estate is raised to communion with Christ, to the participation of His glory. And also in the world, no matter how obscure his origin, he becomes the companion of all the brethren. "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him." The rich

own them as brothers, and meet at the Lord's table, as possessors of the same privileges. On the other hand, the rich man, if faithful, cannot walk in the greatness and splendour of a world that has rejected the Lord. He becomes—for God has made him so—brother to the poor one who loves the Lord; together they enjoy the communion of the Spirit, and share the most precious things of life.

They rejoice together, and the poor in his exaltation. Christ is not ashamed to call him brother. And in this title the rich glories far more than in all those that belong to him in the world. In the world this title is despised and counted as nothing. But he knows that the honour of this world passes away as the flower of the grass, and he rejoices in being the companion of those whom the Lord of glory owns as His. The world will fade away, and the spirit of the world is already gone for the heart of the spiritual Christian. He who takes the lowest place shall be great in the kingdom of God.

All this is very far from the spirit of jealousy and envy that would pull down all that is above us.

It is not selfishness, but the spirit of love that comes down to walk with the lowly, who are not of small esteem in God's eyes, as Christ, who certainly had the right to govern, and be the first, came down to be with us, and made Himself a servant among His disciples. For us the glory of this world is nothing but vanity and mockery. Love delights to serve, selfishness to be served.

The apostle returns to the character of the new man, for whom the life here below is a time of trial. He is happy when he passes through temptations, enduring them with patience. This is the normal state of the Christian (1 Peter iv. 12). The desert is his pathway; patience here and glory afterwards, his vocation. Tempted here, he remains faithful and steadfast by grace in tribulation and trial, afterwards to inherit the crown of life that God hath promised to all them that love Him. Life that has not trials is not life; but he who is tried is blessed.

Our life is not here below, though we are traversing the desert. We are on the journey, not entered into the rest, the promised life in Christ.

In order that this life may be manifested, the affections must be set on the crown and the promised blessings. When we have the life of Christ in us, we ought to be exercised to have the heart detached from the things that surround us, and perpetually attract the attention of the flesh ; so that we may not yield to them, but, ever resisting, the heart may be preserved by grace habitually in the way of holiness, enjoying heavenly things and communion with God. Now, trials endured with patience aid much in this object. A heart weaned from vanity is an immense gain for the soul. If the world is dry and barren to it it turns the more readily to the fountain of living waters.

There is another sense in which the word "temptation" is used. It is true that it always means *trial* ; but that other kind of trial which springs from within—lust—is an entirely different thing. God may try us from without, in order to bless us ; and He does so, as in the case of Abraham ; but He is not in any wise the author of lust. When it is a case of sin, not of putting obedience and patience to the test, it is still on account of the state of the soul, so that it may be corrected, and enabled to make progress ; but when lust is stirred up, we cannot say that it is God who tempts us. "For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man ; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

Christ Himself was tried by God in all His path, but the only result was a sweet smelling savour. Being come to do the will of His Father, He learned what obedience meant in this world of sin and enmity against God. Satan desired that his own will might be manifested in Him ; but in vain. It is true that He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil ; but it was to conquer for us who were subjected by sin to his power. There was no lust in Him ; but He could be, and was, hungry.

Jesus having been declared the Son of God by the voice from the Father, Satan in proposing to Him to command the stones to become bread, desires Him to abandon the position of a servant, which He had taken on Him in becoming man, and do His own will. Here we have a temptation of the enemy. The Lord remains in His perfection, and lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He is put to the test by God through sufferings ; but no lust existed in Him. When Satan seeks to take advantage of His hunger—a need without sin, which even Christ had—He remains firm in perfect obedience, knowing no motive of action save His Father's will. With us there are temptations that come from within, from lust ; but these are altogether distinct from the trials that come from without, which prove the state of the heart, and subdue self-will when we are not perfectly subject to the will of God, when other motives direct the heart.

James is always practical, and does not investigate the root of everything in the heart, as Paul does. He gives lust as the source from which actual sin springs. Paul shows that the sin of nature is the source of lust ; an important distinction, which illustrates the object of the Holy Ghost in the Epistle of James, namely, the outward and practical life, as the evidence of the character of the life which owes its origin to the Word of God working by faith. For James, lust—the first movement of a sinful nature, discovering its character—having conceived, brings forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. Such is the history of the operation of natural evil. James takes up its effect, Paul its source, so that we may know ourselves (Rom. vii. 8).

Then, in opposition to lust, and showing the action of God, not to tempt, but on the contrary to produce good, James tells us that “every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us (believers) with the word of truth, that we should

be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (vers. 17, 18). He owns, as I have said, grace as the alone and divine spring of good in us ; and that as born of God through faith, because it is by the word of truth. By this we are regenerated, and receive a new life, and that by the will of God. We belong to the new creation, and are the first-fruits of it. This is deepest blessing, true not only of a new position, though it is such, but of a new nature, which renders us capable of enjoying God. It does not speak of justice by grace, but of a nature altogether new, and that comes from God.

Thus we are exhorted—self-will being broken, and confidence in the flesh being destroyed—to take the place of receiving everything by grace ; to listen rather than to speak ; to be slow to wrath, which is only the impatience of the old man, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The man taught of God is subject to Him. Laying aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, he receives with meekness the engrafted word. This is an important step, for it reveals the state of the man of God, and what influences him. The will of the flesh does not work in him, neither self-will ; he listens to what God says, receives His word with meekness, and submits to it ; then God engrafts the word into his heart. It is not purely knowledge, but the truth of God, His word, that can save the soul ; it is the seed of divine life, and forms it.

The word that sanctifies is engrafted in him, the plant is introduced by Him, the new man that can produce fruit for God. But it is necessary that this should be put in practice, that a man should be a doer, and not only a hearer of the word ; otherwise he is like a man who beholds his natural face in a glass, and then, going away, forgets what manner of man he was. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Here we find an important expression, "the law of liberty." If I tell my child to stay quietly at home when he wants to go out, he

may obey ; but it is not a law of liberty ; he gives up his will. But, if afterwards, I say to him, " Go out where you like," he obeys ; but this is a law of liberty, because his will and the law are at one, and go together.

For Jesus the law of God was a law of liberty. He came to do His Father's will, and desired nothing else. Blessed state ! In Him was perfection, for us a blessed example. The law is a law of liberty when the will, the heart of man, all his desires, are perfectly in unison with the law imposed on him. In our case it is a law imposed by God, written on the heart. Thus with the new man it is as with the heart of Christ ; he loves obedience and the will of God, because it is His will, and because he has a nature corresponding to what this will expresses. Since he is a partaker of the divine nature, he loves what God wills.

Verse 26, etc. But there is a sign of what exists in the heart which betrays more than anything else what is in us. This is the tongue. He who is able to govern his tongue is a perfect man, and is able to bridle the whole body. The appearance of religion, if the tongue be not bridled, is but a vain show ; and the man professing it deceives his own heart. True religion shows itself by love in the heart, and by purity, keeping it unspotted from the world. It thinks of others, of those in distress, in need of protection, of care and of the support of love, such as orphans and widows. The heart truly religious, full of the love of God, thinks as He does who moves it, of misery, of weakness, and of need. This is the true Christian character.

The second feature of Christian life given by James is to be " unspotted from the world." The world is corrupted, lies in sin, has rejected the Saviour, that is, God come in grace. It is not all that man was put out of the garden of Eden, because he was a sinner, that is true, and is sufficient for his condemnation. But there is yet more. God did much to restore him ; He gave the promises to Abraham ; called Israel to be

His people ; sent the prophets, and at last His only begotten Son. God Himself came in grace ; but on the part of man, He was driven from the world. Therefore, God had to say, "Now is the judgment of this world." The last thing He could do was to send His Son, and this He did. "Having yet, therefore, one son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my Son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir ; come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard." (Mark xii.)

The world is a world that has already rejected the Son of God. And where does it find its joy? In God or in Christ? No. In the pleasures of the flesh, in greatness, in riches, it seeks happiness without God, in order to avoid feeling His displeasure. It would not require to seek happiness in pleasure if it were really happy. Formed by God for Himself with the breath of life, man cannot be content with anything less than God. Read the history of Cain. He went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of the Nod.¹ Then he built a city, and called it after his son Enoch. Then Jabal was father of such as dwell in tents, and had cattle, the wealth of that time. And the name of his brother was Jubal, the father of all such as handle the harp and organ ; and Zillah bore also Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer of brass and iron.

Such is the world and all its civilisation. Without God, the need is felt to make it pleasant and beautiful. One may say, "But where is the harm in harps and organs?" There is none, certainly ; the evil is in the heart of man who uses these things for his enjoyment without God, in order to forget Him, to flee from Him, to seek contentment in a world of sin, so that he may not feel his misery, his distance from God, and to hide himself in the corruption that reigns there. The refinement with which man surrounds himself too often only makes him

¹ Nod is the same word as *vagabond* in Gen. iv. 14. Cain built a city where God had made him a vagabond. This is what man has done.

glide insensibly into the corruption, which he even endeavours to conceal beneath a cloak of gladness.

But the new man, born of God, and participating the divine nature, cannot find his delight in the world ; he flees from that which shuts him out from God. Where flesh rejoices, and finds its pleasures, the spiritual life cannot find them. James speaks of corruption itself, but not as though a part were corrupt, and another pure. Corruption is there, and the Christian must keep himself unspotted from the world. The world is not pure ; on the contrary, it is impure in its principles and in all its ways. He who is conformed to it is corrupt in his walk ; the friendship of the world is enmity against God ; and he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. It is necessary to keep unspotted from the world itself, and to go through it as epistles of Christ among men, pure from what surrounds us, as Christ was pure from the world that would not receive Him.

CHAPTER II.

IN the second chapter believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are clearly distinguished from other Jews. They must not have the faith of Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. To despise the poor was contrary to the law, which regarded all Israelites as the objects of God's favour, the nation one before Him, and each as a member of the same race. It is, moreover, entirely contrary to the spirit of Christianity, which is characterised by humility, calls the poor happy, seeks greatness in heaven, and shows how the cross below answers to glory above. Faith has seen this Lord of glory in humiliation not having where to lay His head. The rich for the most part remained adverse to Christianity. They blasphemed the good name by which Christians were called, and brought its professors before the courts. God had chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, the heirs of the kingdom. The same testimony is borne by Paul also : "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are

called" (1 Cor. i. 26). These three things are chains that bind the soul to this world. Grace can indeed break these chains, but that does not often happen. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." These bonds are too strong; though with God all things are possible.

James contrasts the Lord's glory with the false glory of man in the world; for the fashion of it fadeth away. He dwells much on this point, as also does Peter. If in the assembly a difference be made between rich and poor, those who do so become judges of evil thoughts. Let us give God thanks, that at least in the church we can live together for heaven amid heavenly things, where the only true difference lies in the degree of spirituality, and not in the vanity of this world. We may remark here that the gathering is styled the "synagogue;" and this tells us how the thoughts of James still ran in the way of Jewish habits.

But the fact that there was a distinction made between rich and poor, by which they were convinced of the law as transgressors, leads James to speak of the law. He mentions three laws: that of liberty, of which we have already spoken, the royal law, and law in the ordinary sense of the word. The royal law is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He who does this does well. Then a much more important principle is added: that if we keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, we are guilty of all. The reason of this is simple. When lust has moved us, we have transgressed the law, and despised the authority of Him who established it. We cannot suppose a man to have violated all the commandments. He who gave one gave all; and wherever the flesh and the will have been active, we have followed our own inclination, and despised the will of God. His law has been broken.

Christianity requires that we should both speak and work as being free from the power of sin, to do the will of God in everything, and that His will should be ours also. We have

been delivered from its yoke, we are truly free to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Precious and holy liberty! It is liberty of a nature that finds its pleasure and joy in the will of God, and in obedience to Him. Now the Christian is free to do always the will of God, but he may wander from Him, and lose power and desire; but that only happens through negligence and unfaithfulness, and then all that he does and says will be judged according to law. This is an important truth. We may grow in the knowledge of the will of God, and be free to perform what we know; and the strength to do so is found in Christ.

To this thought is added that of judgment, and the necessity of walking in grace. If we do not show mercy, judgment shall be without mercy. The same principle had been already laid down by the Lord, that the transgressions of those who forgive shall be pardoned. Unless the spirit of grace be in the heart, we cannot share in the grace that God has manifested towards men; and in the details of life, he who does not show mercy, may experience the chastisement of God; for it is in goodness and in love that God takes pleasure. Here works are insisted upon; and this is an important part of the epistle; not that it is of greater value than the other parts, but on account of the many arguments of men.

This principle introduces the question of works. Love must be displayed not only in words but also in deeds. The spirit of James was practical, and yet full of the evil arising from the profession of Christianity, without the practical life corresponding to it; and he therefore blends the two principles in his observations, saying that love should be real, and that faith should be shown by the works which it produces. "If one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." It certainly is not Christian faith, which is a mighty principle, the effect of the operation of

the Holy Ghost in the heart, the spring which puts all the wheels in motion, which raises the heart above selfishness and all the base motives of this world, and fixes the affections on Christ. He becomes the true motive of the heart; and, dwelling in us, is the source from which all our actions flow, so that we walk as He walked. Doubtless we are behind what He did; but the principle of our life is the same, and He is the same who dwells in us.

It is obvious then, that true faith works by love, which produces good works; and this cannot be otherwise. But there is still another principle in this passage, which expresses itself in the words, "Show me." Faith is evidently a principle hidden in the heart. It cannot be seen, as the root cannot be seen from which the plants grow and produce fruit, drawing nourishment from the soil, as faith does from Christ. But as without the root the plant cannot bring forth fruit, so without faith, good works cannot be produced. Some may be shown outwardly, however, which have no real value. Much may be given, and many may labour, without true love, without faith; but a life of love, that follows Christ, and does His will, that will being yet its own, cannot exist without faith. Now he who glories in faith, owns that it alone is good, and produces what is good.

James says then, "Show me thy faith without thy works." But that is impossible. It is evident that it is a principle hidden in the heart, a simple profession without any reality. Sometimes we add hypocrisy, because education, and the influence of what surrounds us, as well as external proofs, may produce the mental habit of believing in Christianity and in its fundamental doctrines. But in such faith there is no bond with Christ, no spring of life eternal; though a man may not be openly an unbeliever, and may respect the name of Christ, yet this faith does not produce anything in the heart. Christ cannot trust him (John ii. 23-25).

As soon as true faith—that which is produced in the heart by grace through the action of the Holy Ghost—is known,

a personal need of Christ, of possessing Him for one's self, of hearing His voice, is experienced. This was what happened to Nicodemus, and led him to go in search of Christ ; and observe that he felt that the world was against him, because we read that he went by night. Now as faith cannot itself be seen, he who boasts of it can reply nothing to him who says, "Show me thy faith." But he who has true works of love, cannot have them without faith, which is the divine instrument of Christian life in the heart, and is displayed in deeds of patience, purity, charity, and in separation from the world, although he is in it. He cannot move without the spring. Faith that looks only to Christ, and finds all in Him, manifests itself in this life, the life of faith.

It is necessary to show our faith. To whom? To God? Certainly not. "Show *me*." It is to man, who cannot look into the heart as God can. All the reasoning of James, all his power, all his meaning, are centred in these two words, "Show me." He does not tell us of peace of conscience when justified by faith, since the Lord, the precious and beloved Saviour, has borne all our sins, and was delivered for our offences. Faith trusts to the efficacy of the work of Christ, and believes that God has received and accepted it as perfect satisfaction for the sins of believers ; that it is a work which will never lose its value in His eyes, into whose presence Christ has entered, not without blood, that is His own, there to appear for us continually, being set down at the right hand of God, since all has been accomplished according to His glory, with regard to our sins, on the cross.

Here, instead of vain and empty faith, it is a question of the profession of the name of Christ, of calling one's self a Christian without having Christ in the heart. This is shown by works, by fruit. From the fruit it is seen that the tree is living, that the root is there, and that it draws its sap from Christ. Thus profession is justified before men, to whom it must be displayed by the fruit it produces. If we examine

closely the examples given here, we shall find that it is not so much a question of good works in the ordinary sense, as of the trial of faith. The works here referred to as demonstrating faith are those of the same persons whom Paul cites ; namely, Abraham, who was ready to offer up his only son when God required him to do so ; and Rahab, who hid the spies, and sent them away in peace.

Nothing could be stronger. Not only was Isaac an only son, but all the promises of God were centred in him ; so that there must have been absolute confidence in God (see Heb. xi. 17-19). As a work of man, there was nothing good in slaying his son. If we consider Rahab's act from a human point of view, she was faithless to her country, a traitress ; but she joined the people of God when His enemies were yet in the fulness of their power, before the chosen race had gained a single victory, and when they had not even crossed the Jordan.

Such was the faith that could count on God at whatever cost, and unite with His people when everything was against them. The faith of Abraham was simply faith in God, in His word ; but it was shown to be absolute and without hesitation, when he offered up his beloved son, the subject of all the promises of God. The faith of Rahab was also a simple faith in God, but was displayed in identifying itself with the cause of God, when all the power was apparently on the other side, since God was not seen. In fact, to call oneself a believer and yet produce nothing, is not really faith. Faith realises its object, and this object produces its effect in becoming the motive of the heart.

He who receives the word is born again of incorruptible seed, and shares in the divine nature ; and obedience, purity, and love are produced. It is true that we have still to overcome temptations and obstacles, and we are not all that we would be, neither all that we might be ; but the life produces its fruits more or less. Though the heart be unfaithful in the Christian walk, through carelessness it may be, yet faith always

produces its own fruits ; and the Christian knows well that the faith that produces nothing is not true faith. Faith realises the presence and the love of God known in a new nature, and enjoys both ; and reflects, feebly as may be, the character of Him whom it enjoys. We are sons born of God, through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is by faith, even though it be merely human, and not that of the divine life in us, that everything is done which is not purely instinctive. Why does the husbandman sow ? Because he believes that he will reap. And thus it is with everything, except eating and drinking. For divine faith divine things have to be revealed to the soul ; it is the work of the Spirit of God. Faith in God is what is acceptable to Him ; but this faith—we being made alive by Him through His word—produces the fruits of the divine life.

By means of this faith we have communion with God, with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord ; and He is not ashamed to call us His friends (John xv, 15). Abraham was called the friend of God. In our relationships with the world we say only what is called for by the necessity of the moment ; but that said, all is finished. But with an intimate friend we speak of things that have nothing to do with mere business, of all that concerns the heart. God did not speak to Abraham about the promises made to him when he is called the *friend of God*, but communicated to him all that He thought of doing, and the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” It is beautiful to see the intimacy into which one can enter with God when walking faithfully with Him (see Gen. xxviii. 17-20).

In Sodom the believer was saved, losing all, and living in uncertainty and misery, fearing the mountain (where Abraham dwelt, for the position of faith is always feared by unbelief), the mountain of Zoar, when he saw the terrible fate of the others. Then he finished by taking refuge in the mountain he had at first feared, and lived there in misery and shame. In

Abraham we have the portrait of a believer who lives by faith ; in Lot, that of a believer who takes the world, fair to look upon, as his portion. He inherited judgment, though he may be spared ; while, after Lot's departure, God bade Abraham lift up his eyes and behold the promised land, realise all its extent, and know that all was his.

Faith gives communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and the realisation of all that belongs to us. It is not to be wondered at if it produces fruits desired by God. God gives us to live in nearness to Him, so that things not seen may work in our hearts ; and that we may live in patience and in joy till the Lord shall come and introduce us to the place where there shall be no more need of faith, into the enjoyment of what faith believed in when yet unseen.

CHAPTER III.

JAMES recommends modesty in word, that we should not be many masters. When we do not know ourselves, it is much easier to teach others than to govern ourselves. Now the tongue is the surest token of what is in the heart. All of us fail in many things ; but if we pretend to teach others, all our offences become more serious, and deserve the greater condemnation. Lowliness of heart makes us slow to speak, waiting rather to be taught, and that others should express their thoughts. We should be more willing to learn than to teach. With this admonition, James begins a serious dissertation on the perils of the tongue. No man can tame it. As we have already remarked, it is the surest index to the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Many do more by hard words than they could by the hand. They often utter, moreover, light and vain words.

James insists on having the will kept in check, that there should be no confidence in self, and that the carelessness of the flesh should be corrected by the fear of God. First, the Christian

must not be too ready to teach. We must not be many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. Love seeks to edify the brethren, and the Spirit leads the humble to the exercise of their gifts. But it may be that a Christian likes to make himself heard, that he is not humble, and that he speaks because he has confidence in himself. Now this is not love, but rather self-love.

We all fail in many things, and naturally, when we teach others, or at least pretend to do so, we are the more responsible, and our faults become the more grave. How can we teach others if we do not know how to walk faithfully ourselves? This is not the fear of God. If the conscience be not pure before God, it is impossible to set forth His grace and truth with His power, because we are not in His presence, and He is not with us. The first effect of His presence would be to stir up our conscience. He who teaches ought to keep himself in deepest humility, and watch so as not to stumble in his walk.

This spirit of humility is not a want of confidence in God ; on the contrary, it is united to confidence. A man in possession of such a spirit will not say of the Lord, "I knew Thou wert an hard man ;" but self-confidence is absent, and he only speaks when it is the will of God. Then he does so in the power of His Spirit. He is slow to speak, and waits on God, in order to do so with Him,

But other important truths are contained in these words. First, we all fail in many ways. He who calls himself perfect deceives himself. It is not, necessarily, that we commit open sin, but that we do and say what is wrong in God's sight. Our speech is not always according to grace seasoned with salt. There are failures. We cannot excuse ourselves because the Lord has said, "My grace is sufficient for you," and "My strength is made perfect in weakness." We do fail, however sad it may be to say so ; and we have to own it. Walking with God, grace leads us to feel and confess it ; and thus we shall walk in greater nearness to God, with more watchfulness and humility. and more in felt dependence on Him.

There is yet another truth revealed in these words. This exhortation would not have been necessary if liberty to speak, according to God's direction, had not been possessed by all the brethren, in accordance with their gifts and the rules given in the word—for there are such. If one person had been appointed to speak, the exhortation would have been useless. This then is an exhortation to modesty, to quietness, to distrust of self, and to the fear of God. The question is one of the danger of failure, and of responsibility ; but the thought of single ministry in the assembly is excluded.

It is not asserted that a single individual cannot exercise a ministry that God may have confided to him ; such ministry by one is permitted to each, if the Lord has supplied the necessary gift, but this must be according to the directions of the word. The activity of the flesh is reprov'd, and the liberty of the Holy Ghost demonstrated. The Lord makes use of each as He sees fit, whether by means of the permanent gifts of teachers, pastors, and evangelists, which will remain with us till the end, or by the ministry of each member in the place he has assigned to it.

What is said regarding failure is in continuation of the discourse on the tongue, the best index to the heart, easily put in action, and following every impulse of the heart. Everything has been tamed, even wild beasts and reptiles ; but no man has been able to tame the tongue ; it is full of deadly poison.

What James says is very strong, but, alas, very true. But if, in a practical way, we remember that the flesh is counted as dead, and we live by the Spirit, the tongue will be the expression of new impulses, or it may keep silence when grace ought to have nothing to say.

There are many who, according to the flesh, would avoid inflicting a blow, who could not restrain a passionate or hard word against their neighbour ; but if man cannot restrain the tongue, the grace of Christ can do it, because the inward man is under the Lord's yoke, and is meek and humble. Christ fills his heart,

and then, just because the tongue follows the impulses of the heart, his words express meekness and humility. But it is necessary that Christ only should fill the heart, and the flesh be held in check, so that when temptation comes, we may not be moved. It is difficult to avoid failure ; but it is very useful to see how the tongue indicates what goes on inwardly, as the hands of a clock show the movement of the hidden works.

It is good to observe the true character of the tongue as here defined. When James says, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" he does not mean that it is not what happens in the case of the tongue, because it is this that he laments (vers. 9, 10), but that such an evil ought not to exist ; it is contrary to nature itself. Then he goes on to show the character of the wise man endued with knowledge. He must show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom. Wisdom, or at least knowledge, that manifests itself in a spirit of envy and contention, is not divine wisdom. Divine wisdom cannot exist apart from the state of the heart, and meekness produced by grace, the consciousness of the presence of God, a broken will, and that which learns with Jesus meekness and humility of heart.

"The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Wisdom that boasts and strives is earthly, sensual, devilish. It does not come from above, but shows itself in envy and strife, springs full of confusion and every evil work. The wisdom that comes from above depends on the consciousness of the presence of God, and on communion with Him, where the energy of nature is of no value, and where the spirit of dependence on God is shown. It knows that without Christ it can do nothing. The realisation of God's presence makes this wisdom first pure ; and it cannot be otherwise if communion with God be known. This communion, which gives wisdom, is necessarily pure. The divine nature in us, realising the presence of God, and dwelling in Him, discerns what suits God, and has the senses exercised to know good and evil.

It is not precisely that good desires violence, but it does not dare to admit evil because it draws us away from God. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable," for the spirit of peace dwells in the heart. It is "gentle, easy to be entreated," subject, as to self-will, not seeking its own satisfaction, but ready to do the will of others, when this is not opposed to that of God. Then the activity of good unfolds itself in the heart; it is "full of mercy," and free from selfishness, because happy in God; feeling the misery of others, it produces the good fruits that flow from such sympathy. It is not disposed to strive, nor to find faults, defects, and failure in others or in their work, neither to criticise nor judge as though superior and capable of doing better. It walks, moreover, in simplicity and integrity of heart, not seeking the approbation of men, nor to appear anything but what it really is; it thinks not of itself, but simply of doing the will of God, and of pleasing others as its own greatest pleasure.

Such is the lovely character of divine wisdom. It is well to remark how James always seeks to have self-will in the place of silence, so that it may be capable of doing that of God, and of manifesting the character that partakes of the divine nature—the character of Christ, God manifest in the flesh. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who had sent Him; and always submitted even to injustice and wrongs, doing good, and walking in quietness and in love. To do good, to suffer, and to have patience, is, says Peter, acceptable to God. Then love is free when self is dead. It walks in peace, and makes peace, and "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." Thus I understand these few words. "Blessed are the peacemakers (the procurers of peace) for they shall be called the sons of God." It is the reproduction of the peace and love of God in human walk, as those do in whom Christ is manifested here below.

CHAPTER IV:

HAVING recommended the spirit of peace in the ways of Christians, James now inquires, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" Here we must ask ourselves what "among you" means. It is not necessarily among Christians. Meekness and wisdom, a wisdom gentle and easy to be entreated, characterised the Christian (chap. iii. 17). But, as we have already seen, these were still in the midst of the twelve tribes; and the latter are no doubt included in the words "among you." Christians, however, might become implicated in these contests; so that the exhortation applies to them also. This striving was the result of lust. The will was not broken, concupiscence tormented the heart, desiring to possess what it could not obtain; conscience silenced by the oppression of lust, the desires left free by the will, free rein was given to the passions. They killed, and desired to have, yet could not obtain; they fought and strove, but were not satisfied.

Dependence on God was forgotten, and the will worked in its own way; they did not ask of God, or if they asked, it was only with the desire of making God subservient to their lusts. God does not answer such prayers. Sad state of man! God was forgotten, and, still worse, the heart was enslaved by lust and under the yoke of concupiscence, far from peace and rest; war within, open sin without; without God in the world—the morning scene where these desires are enacted—or if God was known, He was forgotten by the rebellious heart. "For the friendship of the world is enmity against God." The Christian who is conformed to the world forgets that he has been purged from his old sins. He walks in forgetfulness of God in the ways of unbelievers, and conscience is deadened by the restraint of lust. When he asks of God, he does not receive, because he does so as a man of the world for the increase of his pleasures.

It is not necessary to believe that all whom he calls "adul-

terers and adulteresses" were so in reality. There were many such sinners in the world, and others, though Christians, were walking in the same spirit of faithlessness to God, and so gave free rein to lust. This truly is not Christian walk ; but when a Christian leaves the ways of God, and mixes with the world, he often becomes ashamed of his Christianity ; he does not dare to confess the Lord's name ; then, conscience becoming hardened, he is soon as bad as, or worse than the world, having leapt over every barrier. Satan rejoices to see the name of Christ dishonoured by those who bear it.

But a principle of much importance is contained in this passage, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God, and whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." This is a powerful testimony which judges our ways, and lays bare the heart. The world has proved its true character by rejecting and crucifying the Son of God. Man had already been tried without law, and under law ; but when he had shown himself utterly bad without law, and had violated the law when he received it, then God Himself came in grace, making Himself man, in order to bring His love directly to the heart of man, by taking his nature. This was the last opportunity for the human heart. He came not to impute sin, but to reconcile the world with Himself. But the world would not receive Him, but showed itself to be under the power of Satan and of darkness. It saw and hated both Christ and His Father.

The world is always the same ; Satan is the prince of it ; and all that goes on in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but of the world. The human heart, the flesh, is what it has always been since the fall, enmity against God. It is often thought and said that after the death of Christ, Satan was no longer the prince of the world, but it was precisely then that he showed himself to be the prince of it, by leading all men, Jews and Gentiles, to crucify the Saviour. Though men may bear the name of Christ, yet the opposition of the world to His authority still remains unchanged.

Only try, and you will see if the name of Christ is not dishonoured. People may be taught to honour it, but it is not the less true that when in the enjoyment of the freedom of their will, they resist Christ, for fear of their pleasures being interfered with. If left to himself, man does think of Him; he does not wish to speak of the Saviour, for he sees no beauty in Him that he should desire Him. He loves to do his own will, and does not wish the Lord to come and hinder him. He prefers vanity and pleasure. We have the true history of the world, and its practical principle in that of Cain. Having killed his brother, he was driven from the presence of God, despairing of grace, and refusing to humble himself. Through the judgment of God, he became a vagabond on the earth. But such a position was not pleasing to him. He therefore built a city in the land of Nod. Now "Nod" is only the Hebrew word for "vagabond." He established himself where God had made him a vagabond, and called the city by the name of his son, in order to perpetuate the greatness of his family. But it would have been insupportable for his city to be deprived of all the delights of life. He therefore added wealth to his son; then another member of the family invented musical instruments; and another was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron. Such was the world, driven out by God, and seeking to render its position more agreeable without Him, and to find contentment at a distance from Him.

Now by the coming of Christ, the state of man's heart is brought to light, not only as seeking the pleasures of the flesh, but as enmity against God. Whatever might be the goodness of God, he would not be disturbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, nor submit to the authority of another, but insisted on possessing the world for himself, striving for its acquirement, and rending it out of the hands of those to whom it belonged. Now it is evident that "the friendship of the world is enmity against God." As far as possible, it has cast God out of the world. Man desires to be great in this world.

We know that the world has crucified the Son of God, that it has found no beauty in the One in whom was all God's delight.

Not in vain the Scripture says, "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth only to envy." But on the other hand (and here we find the means of conquering it), "God resisteth the proud, but giveth more grace to the humble." This is the true secret of power and victory in the midst of the difficulties and opposition of the world.

James again insists on humility, and that the will of man should be broken, and he himself in subjection to God. For obedience and absence of self-will is true humility; and to this the goodness and grace of God lead man. Confidence in God leads the soul to submit to Him. It is a duty and a necessity that this should be the case; but when confidence exists, it is done with willingness of heart. It is the truth of our relationship with God, and in this the soul finds happiness. We do not need a will of our own, when God, who loves us, has a will for us in all things. We ought to trust in Him. What grace that the all-powerful God should think always of us in every circumstance of our life! The devil is an enemy, who seeks to deceive us, raise up envy, and endeavours to get the better of us by means of our lusts. He may often stir up persecution in order to hinder us in the way of faithfulness; but in every day life he deceives us by things adapted to the flesh.

If we suffer persecution, we should glory in it. "For unto you it is given," says the apostle Paul, "not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." But the danger of Satan's deceit always exists; it surrounds us continually. The important thing is that we should so live in communion with God, and according to the new man, that we may be able to detect the wiles of the devil, which are opposed to obedience to the will of God. It may be said that evil is only too apparent. When Satan proposed to the Lord to make bread of stones and eat, that was not an apparent evil. To eat when we are hungry does not seem wrong; but in that case it would have been disobe-

dience. Satan could do nothing. To eat simply because we are hungry is an instinctive action, and has no reference to God. But we ought to do everything, even eating, in the name of Christ, giving God thanks. All is holy for us, if we realise the presence of God.

Satan then cannot be hid when he resists obedience; and when discovered, he departs, knowing that he has met Him who has conquered him—Christ in us. The word of God is enough to enable us to walk in a path where Satan is powerless, where he is obliged to leave us, for there we discover his deceit, and learn that he is our enemy. This was the case with the Saviour. He quoted the word of God, and the devil was silenced, but then sought to deceive Him by other means. He did not show himself openly; but the perfect obedience of Jesus deprived his snares of all power. But when Satan manifested his real character by offering Him worldly glory, He sent him away, and he departed. The Lord's path is ours; His strength is ours; and if we walk with Him in obedience, His wisdom will be ours too. Only He has already vanquished the tempter. The difficulty is to walk sufficiently in communion with Him to be able to discern the snares. We need the whole armour of God.

If the presence of God is realised by the heart, and His Spirit governs it, if the feeling of dependence is active, we shall be conscious that what the enemy presents to us is not of God, and the will of the new man will refuse it. Once discovered and resisted, he has no more power; Jesus has conquered him for us. We learn that if we resist him, he will flee from us. He understands that he has met with the Spirit of Christ, and flees. The trouble is that we do not always resist. We accept his snares, because the will of God is not everything to us, and because we desire to please ourselves. If grace is known, obedience and dependence guard us from the attacks of the devil. Against the resistance of faith he has no power; he is manifested as Satan—the adversary—as when Jesus allowed Himself to be tempted for us, he fled before resistance. And he knows that it is the same that he meets in us.

This is not the place to speak of the armour of God, but a few words may be useful. Everything in it, up to the sword, is connected with the state of the soul—the effect of truth in keeping it in good order and regulating its affections, and the conscience possessing all its strength according to the will of God; the breastplate of practical righteousness, so that the conscience may be pure; and in the walk, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace—this is conduct—bearing the stamp of the peace we enjoy in Christ. Then there is the confidence in God that produces these things, and that prevents the fiery darts of the wicked from harming us. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Doubts and evil thoughts of God will not find entrance to the heart. The assurance of salvation enables us to lift up the head in battle with the enemy. Then we can take up the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, and use it in the conflict. Protected by the armour of God from the assaults of the enemy, we can be active in employing the word in the Lord’s service, always, however, in dependence on Him for aid. This dependence expresses itself in prayers and supplication. Let us then resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

Verse 8. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” Here the activity of the heart is shown in dependence. Thanks be to God we can draw near to Him. His throne is for us a throne of grace. We can come before His face without fear, through His love, and, by the precious blood of Christ, enter into the holiest. In His presence we learn holiness, we discern His will; the eye sees clearly in this pure air, and submission is found in the heart. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” These walk with God, are taught of Him, and their whole body is full of light. Then He is with us, near to us, inspiring us with confidence. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” says the apostle. Not only is God’s power with us, but His presence produces liberty and confidence in the heart, since we feel that we possess the knowledge of His will, because He is with us. The consciousness of His presence

produces joy, calmness, and courage in the presence of the enemy, and amid the difficulties of the way, we rest in Him. "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man ; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." The presence of God, a true and real thing for the heart, keeps the conscience wakeful, and the heart full of quiet confidence. "Draw nigh to God."

But in order to do so, the hands must be cleansed, and the heart purified, that we may not be double-minded. God is light, and must have purity and uprightness in the inward man. Full of goodness and condescension, He is ready to help the weak ; but to the double-minded He turns a deaf ear. He must have a pure walk and a true heart in those who seek to be near Him. This cannot be otherwise ; He keeps at a distance from those whose hearts are not open in His presence. He sees all, whatever it may be ; but He desires a true heart, in order to listen to it. James, too, when he thinks of the foolish joy of this world, which leads to eternal ruin, calls upon those who have ears to hear, to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep ; to turn their laughter into mourning, and their joy into heaviness. The intelligent soul of those who think of others, and have a heart moved by love—the Christian who shares in the Spirit, and therefore in the feelings of Christ, will be alive to the moral and actual misery which surrounds him ; he will have joy in Christ, but sorrow with regard to the state of the men of the world.

Sin has rendered the world unhappy and wretched, and on every hand the ills it has introduced are apparent ; but nevertheless, the heart feels the goodness of God in the midst of everything, and rejoices in eternal salvation, and in the goodness that has secured it. It rejoices, too, in the daily blessings of God, but knows nothing of the foolish joy of the world, that seeks to conceal the void that is in the heart, or avoid by laughter the consciousness of its misery. But when the man of the world is alone, this void and frequently sorrow, make themselves felt ; with his companions he forgets them in laughter ; it does not

suit them to recognise sorrow, or to concern themselves about it in others ; they must make people think they are happy. The world cannot be truthful in public ; sorrow and affliction are too true. The Lord could weep, but could not laugh. Love and Christian sense follow His example from the heart, and from the same feeling. James desires that the foolishness of the world should be exchanged for Christian feelings of love and of wisdom. In the following chapter, too, we shall see that judgment will shortly put an end to the false joy of the world. Here the exhortation is moral, there it is in connection with the close of this joy by the hand of the Lord.

Ver. 10. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." This is what Christ did (Phil. ii), and what He said. He who humbleth himself, the same shall be exalted. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Humility is becoming to man, to his littleness in God's sight, in the consciousness of the greatness of His grace, and in that of all that he is in himself. The glory that awaits the Christian is also a source of humility to him, for he knows how unworthy of it he is ; he knows that he can do nothing in divine things without God.

But James speaks, thinking of the pride of the spirit of the world, which was found also in Christians, exhortingly, and desires not merely humility, but that they should humble themselves. The spirit of man springs up so easily, that it is necessary to humble ourselves, and realise the presence of God. Here we shall be ever humble, have the consciousness of our own littleness, and think of God and not of ourselves. To exalt the proud would be only to encourage pride, which does not become sinful man, neither the pious man, for piety and pride cannot go together. But God takes pleasure in exalting the humble ; and the elevation that comes from God is a source of gratitude and joy, and not of pride. It is found in God in the feeling of His goodness.

When one humbles himself, it is in the *sight of God*, not of

men—it is a true inward work that destroys his good opinion of himself, realises the presence and greatness of God, gives Him His true place in the heart, and to Himself His own. Then all is true, and it is only then that he can work for God according to the truth. These verses (9 and 10) are the effect of the realisation of the presence of God in a world of sin and misery, in a heart that dwells there, and feels the two things.

James sees that the world is full of evil, that it lies in wickedness, under the power of Satan, has rejected the Lord Jesus, that the friendship of it is enmity against God, and that he who will be its friend is the enemy of God. In the world lust finds that which nourishes it, and it desires to possess what it envies, or to appropriate what belongs to others. Self-will is lust; *I* governs this world.

But God, working by grace in the heart of the Christian, can enable him to subdue both the world and lust. The proud who trusts in his own strength, and does only his own will, God resists; and He knows, too, how to humble such; but in His perfect goodness He gives grace to the humble. Precious gift, which by the feeling that divine strength is with us, and the knowledge of God's favour and love, encourages hearts that may be cast down in view of all that surrounds them. A humble man is a happy man, and rejoices in the knowledge of the love of God resting on Him. One must also be subject to God. His will is not always pleasing to the heart, and does not agree with its desires; but it becomes the creature to submit; and God is wise, and makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. His ways too are always the effect of grace towards us, so that it is our wisdom to submit to His hand.

We have yet another great consolation; and this is that the adversary, the devil, has no power against us. If we resist him, he flees from us. If we listen to his wiles, he can and does deceive us; but Christ has vanquished him; and if we resist him simply and faithfully with an upright heart, he discovers that he has met with Christ, and so flees, unable to accomplish

anything—unable to enter into the sanctuary of the heart where Christ dwells. How great this consolation and blessing, beyond all telling! Though feeble, yet if we have Christ as our support, we can conquer all our enemies; and God gives all the grace that is needful to us. His strength is enough against the power of the enemy.

Moreover, we must draw nigh to God. Little by little, we learn our dependence on Him; but the danger of going on independently always exists; and God desires that we should feel the necessity of seeking Him, and that the heart should be active in doing so. This, no doubt, is the effect of grace; but grace works in us to produce the will; and dependence on, and trust in, God are expressed in our drawing nigh to Him. These things form the link between the heart and God, and He never fails to respond to them. As confidence grows, one loves increasingly the dependence that recognises the perfect love of God, and the precious truth that He withdraws not His eyes from the righteous; that in His great goodness, full of condescension, He is occupied with every circumstance of our life, our individual character, and our difficulties, and that He does not consider it beneath Him to think of us, no matter how insignificant we may be, nor of all that concerns us. Though He may make us wait, in order that faith may be exercised, yet He never fails to answer. Daniel had to wait three weeks; but the answer came, and his heart was satisfied by the communication of the perfect goodness of God towards His people, and by the promise of the coming of Christ. God draws nigh to us—what great and precious grace! The heart adores and loses itself in the love of God in which now it dwells; and which is an unfailing support of its confidence.

That which follows contains particular precepts, rather than a continued argument. Sinners are to cleanse their hands, and those that are double-minded to purify their hearts; their conduct is to be simple and pure, so that they may be blessed of God. The conduct must not be unjust nor crooked, nor must

the heart be vacillating between the world and the Lord, for then we can expect neither happiness in the heart nor blessing from God. In a corrupt and evil world the Christian walk is not suited to the laughter and joy of the flesh. Judgment was ready to fall on the Jewish nation and on the world. It was needful, therefore, that laughter should be turned into mourning and joy into heaviness.

James then exhorts those to whom he writes to humble themselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift them up. He feels deeply the worldly folly of men, and even of Christians, who walk in the spirit of the world, mixed up with it, not only as to the body, but in heart and ways. Such a walk does not become a Christian. The fear of God, and the fact that the world has crucified the Lord, makes the judgment that awaits it present to him, although he does not know at what moment it will be executed. It is better, far better, that his heart should be attracted by a glorified Lord—the bright and morning star—and by the things which are above; but if he be inclined to walk with and as the world, then the world gains power over him, and he has to be brought to feel that the end of it and the judgment of God are approaching, and to listen to the voice and warnings of God which announce that “the day shall come as a thief in the night.” If he listen, the Lord will lift him up and bless him. But who, that has not listened, shall be able to endure the day when He comes to judge? To the Christian, however, the coming of the Lord is another thing. He will come, He tells us Himself, to take us, to catch us up in the air, to receive us into His Father’s house, whither He is gone to prepare our heavenly and eternal abode.

“Speak not evil,” says our Epistle, “one of another.” This is a precept that would restrain many tongues if they were obedient, and would put an end to much evil. Love could not do so; but the tongue, as we have seen, is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, and can kindle a very great matter. But further, he who speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law; because the law

gives us the brother as the object of the love of God, and not that he may be persecuted, evilly spoken of, and degraded in the sight of others. Such an one forgets the position in which the law has placed the brother. If we take the place of judges and legislators, we place ourselves above the law ; we transgress it, and do not obey it, nor follow its precepts. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." Who are we to judge others ?

The word also condemns false trust in the purposes of our own hearts. The human heart, at a distance from God, thinks that it can direct its own steps, and decide, without thinking either of His will or of Himself, what it will do. Perhaps the thing may not be evil, and does not make the conscience uneasy ; but God is totally forgotten. Man acts without God, as though the world were given up to him, as though God had retired from the scene, and His will went for nothing. Such a man, as to religion, as to his duty in practical things of every-day life, lives in atheism. God does not enter into his thoughts. Riches, worldly ambition, though he may not be living in evil pleasures, are what govern his heart. He does not realise that he belongs to God, bought, if he be a Christian, with the precious blood of Christ ; he lays his plans according to his own will, his own wisdom, and his own worldly interest. God is unthought of ; and without God in the world, he seeks earthly things, and in fact is not where God dwells. If we labour to obtain what is necessary, this is according to the will of God, and we can ask His blessing. Here, however, it is not a question of this, but of the man who disposes of his time, and seeks gain for himself, without looking to God, or waiting for His direction, or the manifestation of His will.

But man does not know what the morrow may bring forth ; he does not know that his life will continue for another day. "It is a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." Such is life here below. We ought to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." All this

boasting is evil. James, always and everywhere, opposes the pretensions of the will of man ; he insists that it should be broken, and that man should take his true place of obedience and submission. God must have His place, and man be dependent and obedient. All the activity, and all the pretensions of man's own will are evil.

There is another important principle at the close of this chapter. The will of man is always evil. Where understanding to do good exists, and yet is not done, the heart, or at least the state of the man, is evil. Grace and love are wanting. Self-interest, self-will, and the satisfaction of his own will, characterise the natural man ; doing of good, desire for the well-being of others, and the service of others, are the fruits of love. When the understanding of what is good exists, and the opportunity of doing it presents itself, if a man does not do it, it is a sign that his heart is evil ; the love of others and the desire of doing good are wanting. Not to do good is evil ; it shows the absence of grace, and the activity of self-will.

CHAPTER V.

THE portion of the faithful is not in this world. Christ has acquired them for Himself, that they might be fashioned like unto His glorious body, and be co-heirs with Him ; for His love desires that they should enjoy all that He Himself enjoys. His love is perfect. It is a great privilege to be called to suffer for Him ; but this is not the portion of all. Still, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). It is not possible to avoid suffering with Him ; for if we have the Spirit of Christ, we feel as He did. Holiness suffers in view of the sin that exists everywhere, and also of the state of the Church of God and His own, as well as from the misery that surrounds us, and the blindness of souls that will have neither Christ nor salvation. Each must bear his cross ; and God allows us to suffer, for by this means we learn patience, and that our inheritance is

not below. Experience, the realisation of practical truth, is established in the heart, and hope becomes brighter and stronger. This of course supposes that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. If this be not the case, God allows sufferings to come, and even sends them, in order to restore the heart. Those whom He loves He rebukes and chastens.

James denounces the rich who possess this world's goods, but give no thought to the poor; while "blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble" (Ps. xli. 1). He who despises the poor because of their poverty, despises the Lord Himself. "I am poor and needy," says the Lord in the Psalm preceding that from which the words above are quoted. The Lord pronounced His blessing on the poor to whom the gospel had been preached. It was a sign of the Messiah. We all know that a poor man may be just as bad as a rich man; but riches are a positive danger for us, because they encourage pride, and tend to keep us apart from the poor, with whom the Lord associated in the world. "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich."

But here the rich went to still greater lengths in evil; they oppressed the poor, they had not paid the hire of those who laboured for them. This brings us into the presence of the last days. But the cries of the poor had entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. The rich are bidden to weep and howl for the miseries coming upon them. They had lived on the earth in pleasure and in wantonness. And not only this; but when living in pleasure, man does not like any one to come in and disturb his contentment. And this was why he condemned and slew the Just One. He had not resisted them; but they desired to secure the enjoyment of this world, amid that false peace that thinks neither of God, nor of judgment, nor yet of death. When conscience is stirred up, then men are disturbed; but these had hardened their hearts that they might not be awakened.

For a moment God does not change the course of the world.

If He were to do so, He would have to execute judgment, instead of labouring in love for the wicked and for sinners. Though He will not yet strike, yet the accomplishment of His promise is not delayed ; but He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Christians, therefore, must not let their hearts be discouraged, but continue patient and submissive to the evil around them, till the Lord come. As Christ Himself suffered, doing good, and yet was patient, so must the Christian follow in His footsteps. Our portion is not in this world ; if we suffer doing good, this is acceptable to God, and still more so, if it be for Christ's sake. The Saviour's life was nothing but suffering and patience ; but now He is glorified at the right hand of God. Soon He will come again to this world in the glory of the Father, in His own, and in that of the angels ; and then He shall be " glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe."

At that glorious day, when the poorest of His people, those who have been oppressed by the enemies of the truth, shall be like the Lord Himself in glory, we shall rejoice in having been able to suffer for Him, and in having been patient and silent in the unjust sorrows of the Christian life. Then blessed are they whom He shall find watching, for " He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." What joy ! what grace ! It will be the glory of the Saviour to bring us into the enjoyment of the blessings of the Father's house, and to make us receive them from His own hand. It is worth suffering a little, and for a little while, for Him, and then to possess heavenly blessings, communicated to us by the hand and from the heart of Jesus Himself. We shall reign with Him—our prize for the work given us to do for Him here ; if it were only a cup of water given in the name of Jesus, it shall in no wise lose its reward. But much better will it be to sit in peaceful enjoyment of the eternal blessings of the Father's house, which Christ will minister to us abundantly, in precious token of His approval and of His love.

Here let us notice that the coming of the Lord was a present hope. Those who were oppressed were to be patient till this coming. "Be ye also patient," says James; "stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "They were then deceived," some one will say. Certainly not. It is quite possible that we may die before His coming, and this was the case with them. But they will reap the fruit of their patience when the Lord does come. Already, at this moment, they are with Him, absent from the body, present with the Lord; and then they shall enjoy the fruit of the sufferings they endured with patience for His name's sake, seeking to glorify Him here below.

But this exhortation clearly shows that this hope was a present thing, entering into all the thread of the Christian life. It was not merely an idea in the mind, a matter of knowledge, or a dogma of faith only. They were personally expecting the Lord; and what a comfort this was to the poor and the oppressed! What a check to the rich to be always expecting the Lord—to know that He is coming soon, that then sorrows shall cease, and we shall be for ever with Him who has loved us. Nothing effects detachment from the world like the expectation of the Lord. I do not say the doctrine of His coming, but the true expectation of the Lord. His coming detaches us from it for ever; and the heart waits till He comes.

The Lord's supper expresses the Christian position—the Lord's death when He came the first time, which we celebrate with thanksgiving, remembering Him who has loved us, and feeding on His love, till He shall come to take us to be with Himself. It is the outward expression of the practical state of the Christian as a Christian, of Christianity itself; but it is only by the Holy Ghost that we can show forth His death in truth.

There is still another point worthy of notice in this exhortation. "Be patient therefore, brethren." We are always waiting, if we have really understood our position; but whatever our desires may be, we cannot command the Lord to come, neither

can we know when He will come. All His body, His bride, must be formed, every member must be present, converted and sealed by the Holy Ghost. Then He will come to take us. Christ Himself is now seated on the Father's throne, not yet on His own. He also is waiting at this moment, and certainly with greater love than we do. This is why the "patience of Christ" is spoken of. This is the true meaning of the words in Rev. i. 9, and also in chapter iii. 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience;" and again in 2 Thess. iii. 5, "Into the patience of Christ." The word is the same in these three passages.

We learn also, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 12), that Christ is set down at the right hand of God; and, moreover, that He is expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. We may well expect, if Christ expects; though for us it may be in suffering and conflict. He awaits the moment when He will come to reign, and bring full blessing to His own, whether in heaven or whether on the earth, and banish evil from both places.

It is needful then to have patience, so that neither will, nor weariness in the conflict may take possession of the soul. It is certain that God's time is the best, that which divine wisdom and love may appoint. We have the affections set on the Lord and on things above, so that we may look for Him with desire, yet with broken will and firm faith, leaving His return to the decision of God. We cannot hasten Him; but the heart must have perfect trust in His love. Sure it is that the Lord waits with more love than that with which we expect Him, calm in trust, and patient in our walk through the wilderness. It is sweet to wait for Christ, for fulness of joy with Him. Thanks be to God, He "draweth nigh."

Two practical consequences are drawn by James from this expectation of the Lord. First, the Christian must not resist evil. The Just One did not do so. He must wait with patience, as the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for the early and the latter rain—the Lord's means of bringing the fruit of His harvest to perfection. The Christian

must stablish his heart amid the vicissitudes of life and the persecutions of the world, the constant enemy of the Lord, thinking ever of his expectation.

James then exhorts the disciples not to walk in a spirit of complaint and strife one against another. If we expect the Lord, the spirit is quiet and contented; persecution does not irritate us; and we sustain with patience the ills of the desert, resisting as Christ resisted, suffering and enduring wrong, ever trustful in God. We are content and calm with a happy and benevolent spirit, for it is easy for a happy heart to be benevolent. The coming of the Lord will put everything in order, and our happiness is elsewhere. Paul says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. iv. 5). What a real, powerful, and actual thing was the expectation of the Lord! What power it exercised over the heart! "The judge standeth before the door."

Then examples are given. The prophets were examples of affliction and of patience. They loved and counted happy them that endured. They were not alone. Others had suffered patiently, and were counted happy. For example, if we see one suffer for the name of Jesus in this world unjustly, if he is patient, meek, his heart forgiving those who persecute him, rather than irritated against them, we see then the power of faith and confidence in the love and faithfulness of the Lord. Beholding him calm and full of joy, we exclaim, "How happy grace makes him!" And we ourselves are happy when we suffer; at least we ought to be. But it is one thing to admire others, who are sustained by the Spirit of Christ, and another to glory in tribulation ourselves. A broken will, confidence in God, communion with Him who has suffered for us—this is what is necessary to enable us to glory in tribulation.

Job also is an example; but he is introduced here to show the end of the Lord, that He is very pitiful and of tender mercy. But the example is very instructive. Job was a man, perfect and upright, fearing the Lord, and eschewing evil. But

he began to be self-satisfied ; he did right, but thought of his own uprightness ; it was hidden self-righteousness, and this destroyed his godliness. God does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous. He saw Job's danger, and directed the attention of Satan to him. It was God who began. Satan, the accuser of the saints, insists that Job should be tried and he would prove a hypocrite. God permits him to tempt him, to do to him what he would, putting a limit, however, to his malice. He does, accordingly, all he is allowed to do ; yet Job remains submissive, and does not sin with his lips. Satan persists in his accusations, insinuating that if the temptation were increased, he would curse God to His face. God gives him all power, except over his life. But Job still remains faithful, and sins not ; he had received good at the Lord's hand, and should he not receive evil ? His wife tempts him in vain.

Through grace Job triumphed over Satan, who was unable to shake him. By the grace of God, the efforts of the enemy are conquered. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job." From Satan's accusation of hypocrisy Job is fully justified. But the work of God for his blessing was not yet complete. By His grace, He had sustained His servant's heart against the enemy, and Job had showed himself faithful. Satan had done much as the instrument of the ways of God in bringing misery on him ; but his heart was yet untouched ; he did not know himself. Quite the contrary. Although the preparation had been made by means of Satan, yet Job was practically justified from his accusations by the grace of God ; but if he had been allowed to remain thus, his state would have been still worse ; he would at least have been in greater danger than ever. He would have been able to say, "I was meek and upright in prosperity, and now patient in adversity." It was necessary that God should finish His work, and that Job should know his own heart.

Job's friends come to see him, and remain seated, stupefied by the condition in which they find him. Alas ! pride is often

awakened before men, and being wounded, irritates the heart ; and fortitude fails in presence of sympathy. However this was the bottom of Job's heart shows itself when his friends are present. He curses the day of his birth. Job is naked, not only before God—which we all are—but, what is equally painful, before himself. Where now is his gracious meekness? He fights against God, calling himself more just than He. Still it is beautiful to see that at the bottom of his heart there were just and true thoughts of God.

His friends pretended that the world was a perfect demonstration of the government of God ; in consequence of which Job, since he professed godliness, was a hypocrite. This unjust judgment, however, he resists ; declaring that, though the hand of God may be often manifested, yet He allows evil to run its course without interfering ; because the wicked prosper. But he allows the bitterness of his heart to appear. And though Job may be accused of making himself more righteous than God, yet God still governs ; He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous, and chastens them in love. Then God manifests Himself to Job, and shows him the folly of contending with Him. And now he owns his error and his nothingness. Instead of saying, "When the eye saw me, it gave witness of me," he says, "Now mine eye seeth Thee ; wherefore I abhor myself,¹ and repent in dust and ashes." He knows himself before God. Then God can bless him, even more than at the beginning. Such is the end of the Lord ! Job was patient in the greatest misery and trial ; God sounded his heart, and then blessed him abundantly.

Verse 12. James continues the subject that is the scope of his teaching. The will must not work, nor the flesh manifest itself. The motions of nature must be held in check, and the heart kept from following these motions of impatience, which are only too natural to the carnal mind.

¹ In the Hebrew the word is still more emphatic. It signifies to detest, to abominate, to despise.

If a man swears, he allows this impatience of the heart to work, forgets the glory and majesty of God, and associates Him with unsubdued flesh in order to strengthen an assertion or support a vow without reverence ; or, instead of God, he invokes some creature whom he invests with the authority and power that belong to God alone. The root of this is an unsubdued will, the unrestrained passion of the heart. Intuitively conscious of his inability to assure the effect of his thoughts, man introduces God irreverently, just as a heathen would a deified creature, as the occasion presented itself. This is not lust, but the unchecked impulse of the flesh (Col. iii. 8). It is irreverence, the presumption and independence of the human spirit, roused to the highest pitch.

This is why James says, " But above all things " he desired that, in peace and quietness, our communication may be yea and nay, calmly in the fear of God. It is all-important to keep the motions of nature in check. We should do so if we saw God before us. We should certainly do so in the presence of a man whom we desired to please ; but God is always present, and to fail in this quietness and moderation is a proof that we forget His presence.

Verse 13. James sets the soul free from the customs of the world. Man seeks to deceive himself, forgetting his thoughts in folly, and thus to find relief from the cares and troubles he cannot escape from ; but, thanks be to God, He gives help and refuge to the heart in His love, and carries our cares for us. He is not willing that we should be ignorant of the trials of life ; He who withdraws not His eyes from the righteous sends them for our good. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father — not only without the will of God, but without Him who loves us as a tender Father. He may indeed chasten us ; but He remembers us ; and it is in order to sanctify us, and draw our hearts near to His.

In drawing nigh to God in afflictions the will is subdued, and the heart comforted and encouraged. God Himself is

revealed to the soul, and works in it by His grace ; and consciously in His presence, it can say, "It is good to have been afflicted." And not only are we brought nigh to God, but we open our heart to Him who is full of grace, and who desires that we should do so. Not only are we subject to His will, but we present our anxieties before Him. "Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 67). Here it is a question of care ; but in affliction we find the same consolation and rest.

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation," says the apostle Paul, appealing to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. The hearts of the Philippians were filled with peace through the consolation poured into them. This may happen through circumstances ; but the Spirit of God says, "God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." Paul was altogether cast down because he had not found Titus, whom he had sent to the Corinthians, who were walking in much evil. He had left an open door for the gospel at Troas, and now his heart had reached the point of even regretting that he had written his first inspired epistle. His faith had got below the power of God, who had led him to write it. Arrived in Macedonia, still in search of Titus, but bearing testimony to Christ, however, the apostle had no rest in the flesh, but was troubled on every side ; without were fightings, within were fears. God allowed him to feel his weakness ; but it is worth while being afflicted, if God Himself becomes our comforter. Titus arrives, bringing good news of the effect of his first epistle, and the apostle is filled with joy. God often takes away the affliction itself, fills the heart with gladness, and pours His consolation into it ; and then it becomes riper by communion with Him. In every affliction prayer is our refuge ; thus we acknowledge our dependence, and trust to

the goodness of God. The heart draws nigh to Him. It tells Him its need and its conflict, placing them before the throne and on the heart of God, who replies either by rendering our circumstances happy, or by pouring His own consolations into our hearts—an answer yet more precious than outward happiness—but always by what is best for us, working in perfect love.

The godly soul, under the influence of grace, approaches God also in gladness; if it confine itself to that which is the occasion of happiness only, and reposes in it alone, this is a danger for it. But as God is a refuge in trouble, so also He is the portion of the soul in happiness. If I have an occasion of joy, I communicate it to my friend, so that he may rejoice with me, and thus the joy is redoubled. But to the Christian there is more than this; his heart feels that God is the source of blessing and the cause of happiness. Even though there be no special reason for gladness, yet his heart is joyous, and the godly soul that lives in communion with God, seeks to have God with it in happiness.

But if the soul be given up to the joy, this becomes vain and light; the heart wanders from God, and folly enters into it. In trial, dependence on God makes itself felt, but in happiness there is a danger of forgetting this dependence, and the joy often ends in a fall. In any case, the flesh is active, and God is forgotten. James desires then—and this is very important for the Christian—that gladness should be tempered with godliness.

When thoughts of God exist, they are to be expressed in psalms and in thanksgiving. God is present in joy and faith, and communion and spiritual power are increased by the sense of His goodness. Thus one engaged in the business of life is encouraged and strengthened amid the toils of the wilderness by a more profound sense that God is for him.

Verse 14. Affliction and happiness lead James to another matter which arose among the Christians—sickness, often, though not always, the effect of chastisement from the Lord. Disease like death, entered through sin, and now is found in all the course

of human history. But not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the hand of God our Father, as the Lord tells us. And ills belong to the natural state of mankind; God makes use of them to correct His children. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous." In either case—whether the ills natural to man, or the chastisement of God—He makes use of them, when the heart, instead of receiving all that happens with indifference, draws nigh to God, who thinks of the trials of His people, and considers the submission and the cry of those whom He chastens.

The prayer of faith saves the sick, and if the malady be the fruit of sin, that which has caused it shall be forgiven. The sufferer owns the hand of God in his sickness, and He responds to the faith of him who prays to Him. In the ways of God there are two kinds of forgiveness—justification for eternity, according to chapter iv. of the Epistle to the Romans, and x. of that to the Hebrews, is the blessing that belongs to those who trust to the efficacy of the blood of Christ—that is, that their sins are no longer imputed to them. "Whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified." God has been occupied with their sins on the cross, has cancelled them for ever, and remembers them no more.

There is, however, the government of God, of a Father, but of a holy Father, who loves His children too much to allow them to walk in evil. In the book of Job, when Elihu says that God withdraws not His eyes from the righteous, while indicating the blessing that flows naturally from the favour of God, the effect of His grace, he speaks immediately of chastisement, thus clearly explaining Job's case. Here the Spirit of God supposes the possibility of a case of actual failure, speaking of actions. But this is not always the ground of chastisement. In Job xxxiii. it is said that God seals His instruction by chastisement, that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He hinders evil, as in the case of Paul (2 Cor. xii.) *He humbles man in order to prepare him for bless-*

ing. In every case He makes all things work together for good to those that love Him (Rom. viii. 28).

Now if the will be not broken, we lament, murmur, and rebel against God; but if the soul looks to Him, owning His hand, whether in the ills natural to sinful man, and to which he is heir (though never without the hand of God), or in positive chastisement, even though he may be ignorant why it is sent, he can turn to God, own his state as the effect of His will, and seek the remedy in His grace, submissive to and depending on His power and will. But it is only the faith of true Christians that can draw down the answer and the blessing from above.

James now speaks no longer of the synagogue, but of the assembly. In order to receive blessing, we must possess true faith; and God has placed blessing in the assembly, in true believers. There it is found by faith in His government and discipline. When sin is manifested openly, so that a man who is known as a brother may be called wicked, it is the duty of the assembly to put him away from among them. Then the sins are bound on him who is excluded, and if he humble himself, and recognises his sin from the bottom of his heart, then the assembly ought to receive him again (2 Cor. ii.) In this sense, of administration, the sinner is forgiven (vers. 7, 8): his bands are loosed. And this holds good for two or three, if gathered in the name of Christ, in the unity and power of the Holy Ghost (Matt. xviii.): for it is only by the Spirit that this can be done in truth. It is necessary, moreover, that it should be the action of the assembly as such, not only because the promise belongs to it, but in order that it may purify itself. It is to the assembly that the exhortation of 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8, is addressed. And this solemn act is bound in the presence of Jesus, according to His promise.

Here it is not a question of the sins that bring the judgment of the assembly on an individual, but of the ways of God Himself in the every-day circumstances of life, or, it may be in more direct chastisement on His part. Now the individual who re-

cognises the hand of God, not thinking of what happens to him as the result of accident, seeks the intervention of God according to His grace. But the assembly is now the place where He has placed His name and His blessing, and it is the ordinary administrator of His grace. Christ is there ; and when the assembly was in order, the elders who watched over it were sought for by the sufferer, in order to receive this grace and blessing of God.

Yet it was personal faith which, through prayer, brought the special blessing from heaven—"the prayer of faith," as it is said. The elders were merely a sign of this special intervention of God, as we see in Mark vi. 13. There miracles were wrought by those specially sent by Christ, with power given them for this purpose ; here it is the blessing of God in the bosom of the assembly, administered by its chiefs, provided faith there existed. Now order no longer exists, but Christ does not forget His assembly. The promise to two or three gathered in His name, in the unity of His people, remains ever sure ; and, if there be faith in those who watch over them, the answer from God will be the same. One cannot expect blessing to flow in its natural current if the channels be broken and destroyed. But the case is the same now as then, and His power remains unchangeable. How precious to know it ! When the Lord chides the disciples for their unbelief, He says also, "Bring him unto me ;" and the child was healed (Mark ix. 19).

Hence James recalls the case of Elijah, who was a man subject to like passions as we are ; yet, in answer to his prayer, it rained not for three years and six months. The outward order of the assembly is gone ; but the power, the love, and the faithfulness of the Lord remain without change. He may make us sensible that, on account of the sin of the assembly, we are no longer as we were at the beginning ; nevertheless, where God gives faith, the answer on His part will never fail. That is not godliness which is insensible to the loss sustained after the time of the apostles through the unfaithfulness of the assembly ; but

neither is that godliness which doubts the power of Christ, if God give faith to make use of it.

When it is said that sins shall be forgiven, the meaning is that, when the brother comes to himself, and owns the hand of God (if it be his sins that have brought chastisement on him, and that hinder his disease from being cured), they shall be forgiven him as to the discipline of God in His government. This discipline is shown in chastisement, that is, in the sickness ; but if this be removed, discipline is at an end, and the sins are remitted.

There is here yet another more general direction, depending, however, on the state of the church. We have seen that when things were in order, the sufferer was to call for the elders ; and this can still be done by sending for those who are practically elders. But faith given by God, and therefore working on His part, must be in these. But whatever may be the state of ruin into which the assembly of God have fallen, we can always confess our faults to each other, and pray for each other, so that they may be cured. This does not require the existence of official order, but supposes humility, confidence, and love among the brethren.

We cannot confess our faults if confidence in the love of a brother do not exist. We may choose a wise and discreet brother (instead of revealing all to the indiscreet), but as to the disposition of the guilty soul, this choice cannot change anything. Not hiding the evil, but opening the heart, we relieve the burdened conscience, and therefore the body also. Truth asserts itself in the heart, and the guilty soul seeks not a fair reputation, since that would only be false, but a pure conscience before God. God takes pleasure in setting the conscience, and also the body, free from suffering, if it be necessary ; and then the heart becomes happy in the sense of His favour. A pure and true conscience is a source of joy before God.

It is very important to remember that there is a government of God over His children. It is not a question of their justification or forgiveness in that sense. It supposes that we are righteous in His eyes as to salvation (Job xxxvi.) Then the

Lord keeps His eye on us, blesses us, and makes us alive to His favour, if we walk well and enjoy God. But if we do not walk well, He warns us, and if we do not listen to His voice, chastises us, in order to awaken the slumbering soul that is beginning to forget Him. It is His goodness, His wonderful long-suffering, His love for us, that never grows weary.

Verse 19. Finally, James adds a promise in order to encourage our souls to seek the blessing of others. He who converts a soul from the error of his ways, is not only the means of saving it, if it be a sinner who is walking in his sins, or a Christian who is walking in evil, but he shall hide a multitude of sins. Whether it be the case of an unconverted soul, it is saved, or that of a Christian walking in evil, he is at least arrested in the way of perdition.

The second case requires a little explanation. Sin is hateful in the eyes of God, and He sees everything. When we think of the state of the world, we understand how wonderful His patience is. Now the conversion of a sinner takes away all his sins from before these eyes. He sees them no more, as though they were at the bottom of the sea, as it is written. Now they are cancelled. It is in this sense that it is said, "Charity shall cover a multitude of sins." They exist no longer as an offensive object to the eyes of God. If we do not forgive the faults of a brother, enmity remains as a wound in the body before God, and one which cannot be healed. But when he is forgiven, love is the object that presents itself to God, an object well-pleasing to His heart. Thus when a sinner is converted—restored, the love of God finds its pleasure in him, and the offensive object is removed from His eyes.

In the Epistle of James we find but little doctrine, but rather the breastplate of righteousness, the manifestation of faith by works in the Christian walk ; and submission to the hand of God, and patience under His government, are unfolded in a way of great service to the Christian.

THE CENTRE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP AND THE CAUSE OF ECCLESIASTICAL RUIN.



FROM 2 Cor. i. 4 it would appear that the persecution at Ephesus was more violent, and that it continued longer than during the public events recorded in Acts xix.

What these particulars may have been we are not told ; but, after the stormy assemblage in the theatre, Paul calls the disciples together, embraces them, and departs into Macedonia. Going over those parts, he exhorts the brethren, and arrives in Greece. There he remains three months. He had thought of returning from Greece to Syria ; but the Jews (ever envious, and enemies to the gospel, as well as to the one who preached it outside their limits, since they had rejected Christ, and hope for them was gone) lay wait for him. The truth which they had had was always the truth ; but now that the Son of God had come, and the Father and His love been manifested in Him, this no longer possessed any power or value as regarded present relationship with God. For the Christian revelation was one of life eternal, and of the satisfaction of divine justice. They could not endure the thought of being placed on one side on account of the truth they would not receive, and therefore laid wait for Paul. When this becomes known to the apostle, he returns by way of Macedonia.

Let us remark in this brief narrative, which is not accidental, that when Paul has planted the gospel in a country, he does not abandon the converts, but returns with affectionate solicitude, instructs, exhorts, edifies, and watches over the seed planted by his instrumentality, in order that it may be preserved and grow in the knowledge of Christ. He does not neglect the Lord's

garden, well knowing that tares may spring up where the good seed grows, and that the enemy can spoil the harvest if it is not well guarded. It is more needful now than ever to do this, for we are in the perilous times of the last days. Though the enemy can never pluck the sheep out of the Good Shepherd's hand, yet he may disperse them; they may be subjected to the effect of every kind of evil doctrine, by which their growth is hindered, the Lord's glory trampled upon, testimony to Him destroyed, and the candlestick taken away. Let the Lord's servants take warning.

Paul then returns by Macedonia. It is not important; but in verse 4 we should read, "Gaius and Timotheus of Derbe." From verse 5 we see that many attached themselves to Paul in the work; and others, besides those in verse 4, went before. Luke, the author of this book, and perhaps still others, accompanied the apostle in his journey towards Troas. The others tarried for him at Troas. It is not without interest to see this emotion of hearts moved by the gospel which Paul preached. All were free; some, such as Apollos, labouring apart; the others, the companions of the great central figure—great for his faith in Christ, and as sent directly from Him by the voice of the Holy Ghost—occupied and sent by him to carry on and accomplish the work in places he would himself have visited had he not been obliged to go elsewhere, when the opportunity presented itself for them to be thus sent.

Leaving Philippi, in five days they come to Troas, and there remain seven days. Everywhere assemblies had been formed. Here a door had been opened to Paul in coming from Ephesus; but he had not been able to remain long, being uneasy about the Corinthians, since he did not find Titus there, whom he had sent to them. It was at Troas that Luke, who wrote the Acts, had attached himself to Paul, to accompany him the first time he visited Macedonia. We do not know how the gathering at Troas was formed; but there was one, and we are given to see into it a little, not its discipline or gifts, as in 1 Cor., but its ordinary walk.

The first day of the week the disciples met together to break

bread. This was evidently their custom. It was the first day of the week, and the disciples gathered themselves together, according to their habit, to break bread. It was the first object of the meeting, the centre of their worship. Other things were done ; they spoke, taught, as Paul did, sang ; but they met together to break bread. This is confirmed by 1 Cor. xi. 20, where the apostle says that the Corinthians did not really assemble for the Lord's supper, since each ate his own supper, not thinking of the others, but eating and drinking for his own pleasure. Now, this shows clearly that the object of the assembly was the Lord's supper. At the beginning, they broke bread every day, Acts ii. 42, 46. When gatherings were formed everywhere, and zeal had been enfeebled, they met only on the first day of the week, the day of the Lord's resurrection. This was not a rule ; but Luke speaks of it as a usage well known everywhere among the Christians. It seems that Paul had awaited this day to speak to the disciples, simply because it was the day of their meeting together ; however, that is not certain. However that may be, he profits by the occasion to preach to them before setting out, and he speaks till midnight. They met, it seems, in the evening.

The discourse was long, and they had not yet broken bread ; the weather was hot, and there were many lights ; such is human weakness, that all this so affected a certain Eutychus that he was overcome with sleep, as Paul was long preaching, and fell down from the third floor, where he was sitting by the window. He was taken up by the men dead. Paul naturally interrupts his discourse, goes down and throws himself on him, declaring that life is still in him. The separation had not yet taken place ; he was stunned by the fall, and if the power of God had not interposed, he would have been caught in the clutches of death. Life, however, had not yet gone out of the body ; and by the Spirit Paul so works on it, that the functions of life are restored. The bonds between soul and body are re-established. In the case of the child restored to life by Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 21, 22), the soul had already left the

body, and returned to it. From these cases, as always elsewhere, we see that the soul is entirely distinct from the body ; and though in our present state it works by means of the body, yet it is in its habitation ; that life in this world is the activity of the soul by means of the functions of the body, the activity of which is restored by sleep, because we are feeble ; that when the soul leaves the body, the man is definitively dead, but that the activity of the soul by the functions of the body may be interrupted, as is partly the case in sleep ; and this action is re-established if the soul have not left the body, if God does so and permits it.

In its higher part—the spirit—the soul in relation to God is, alas ! at enmity against Him ; it will not, and does not, submit to Him. With its inferior part, it works in the body. Marvelous creation !—in relation with God above, and with nature below ! It is a mixture of thoughts which seek to rise to God but cannot, and of creature thoughts. It is responsible to God according to the nature it has originally received from Him. When born of God, it receives a totally new life, in which it is in relation with God, according to grace and redemption—a life animated by the Spirit which it receives from above, and which makes of the body an instrument for the service of God. Possessing this life, we know that “if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” I have said this in reference to Eutychus, because in these days the simplicity of the truth regarding the soul is lost sight of by many.

Paul then goes up again, and, having broken bread, talks still, even till daybreak, comforting much the souls he saw, perhaps, for the last time. He then departs, leaving Eutychus alive to the joy of the brethren. Paul sends on his companions by ship, and goes himself on foot, desiring to be alone. For us this is often a wise thing—to be alone, apart from men, but alone, too, with God, where we can think of Him, of ourselves before Him, of the work as He sees it, and where, in His presence, responsibility

is felt, instead of activity before men. No doubt this activity ought to appear in His presence, because it is holy ; but at all events the activity of man is another thing than to place oneself before God such as He is for us. It is not less true that this communion with Him, as His servants, gives and sustains a blessed confidence in Him, an intimacy of soul with Him, full of goodness and of grace.

Paul had instructed his companions to take him in at Assos, which they do ; from thence they proceed to Mitylene, to Chiös, and finally to Miletus, half a day from Ephesus. Paul had determined not to stop there, desiring, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. If he had stopped at Ephesus he must have remained some time, as he had laboured there for a long period, and with great blessing. He passes on, therefore, sending from Miletus for the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, the centre of the work in that region. It is evident that the apostle was pre-occupied with the circumstances in which he was placed—with the apparent end of his career. This thought, it is probable, exercised an influence over him when he went alone on foot to Assos. And, also, it was the cause of his long speech at Troas.

It is not only imagination which suggests this idea ; the apostle expresses at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, written when he was about to leave Corinth (Rom. xv. 31), his fear that he might be an object of hatred to the rebels in Judea ; and he desires the Romans to pray that he may be delivered out of their hands, hoping thus to be able to see their face with joy, and from Rome to continue his work in Spain. We know that in Palestine he was taken, and after two years' confinement at Cæsarea, went a prisoner to Rome ; that he remained there as such two years more, and that there, as far as the Word is concerned, his history terminated. It is possible that he may have been liberated ; I believe so from what we find in the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon (Phil. i. 25, 26 ; Philemon, ver. 22).

From the 2d Epistle to Timothy, too, it seems that he was set free, and that he returned to Asia. But as to the biblical record of his labours, all is finished at the end of the Acts, which leaves him a prisoner at Rome. According to God's thoughts, such as they are communicated to us in the Scriptures, that was the end of the apostle's work. And he felt that such was the case; and it is no more a question of going to Spain or travelling anywhere beyond Rome. The Holy Ghost spoke of bonds and tribulations; and Paul's thoughts now turned towards his departure from this world.

The elders being come from Ephesus, and assembled before him, Paul speaks of his ministry as of a thing accomplished. A little before he had told the Romans that he had no longer any place in those parts, his career there being over (Rom. xv. 23). Revisiting the scenes of his work in Asia and the regions of Asia-Minor, he shows us the character of this work and the effect of his departure; and this renders his discourse very important. He had served the Lord with much humility, in trials and in tears, caused by the snares of the Jews, whose opposition was continual and without conscience. In spite of it, however, he never failed, both in public and in private, to preach and teach all that was necessary for them—repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ, as the true state of a soul brought to God. Nothing is said as to the order of these two things in the heart, although in such order there is something practical, but of the true character of repentance and faith. Repentance was to be preached in the name of the Lord Jesus (Luke xxiv. 47), so that His name might be owned, and that sinners might repent. It was founded on the ground of the grace and truth that came by Him; but true repentance takes place in the presence of God, and goes beyond sorrow for having done wrong or shame, or the mere work of the natural conscience.

The soul revealed to itself through grace comes with open eyes into God's presence. All is judged according to Him whose presence is manifested to the soul; everything is judged as it

appears in His eyes. The word of God is His eye in the conscience, and makes us feel that He has seen all, and these things appear to us as they do to Him. We no longer excuse ourselves, nor do we desire to do so; the result is confession to God by a conscience which feels itself in His presence (Heb. iv. 12, 13); while the heart restored desires holiness, and the soul feels its responsibility for all that we have done. We justify God in our condemnation (Luke vii. 29); though in such a case there is always some confidence in His grace—not peace, but confidence, for He who has become light to the soul is also love, Himself being both these things. When He reveals Himself as light in order to show us our sins, it is in love He does so in Jesus; and He is love. He cannot reveal Himself to the soul without being the two things, for in His nature He is both.

Take the case of the woman in Luke vii. The light and the love of God had penetrated into her soul; she did not yet know what it was to be pardoned, but her heart had confidence in Jesus; and at the same time her conscience was deeply convinced of sin. Take again the case of Peter (Luke v. 8); of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 17, 19); and of the thief on the cross (Luke xxiv. 47). Repentance then is the effect of the revelation of God to the soul, which then knows itself; and up to a certain point it knows God as light, which manifests everything;—"Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did,"—but as love to the soul. The Lord inspires confidence, though the remission of sins be not yet known. This is discovered by the soul by faith in Christ Jesus—not only that Jesus is the Christ, but that by Him its sins are pardoned, for He died for our sins; and if we receive the word of God, we know, that believing in Him, He has taken all our sins on Himself on His own body on the tree. When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; because by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified by that sacrifice.

Although faith in the work of Christ is necessary in order to

possess peace, yet His Person ever remains as the object of the heart ;—the Christ who has loved us, and given Himself for us, who now is glorified at the right hand of God, after having borne our sins, and submitted to death and the curse for us, but ever living for us now ; who Himself will return to seek us, and make us perfectly like Himself in glory. We believe in *Him*, not only in the efficacy of His death. He is our righteousness before God, made such by God Himself ; and we are accepted in the Beloved. John xvii. tells us that we are loved with the same love wherewith the Father loves the Son. If there be true repentance in the presence of God, and in respect of Him, confidence and peace come by means of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has made peace by His own blood.

Such was the testimony of Paul. Truth in the conscience, peace, and the knowledge of God by His Son Jesus, come down here in love, ascended into heaven as man, having accomplished the work which His Father had given Him to do. So great were the truths and the revelation, and so like the apostle in the execution of his ministry ! But this ministry was drawing to its close, without Paul's knowing what awaited him. The Spirit testified in every place that bonds and tribulations awaited him ; and he foresees that they would see his face no more. This furnishes the opportunity to speak of the effect of his departure. The sheep of Jesus are safe in His hands ; as to the life He has imparted to them, they can never perish, none can pluck them out of His hand. But a temple had been established, a house on the earth, of which the apostle was by grace the founder, according to the will of God, the wise master-builder (1 Cor. iii. 10). According to another figure, He has placed a candlestick on the earth to shine round about Himself, and this He can take away. There will always be a house of God built with His hand, and by His power, which will never grow less ;—Christ the foundation, the stones living, by grace placed on this chief corner-stone, and growing to an holy temple for the Lord (Matt. xvi. 18 ; 1 Peter ii. 4, 5 ; Eph. ii. 11).

Against this work of the Lord—a work carried on by grace in the heart—the gates of hell cannot prevail ; for it is the fruit of the power of the Lord Jesus, working in grace. Moreover, this temple is not yet entirely built—it is growing. At least we may expect that, by grace, new souls can be introduced into it. God alone knows the moment when the work of grace which forms the assembly, the body of Christ, shall be accomplished (see 2 Peter iii. 9). But God's will has been to form an assembly on the earth. The work of Jesus, of which we have spoken, is done here below ; but beyond this, as we have seen, God formed an assembly by the ministry of Paul, a temple on the earth, confiding the building of this temple into the hands of men, and under their responsibility. It is now the habitation of God through the Spirit, Jews and Gentiles being built up together ; founded according to the will of God, but left to the responsibility of man. “ But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon.” “ Now if any man build upon this foundation (Jesus Christ) gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest ; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.”

There are three kinds of workmen ; a good Christian and good workman, such as Paul ; a good Christian and bad workman, himself saved, but his work to be consumed ; then he who seeks to corrupt and destroy the temple of God. In this case he himself shall perish. Such were the Heresiarchs, who, moved by the enemy, sought to corrupt the faith. Three sects of them existed during Paul's own time ; but as long as he remained in the world his spiritual energy resisted and overcame evil ; such as immorality among the Corinthians, and the loss of the doctrine of grace among the Galatians. But with his departure this energy disappeared. He had already said (Phil. ii. 21) that all sought their own, not the things which were Jesus Christ's. No soul was to be found like that of Timothy to care for the state of the Christians.

Paul tells the elders then, that after his departure grievous wolves should enter in among them, and that even of their own selves, perverse men should arise, to draw the disciples away. Till Satan be bound, and the Lord come to do it, there will ever be conflicts. Since the beginning of the world, whenever God has established anything good, man's first act has been to destroy it.

First, there was man himself; then, in the world after the flood, Noah got tipsy, and his authority was lost. Israel made the golden calf before ever Moses came down from the mountain. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire the first day after their consecration, for which cause Aaron could never enter into the inner sanctuary with his priestly garments of glory. Solomon having loved strange women, his kingdom was divided. So in the assembly established on the earth, soon after the apostle's departure, evil presents itself; and it is of this that the elders are forewarned.

Where were the other apostles? At Jerusalem. Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, a part of the gathering scattered by the destruction of Jerusalem. The chief of the apostles abandon to Paul the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, to which work the Lord Himself had called him at the first, and then again expressly by the Holy Ghost at Antioch. To the other apostles, therefore, he does not entrust his ministry. Still less does Paul imagine that there can be successors in his office. He knows nothing of successors; but exhorts the existing elders to faithfulness and watchfulness, recommending them to God, and to the word of His grace, "which," he says, "is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Christ, ascended up on high, can still give evangelists, pastors, and teachers; and He does give them; but the office of personal apostolic care has disappeared. "After my departure," says the apostle. This is a departure without succession. It is sad, surely, yet true; and we have seen it in all that God has established among men.

His grace continues, the faithful care of Christ can never fail. The Spirit has given His instructions for this time, as at the beginning, and the Lord is enough for the present condition, as He was faithful in the past. But such a thing as a succession to his apostleship is unknown to Paul when he speaks of his absence. God, and the word of His Grace, are for him the refuge of God's people. They can meet together, and Christ will be in their midst; they can profit by the gifts He has granted according to His promise. The rules for our walk are contained in the word; but the apostleship, as a personal energy, watching over the organisation of the assembly, has disappeared, leaving no succession behind it.

This is a solemn truth, which must be well borne in mind. But we must never forget that Christ is always enough for the assembly; that He is faithful in His care of it, and that He can never fail in strength, in love, or in faithfulness. What we have to do is to count on Him, and that with purpose of heart. Divine power is manifested more in Elijah and Elisha than in all the prophets of Jerusalem from the time of Moses himself. The Lord gives what is needful to His people. The word of God confirms sadly, but abundantly, what Paul says here. His testimony is that not only should evil appear in the exterior constitution of the church, but that it should continue till the Lord comes in judgment. Let us consider what the word of God says.

Jude declares that it was already needful to write to them, to exhort them to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, because certain men had crept in unawares, who turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness. They were corrupting the assembly from within; and what is very remarkable, he declares that these are they (that is, the class of persons) who will be among the objects of the Lord's judgment, when He comes with ten thousands of His saints. The corruption begun during the time of the apostles will continue till the coming of the Lord. So much for internal corruption. But this is not

all. Evil unfolds itself from the other side, as we find in the Epistle of John. Some had abandoned Christianity openly (1 John ii. 18). "Little children, it is the last time : and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us."

Thus we see that though this apostle survived Paul for many years, and certainly watched over the assemblies, in Asia-Minor at least, dwelling, as it is said, at Ephesus, it was only in order to record the fact that the last time was already come, which was shown by the presence of these antichrists, and by the apostacy of many. If it be asked why God waits so long before executing judgment, the answer is to be found in 2 Pet. iii. 9 ; "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness ; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." To Him a thousand years are as one day. In the time of the Jews, judgment was pronounced (Isa. vi.) eight hundred years before it was executed, that is, when they had finally rejected the humbled, but also glorified, Son of God.

The epoch of this ruin of the assembly on the earth is determined, namely, on the death of Paul—"after my departure." Doubtless, corruption had been rapidly growing. The mystery of iniquity was already working during the apostle's life ; but his spiritual energy knew how to resist it. He being gone, however, it went on increasing without hindrance, except from the grace of God in individuals, and the chastisement by which God arrested the decline into ruin and corruption. The testimony of God, although hid under a bushel, has yet never been extinguished ; and God has from time to time raised up witnesses in the midst of darkness, feeble perhaps, but true ; and, at the time of the Reformation, delivered whole countries from open corruption. But we have seen that the evil introduced in the time of Jude was to continue till the judgment.

This solemn and humiliating truth is confirmed by other

passages. The assembly has never been restored. Not only does John say that the last time has come, but that this is marked by the presence of antichrists. Now, Antichrist shall be destroyed by the coming of the Lord. Paul reveals to us that the apostacy that began to show itself in John's time will be fully unfolded at the last time ; when Antichrist himself shall be manifested, whose coming shall be after the working of Satan, and whom the Lord shall destroy when He comes in glory. The mystery of iniquity was already working, even during the apostles' life, and the progress of evil was to continue from his days till the Lord should come. Thus, too, the Lord says, that the tares are to grow till the harvest.

It seems to us, then, that the death of Paul is the moment from which we must count the prevalence of evil. We say prevalence, because evil was already working, though Paul resisted it by the power of the Spirit ; and because this evil was to go on increasing till Christ should come ; because in the last days perilous times shall come, and the form of godliness without the power of it. Then in 2 Tim. iii., we also get the word of God set forth as that which is necessary, and sufficient to render the man of God perfect, and furnished unto all good works. All this truth is powerfully confirmed by what is said in Rev. ii. and iii., where the Christian who has ears to hear is called upon to hearken, not to the church, but to what the Spirit saith unto the church ; and in his words we find judgment pronounced by Jesus Christ on the state of the church.

We would add that it is one thing to submit to the discipline, or practical judgment of an assembly, regarding evil, and quite another thing to suppose, when we are called upon to judge of the state of the church by the words of Christ and of the Spirit, that the authority of the assembly is the perpetual safeguard of the faith. The univereal assembly, Christendom, is corrupted and divided, and cannot, even as an instrument in the hands of God, secure the maintenance of the truth. It is submission to the word of God only that can do it.

In order to show how far the primitive church wandered from the truth we shall quote from a book read in the assembly one hundred and fifty years after the death of John, cited by one of the best fathers of the primitive church as part of the inspired Scriptures, and esteemed as such by another, who was less orthodox, it is true.

The author, pretending to have received a revelation, says : A man possessed a vineyard, and commanded his servant to stake the vines. The servant, being very faithful, did what was entrusted to him ; and, besides, out of devotedness to his master, rooted all the weeds out of the vineyard. The master was so much pleased with the servant that he consulted with his son and his friends as to what should be done for the faithful servant, and it was decided to make him heir with the son. Now, the master is God, the son is the Holy Ghost, the friends are the angels, and the servant is Christ. God had sent Him to establish the clergy for the support of the faithful ; but He had done much more than this, and what God had not told Him to do : He had taken away sins. Hence he is, according to the consultation of God with the Holy Ghost and the angels, co-heir with the Holy Ghost, who is son and heir of God. Such is what was read in the churches, written by the brother of Pope Pius, and pretended to have been inspired by God ; and this one hundred and fifty years after the birth of Christ. What is recounted in the same book of holiness is no better. What is there related as holy in the visions of Hermas, it is impossible to transcribe on these pages.

Such then is the testimony of the apostle ; after his departure evil would prevail, active both within and without. He tells them nothing of the nomination of successors to the elders, any more than he does of a successor to himself. He insists on the faithfulness of those who were there, whom the Holy Ghost had made bishops (for bishops and elders were one and only one office) ; and commends them to God and to the word of His grace, which was able to build them up, and give them an

inheritance among them that were sanctified. In fact, no means is established in the Word for the continuance of the organisation of the assembly. People are mistaken on this point. The disciples were waiting for the coming of the Lord, the Lord Himself (see the parables of the servant, Matt. xxiv., of the virgins, and of the talents). But neither the Lord nor the apostles speak as if this coming might be delayed beyond the life of those to whom they spake. The sleeping virgins are the very same that are awakened; the servants who received the talents those found afterwards at the coming of the Lord. Paul says, "We which are alive and remain till the coming of the Lord." They did not know when He would come, but still they waited for Him (Luke xii. 36, etc.) What has produced the moral ruin of the assembly is that she has ceased to look for the Lord; not, said he, with welcome; but has said, "The Lord delayeth His coming" (Matt. xxiv. 49). She has taken and beaten her fellow-servants; has eaten and drunk with the drunken. The hierarchy has been established; worldliness has invaded the assembly, and thus alliance has been made with the world.

The apostle recalls his own faithfulness, how he had been an example to the elders, labouring with his own hands, since it was "more blessed to give than to receive." Then, kneeling down, he prays with them all. And they, weeping, embrace him sorrowfully, chiefly for the word that he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship. Solemn departure; the end of the apostle's public work. He speaks of it as of a finished work, announcing that henceforward, in consequence of his absence, evil would prevail in the outward assembly of God on the earth, but assuring the faithful that God and the word of His grace would be enough to build them up, and give them an inheritance among those that were sanctified. This was certain. The power of Christ secures it; but the exterior system, Christendom, would be corrupted having given up the expectation of the Lord's return.

Paul teaches the same truth in 2 Tim. iii. John tells us that the last time has already arrived.

The patience of God continues to accomplish the work of grace ; and Christ to supply the gifts necessary to the perfecting of the saints, and the building up of the assembly, although our coldness greatly hinders the Spirit. And this will be the case till the end of the gathering of saints. But Christendom has grown ripe in evil, as foretold by the apostles. It is evil which began in apostolic times, and which was already sufficiently mature in John's time, the last of the apostles ; for he says that the last times had already come. We trust that the cry, " Behold the Bridegroom [cometh], go ye out to meet Him," has already begun to go forth, and that many hearts will respond and kindle their lamps. May the Lord add daily to their number !

THE COMING OF THE LORD THAT WHICH CHARACTERISES THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I PURPOSE to take up a subject which I feel to be deeply important—the Coming of the Lord Jesus—and to take it up, not proving it as a doctrine, but showing that it was originally a substantial part of Christianity itself. The groundwork is Christ's first coming, and His atoning death ; but when we look beyond the foundation, then we see that the coming of the Lord Jesus is not merely a bit of knowledge, but a substantive part of the faith of the church of God, and that on which the moral state of the saints, and, indeed, of the church of God, depends. You will see, in going through the passages which I will now quote, that it connects itself and is mixed with every part of Christianity, characterises it, and connects itself with every thought and feeling of the Christian. A person could not read the Scriptures with an unprejudiced mind without seeing it : it presents itself to you in almost every page.

Some people have taken the pains to count how many times it occurs ; but what I say is not merely this, but that it is so connected with every part of Christian life that if you take it out you take away what gives its character to the whole Christian life. It was identified with the system as announced to the world. I take conversion : people say what has that to do with the Lord's coming ? That is part of what they were converted to : “to wait for God's Son from heaven.” This waiting for God's Son from heaven characterised their conversion ; they were converted to serve God, surely ; but, also, “to wait for His Son from heaven.” 1 Thess. i. 10.

There are two subjects with which Scripture is occupied, when personal salvation is settled : one is the sovereign grace, which makes us, redeemed from sin, like Christ in the glory : this is the blessed portion of the church of God ; and the other

is the government of this world. The Jews are the centre of the government of this world. (Deut. xxxii. 8.) "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." There we get, in the government of the world, Israel as the centre. Israel would not have Christ, and so was set aside for the time. God's throne was taken from Jerusalem at the Babylonish captivity, but a remnant spared and brought back, that the king might be presented to them; but Him they refused, and are now set aside till His return. There are only sixty-nine weeks of Daniel definitely¹ fulfilled. The last week is not fulfilled; it is not come. So as to the great feasts. You have got the Passover fulfilled. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;" and the feast of Pentecost has its fulfilment in the descent of the Holy Ghost; but the feast of Tabernacles is not fulfilled at all: you have no antitype yet whatever. But here the other blessed work of God comes in, that meanwhile God is calling out poor sinners to have a part with His Son, and be like His Son; for we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. He has taken us poor sinners to have us in the same glory as His Son. That is another thing from prophecy, which gives us the portion of this world and the Jewish people. When He shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory.

The Christian's position, as to the coming of the Lord, is that he is waiting for Christ to come according to His promise. People say He comes at death; I reply, Do you make death the same as Christ? If this were the case, we should have Him coming hundreds and hundreds of times, whereas we only read of

¹ Christians know that half the last week is passed, comprising the time of the ministry of Christ. But for unbelief only sixty-nine are passed. Hence the covenant is made for a week. But God only counts from the beginning of the last half week, a time, times, and half a time.

His coming twice (Heb. ix. 28). Shall I tell you what will happen when Christ comes? Resurrection! This is quite a different thing from death. The coming of Christ is, for the saint, to be the end of death—exactly the opposite. I believe nobody can find a trace of the thought in Scripture that Christ comes at death. Instead of Christ's coming being death, it is resurrection; we go to Christ at death, it is not Christ who comes to us. Blessed it is "to depart and to be with Christ;" "absent from the body, present with the Lord." But I am to show that this thought of the coming of Christ mixes itself with and characterises every part of Christian life.

In the first place, we have it in *conversion*, as already said. They were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven. I will turn to other passages in support of it, but I will go through Thessalonians first. In the 2d chapter of the 1st Epistle, at the end, the apostle speaks of what his comfort and joy in service were. He had been driven away by persecution from the midst of the Thessalonians, and writing to them speaks of his comfort in thinking of them. But how? "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" He cannot speak of his interest in them, and joy, without bringing in the coming of the Lord Jesus. Again, as regards holiness (end of chap. iii.): The Lord make you to increase and abound in love, etc., to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God and the Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints (1 Thess. iii. 13). As to the death of a saint, they were so thoroughly looking for the Lord, that if a person died they thought he would not be there, ready to go to meet Him. They were wrong in this, and the apostle corrects their mistake. But now people say, when a saint dies, we shall go after him, we shall follow him. Here there is not a word about it. Suppose I were to go and say to a Christian now, who had lost some one dear to him: "Do not be uneasy, Christ will bring him with Him," he would think me wild, or find it utterly

unintelligible ; and yet that is the way the apostle does comfort them : “ Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him ” (chap. iv.) He then shows the way He will do it : “ They which are alive shall not prevent them which are asleep. ” “ Prevent ” is an old word for anticipate or go before. The first thing the Lord will do when He descends is to raise the sleeping saints. He is going to bring them with Him : if they have fallen asleep in Him, their spirits will have been with Him meanwhile ; but then they will receive glory, be raised in glory, be like Him, as they had been like the first Adam, and, going to meet Him in the air, will be for ever with Him ; and when He appears He will bring them with Him, and they will appear with Him in glory. You get it in a general way in the 5th chapter, where he desires their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This hope, then, is a part of the Christian state in every aspect. Conversion, joy in service, holiness, a believer’s death, the goal of blamelessness, all are connected with the coming of the Lord.

Turn now to Matthew xxv. The wise virgins take oil in their vessels, but they all go to sleep and forget that the Bridegroom was coming ; but what I have specially to inquire here is, What was the original calling ? The statement, clear and positive, is, that they went out to meet the Bridegroom, but while He tarried they “ *all* ” slumbered and slept—they all forgot His coming, the wise as well as the foolish. They got into some comfortable place ; bivouacking in the open air is not pleasant to the flesh. But at midnight the cry is heard, “ Behold the Bridegroom ! ” The thing that roused them up from their sleep was the cry, “ Behold the Bridegroom ! ” The original object, then, of the church was to go to meet Him who came ; but even true believers forgot it ; and, further, what awakes them up from their sleep is their being again called out to meet Him at His coming. Then you get in “ the talents ” the same thing in regard to service and responsibility. He takes His journey and tells them : “ Occupy till I come. ”

Another very striking fact as to this truth is, it is always

presented as a present operative expectation. You will never find the Lord nor the apostles speaking of the Lord's coming, with the supposition that it would be delayed beyond the life of those to whom they spoke. It might be at cock-crowing or in the morning ; but they were to be waiting for God's Son from heaven. In the parables referred to, the virgins who went to sleep were the same virgins as those who awoke up ; the servants to whom the talents were entrusted were the servants who rendered an account of them at His return. We know centuries have passed, but He will not allow any thought of delay. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." Again, what was the cause of the church's ruin ? It was, "My Lord delayeth His coming." It was not saying, "He will not come, but He delayeth His coming." Then the servant began to beat the men-servants and maid-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken ; and this brings on his judgment. If the bride loved the Bridegroom she cannot but wish to see Him. Her heart is where He is. When the church lost this she settled down to enjoyment where she was ; she got worldly ; she did not care about the Lord's return.

Turn now to Luke xii., and you will find how this waiting for Christ characterises the Christian, and therewith the serving Him, while He is away. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." They were to have their loins girded, their lights burning—such was the characteristic of a Christian. They were to be as men that waited for their Lord to open to Him immediately ; their affections in order and full profession of Christ, but watching for their Lord's return. It is not having the doctrine of the Lord's coming. The blessing rests on those who are watching, "like men that wait for their Lord." Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. They must be girded and have their lights bright while He is away, and watch for His return ; and then He makes them sit down to meat, and girds Himself, and comes forth and

serves them. Now they must be girded and watch ; our rest is not here. But, says the Lord, when I have things all My own way, you shall sit down to meat, and I will gird Myself and come forth and serve you ; I will make you enjoy all the best that I have in heaven, and I will minister it to you : only be found watching.

Christ is for ever, in grace a servant according to the form He has taken. He is girded now according to John xiii. They would naturally think that, if He were gone to heaven in glory there was an end of His service to them, but He tells them, "I am going away ; I cannot stay here with you, yet I cannot give you up ; but as I cannot remain on earth with you, I must make you fit for Me in heaven. 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.'" It is water here, not blood. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." Lifegiving conversion, as well as salvation, is fully wrought ; but if we pick up dirt in the way, even as to communion and the walk, grace and advocacy is there to wash our feet and have us practically fit for being with God where Christ is gone. Growth there is or ought to be, and, as to the unchangeable cleanness of the new man, this is certain ; but if I have not been watchful, I shall pick up dirt in my path. I cannot have this in heaven, nor in communion with what is there, and the Lord says in effect, "I am not going to give you up because I am going to God and glory, and so I must have you in a state suitable to that, and washed as you are (though not all, for Judas was there), keep you fit, restoring you when you fall. But you must be watching while I am away."

It is a comfort to me to know that all the virgins woke up in time, and I believe all His saints will wake up before the Lord comes. The difficulty to the heart in looking around is that so many do not receive it. But the true service of the Lord is connected with watching. That is the state to which the blessing and the heavenly feast is attached. Then you find another thing, serving while He is away ; and the result of this is, "Of a truth I will make him ruler over all I have." It is far better to eat, as is said of Israel, of the finest of the wheat, and that in

the Father's house ; but if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. With the serving in His absence, I get the ruling ; as the heavenly feast with watching. The Lord then goes on to what we had in Matthew, the saying : " My Lord delayeth His coming."

What the Lord is pressing as to *watching* and *servicing* is, " I am coming again ; you must be watching for Me, as men that wait for their Lord : " that was to be their character as Christians. Supposing all the people in this town were actually watching, waiting for the Lord from heaven, not knowing the moment He would come, do you think the whole town would not be changed ? A person once said to me that if everybody believed that the world could not go on at all ; and the Christian cannot in a worldly way.

If people were waiting for the Lord from heaven the whole tone and character of their life would be changed. I may have the doctrine of Christ's coming, when I am really not looking for Him ; but I should not like to be heaping money together when the Lord comes—I should, if possible, huddle it away out of His sight.

Turn now to Philip. iii. Paul was running a race, and he forgot all things else but the goal, and how does he speak of Christ at the close of that chapter ? " Brethren, be followers together of me, etc., etc. ; for our conversation (our living association) is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. He had seen Christ, and would not be content till he was like Him in glory. To be with Him then, was, no doubt, far better ; but it was not the goal of his heart. People talk of going to glory when they die. There is no such thought in Scripture as being in glory, when we depart to be with Christ. Most blessed and happy to be with Him ! This I would surely press ; but it is when He comes that He will change these vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. I am waiting till I get my body changed, to be like Christ in glory ; and, what is more, Christ is waiting too.

The Lord's coming affects all the truths of Christianity. Christ is not now on His own throne at all. He is sitting now, according to the word in Heb. x. (and often from Ps. cx.), at God's right hand, sitting on the Father's throne, as he says Himself in the promise to Laodicea. He has settled the question of sin for them at His first coming, and they have no more conscience of sins, they are perfected for ever; and to them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation. He is expecting in the heavens *till* His enemies be made His footstool. Why does He say "His enemies"? Because He is sitting down after He has finished all for His friends; that is, those that believe in Him. Have all your sins been put away out of God's sight? If not, when will it be done? That you grow in hatred of them all—All right! But if they are not borne and put away on the cross when will it be done? Can you get Christ to die again? Can you get anyone else to do it? If it is not done, it will never be done at all. Beloved friends, if the work is not finished, it will never be done at all: but it is done, and therefore He says, the worshippers once purged "have no more conscience of sins;" "for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

If you look now at Col. iii., you will find the same thing in its full result held out as our hope. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." The first promise He gave the disciples when going away was His coming again. Do not be troubled (as they naturally would be on losing the Friend for whom they had given up all); I am not going to be all alone in My Father's house. There, there are many mansions, I am going to prepare a place for you: do not be uneasy; I cannot stay with you, so I must have you up there with Me, and the first thing is, "I will come again and receive you to Myself." It is not one by one by death, but by resurrection for the dead, and change for the living, His actual coming to receive them, raised or changed, to be with Himself where He was gone, and like Himself, that we shall be in glory with Him.

Again, at His departing from His disciples left down here, what was the last they saw of Him? They saw Him go up before their eyes, and the angel said to them, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus shall so come in like manner." His coming is wrought into the whole texture of the Christian life.

What is Scripture's last word? "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." In the same way you get it at the beginning, with warning and threatening, Jesus Christ, Faithful Witness, the First-begotten, etc., etc., "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him" (ver. 7). Then at the end (prophetic instructions are over, I do not enter into them), "I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel," etc.; "I am the bright and morning star." Now I get what these saints who were watching, and those only, see: there is no star to be seen when the sun is risen: they see the morning star, while it is yet early dawning, for the night is far spent, the day is at hand. Here He calls Himself "the root and offspring of David; the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." If the bride has got the sense of being the bride of Christ, she must desire to be with the Bridegroom; there is not proper love to Christ unless she wants to be with Him. Abram said of his wife, "She is my sister;" then the Egyptians, the world, took her into their house. I just add that you get here the whole circle of the church's affections. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come (this is to the Bridegroom); and let him that heareth say, Come!" That is, the Christian, who has heard the word of his salvation, joins in the cry. Then those who thirst for some living water are called to come. The saints of the church can say, though they have not yet the Bridegroom in glory, that they have the living water, and so call, "Let him that is athirst, come," and then address the call universally, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." This they have, though not the Bridegroom. What I find then is, that, in the word of God, the thoughts, and feelings, and conduct, and doings, and affections of Christians, are identified with

the coming of Christ. Take all these things, and you will find that they are all identified with the coming of the Lord.

Take the first Epistle of John, chap. iii. "Behold what manner of love," etc. Beloved, now are we the sons of God (that is settled), and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Beloved friends, we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son." This is what God has purposed for us. When are we to be like Christ in the glory? When He comes. It is not when a person dies, and the spirit goes to be with Christ, for then he is like Christ when Christ was in the grave; and I do not want to be like Christ when Christ was in the grave; but if I die, I shall be like Christ as to that, but this is not what I want, though blessed in itself. I want to be like Him in the glory. When will that be? When He comes, He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like to His glorious body; so here it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Now mark the practical consequences upon the man that has been in his faith brought up to God's purposes. "He that hath *this* hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I know I am going to be perfectly like Christ in the glory, therefore I want to be as like Him as possible down here. You find here again what the Holy Scriptures are explicit in teaching, that holiness also is always referred to conformity to Christ in glory. I shall have that likeness to Christ in glory, and nothing else is my standard. You will find one passage already quoted, "That He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." The perfection of the Christian is to be like Him when He comes. What again I find, as to Christians, in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians is, "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory." We have the blessed assurance that accompanies true assured hope of the first resurrection and its results.

We shall be perfectly like Christ when we are raised from

the dead. We give an account of ourselves, but it is when we are like the person to whom we are to give an account. The full efficacy of His first coming has been lost, and therefore people are not comfortable when thinking of His second coming. But for the saint "Christ is the firstfruits, then they that are Christ's at His coming." Is Christ the firstfruits of the wicked? Surely not. Just as Christ's resurrection was the public testimony of God's approval of Himself and His work, the resurrection of the saints will be a testimony of God's approval of them as in Him. As we find in Luke xx. 35, 36, "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more, but are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Could anybody show me a single passage about a general resurrection? There is no such thought in Scripture. You get the 25th chapter of Matthew quoted for it, that the goats and sheep represent the two classes; but He has come in His glory down here. He is not sitting on the great white throne: before this heaven and earth flee away. Here He is come and sits on His throne. When He does come and sits there, He gathers all the Gentiles, the nations, to judge them. It is the judgment of the quick or the living. You have three sets of people, not two; and you have nothing of resurrection. You have sheep, goats, and brethren (Matt. xxv. 40). So far from its being a general resurrection, there is no reference to resurrection at all; it is quite a different subject. Further, the only question is, How have they treated His brethren? The ground of judgment does not apply to ninety-nine out of a hundred of those who are to be judged, if it were a general judgment. Those that have had the testimony of the kingdom before He comes to judge the quick, will be treated according as they have received God's messengers, but such only are in judgment.

And now the point I return to is, that the coming of the Lord influences and forms the whole life of the Christian. You cannot

separate anything in the whole course and ways of the Christian from the coming of the Lord Jesus ; and there is but the first coming and the second coming. He has appeared once in the end of the world, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time unto salvation. It is true that He comes and dwells in us, but we speak, with Scripture, of actual coming. If you take holiness, or service, or conversion, or ministry, or a person who has died, they are all connected with Christ's coming. He warns them to be found watching.

I might quote other passages, but I have quoted enough to show that the Lord's coming is connected with everything in the Christian life. When we see Him as He is, then and then only shall we be like Him, according to God's purpose. And now I only ask, Are you waiting for God's Son from heaven ?

His bearing the sins of many is the only ground of hope for any sinner : that is, the finished work which enables us, through faith, to look for Him when sealed by the Holy Ghost. Then, I say, what am I waiting for? I am waiting for God's Son from heaven. Can you say, I am watching for Christ? I do not know when He will come. Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. I do not ask you, Do you understand about the coming of the Lord? To *wait* for Him was the thing they were converted to. The thing that woke the virgins up was, " Behold, the Bridegroom ! " Are you actually waiting for God's Son from heaven? Would you like Him to come to-night? Peter explains the delay. He says His longsuffering is salvation, not willing that any should perish. What would you think if He were to come to-night? Would it just be what your soul was looking for? I am going to sit down to table, and He is going to gird Himself and come forth and serve me. People think that it would stop the gospel to be waiting for God's Son from heaven. Did the acceptance of God's testimony about the deluge stop the preaching of Noah? Far from hindering, it was what gave edge to all. May the Lord give us to be ready, when He comes—found watching for Him !

MIRACLES AND INFIDELITY.

I SEND you some remarks on the Scriptural view of miracles, from which infidels and the defenders of Christianity seem to me to have alike wandered.

As to infidels, any moral apprehension of what miracles are, or anything else is, of the misery of man, or the love of God, or the power and value of the truth, is absent from their minds. Exalting man as he is, the false fancy that in these days of enlightenment the lancet and the microscope have found out everything, and exploded God's truth and love and man's ignorance both together, reducing everything to general laws without being able to tell us where they came from, and thus to a materialism, which, as an able but honest materialist has said, leads them up to a blind wall, beyond which they cannot get. Such is the true character of modern science; very interesting in the discovery of laws which govern matter, that is, the material world beneath us, but excluding from man every moral principle, every excellent affection, and all divine goodness and truth. They tell us that this is no part of science. I quite agree.

But are there no such things as love, and goodness, and morality, and right affections? no knowledge of God? When they come to "the blind wall," can they assure us there is nothing behind it? or tell us something of what is? Neither. It is simply excluding man from everything beyond matter, even to openly denying all responsibility, degrading man and denying God. The first they do pretending to exalt him; the other is the stupid pretension to deny that of which they confess they

are wholly ignorant (and they are quite right); though (thank God) it is a knowledge that is as open to them in God's love as to those who already enjoy its light.

There is an evidence of truth which one who has the Spirit of God cannot use to a mere natural man, though it often carries the strongest evidence with it, and in that way may tell upon him—the possession of the thing that the other is disputing. To him who has it, it is the strongest of all evidences, different in its nature from external proofs. Take even natural things:—I am in pain. No surgical evidence is required for him who is in pain in order to make him know it; there is no deception as to it for the man who suffers. The surgeon may show the physical cause, a stone in the bladder, or what produced it; or inflammation of the blood, or of some mucous membrane; but with all his science he cannot tell me why it gives me pain, nor what pain is. Yet who that suffers it does not know what it is? He may talk to me about ganglions, or sensitive nerves distinguished from motor nerves. But this does not tell me one atom of what or why pain is; though he may talk, and in a surgical sense rightly, of what its cause, its material cause, is; but this is not what pain in me is. Does any one doubt what it is when he suffers it? That is, the most certain knowledge even in the lower creation is entirely out of the reach of science. I do not blame science for this; it is not its sphere. Science—it arranges phenomena, learns by experience their sequence, and often with great sagacity. Nobody denies it. But it cannot go farther. I can say I suffer, I am so made, constituted, that under certain circumstances I suffer. But no one can tell me what makes me *suffer*. He can tell me, very likely better than I can, the circumstances through which I suffer, and perhaps relieve them; he can relieve an animal that knows where and what it is suffering; he can trace the material part, bring in electricity or any other biological power; but what makes me sensible and suffer pain, he cannot tell me. Let him trace it to nerves and electricity and whatever you

please ; but electricity does not make a tree or a stone suffer, though it may make a dead frog leap perhaps (that is, produce material effects), but it cannot make dead matter feel. I feel, and hence have no doubt of it ; I have absolute certainty of it, much greater than any of his science, however extensive and accurate it may be. You will tell me a dog knows it. Just so, but the scientific man does not ; and that is the point I am upon just now, that there are kinds of knowledge which are the most certain of all, which science knows nothing of, has nothing to say to, which the boor is just as certain of as the philosopher.

Now I say distinctly there is the same kind of knowledge in the things of God ; its effects may show to others that it is there, but it is not to be explained to or by men. A man groans or writhes, and a dog howls, if he is in pain. That is not the pain, but a testimony to it. So where God dwells in man, where His Spirit dwells in him, there is no uncertainty in himself ; the effect is one of which he is perfectly conscious in himself. It cannot be in itself a proof for another, because it is in himself, and another cannot be a partaker of that any more than he is of another's pain ; but it is absolute certainty for him who has it, and its effects make themselves known to others as pain and illness do to those who are not suffering. It has another effect which can hardly be communicated to another. It confirms, by its inward effects, the truth and authority of the word of God ; because if the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost given to me, if I enjoy that love inwardly as a deep source of happiness ; if I can look up and cry *Abba, Father*, in the unquestioning consciousness of what He is for me ; if my soul is at liberty before Him in unfeigned confidence, and at liberty from sin that beset me before, and from a sense of guilt which I had ; if I am conscious of my connection with Christ and His presence with me,—I find all these things which I have in my heart recognised and taught fully in that word. I find what is there said connected with the glorifying of the man Jesus when He had accomplished the work of redemption ;

this, with a life here wholly without parallel in holiness and love, absolutely unselfish,—meekness and self-denial and patience, understood of none,—a life which condemns me in spite of me by its perfectness, and which is yet not what men admire in their heroes, though more heroic in reality than all. This, with a statement that this man that none was like,—save indeed in a distant measure as following him,—was the Word, that is, God, made flesh. I find, that is, my own every day new but actual and known happiness (proved to others by the change they see in me) connected with an immense system of truth unfolded in the word, but which I find experimentally verified in my own soul (though the source of it be hidden from sense and science, and science can go no farther than inference from sense); but what that word declares to be the effect in me, by which the unseen is known and the revelation of what is divine is made to my soul,—is in fact produced there, so that what is unseen is known, and what is divine revealed; not a history, but what God is now though revealed in that history in its outward facts; and I know the truth of it by what I possess, and the inseparable connection with all the revelation made, which is but the divine development of that of which the effect is in me.

And so Scripture speaks. “He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself; and he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he hath not believed the record that God hath given concerning His Son.” The infidel will say, That is no proof for me. In effect it may be; in itself I recognise that it is not. He has it not, and of course cannot have the proof that having it gives. But this does not weaken it for those that have. No more does the doctor’s not having pain alter my knowledge of having it; and if he were to tell me “I was perfectly in health: all the tissues right, and there was no cause for pain, it was imagination,” I should know better; it would only prove his science did not reach to the knowledge of the cause. He will despise, too, my enjoyment of divine things, because he does not know what is enjoyed. He

will tell me it is imagination ; but imagination does not produce holiness and godly affections, but poetry. There is nothing permanent. It may take me out of self and sorrow for a moment, but never delivers from either—leaves the man what he was, or worse. No man can stay the hungry edge of appetite by bare imagination of a feast. Imagination deals with things outside us which are not real ; this is what is actually and abidingly in us, a present reality. It is based on what is in its perfectness objective as a source outside us, just as my friend is, though I am conscious of my affection and of his. And when human imagination seeks to make a scene with which it can be occupied, it fails entirely, brings *cannon* into heaven, and makes Satan the most interesting person in the *dramatis personae*.

Proofs may and do leave responsibility without excuse, but enjoyment of the thing itself within takes the need of proof away. “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not ; but one thing I know : whereas I was blind, now I see.” Where was the proof that Christ could open the eyes of one born blind for him who was so? And note here, we are not speaking of the truth of that history, but of the nature of the proof.

Let it be remembered that of love, obligation to God or man, or a father, or a wife, science can know nothing. It is not its business. But man’s happiness or unhappiness even as man here, and everything right and comely, depends upon this. Science knows material phenomena and their laws and connections, and no more. Up to a certain point they may prove a connection of thought and organic structure ; but of one single moral idea it is incapable. I do not blame science for this. Phenomena and their laws are its sphere. It is degrading man’s moral nature I denounce. There is no love in geology or chemistry ; and if, as they have done, they deny responsibility, the best answer is they are not to be trusted with my keys. Who would trust his child to them, if he had any love or sense of obligation ?

They have assumed that science has left all witchcraft, pos-

session, and the like, far behind in the dark, and in the light they have these things dare not show themselves. But they delude themselves. That if men are completely infidels, trusting their puny reason, there is no need of superstition to dazzle them with what is false, is true because they are stone-blind already. But what is all the spirit-rapping that is in the midst of their pretended light, and putting people to sleep, and taking their minds, in a certain sense, into possession, and the coming up of spirits of the departed, the identical necromancy which we read of in Scripture?

That there is a vast deal of deception I have no doubt, but they have not explained and cannot explain the half of it. Witchcraft is not gone. You may find half the housewives in parts of England stop hæmorrhage instantly with a few muttered words; give them the number of your warts one day, and have none the next. To this day there are in France stones with certain marks upon them, to which women who desire to have husbands or children go, and which they worship, and which have jovial celebrations attached to them. They are similar to others consecrated to Mahadeva (Siva) in India, whose symbol is the linga, and worshipped by women in the same way a little more grossly. They come with a dead child in them to revive it. They are probably also connected with the worship of the dead or fairies.—See *Matériaux pour l'Histoire de l'homme*, 1878, 6^e livraison.

It is very easy to sit in a drawing-room or a lecture-hall and say, See how, with our wisdom and science, all these things have disappeared! They have not disappeared; it is mere pretentious ignorance to say they have. It is very possible that infidelity, if it had penetrated where superstition reigns, might make it disappear, though bringing up the dead or spiritism is no great proof of it. Our infidels may not believe that they are spirits of the dead (I do not), but their science cannot explain what happens now.

It is very easy to say, I don't believe the facts, but plenty of

other people know they happen, and at any rate the superstition is there if the facts are not facts. There is no difficulty in distinguishing such things from real miracles ; but the things to be accounted for are there. It is quite idle to say it is in dark places—I do not doubt or question that certain of them are—not spiritism. If a man finds to-day he has no warts when he had yesterday, and you tell him he is living in an ignorant condition, he may say, May be so, but I have no more warts ; and if he has been among the more enlightened, he may reproach them with spiritism, a great deal of which none of them has explained yet. If you ask me, I say a great deal of it is deceit, but there is that wherein there is power, not of man, and certainly not of God. Of what, then, but of Satan ? In their infidelity all is of Satan to shut out God more completely in another way.

Nor is it in the country parts of England only that superstition wields its power. I suppose we have infidelity and scientific light enough, and philosophy of all sorts in France ; yet superstition reigns there. Not only has the worship of the Virgin Mary taken largely-increased proportions in general, but La Salette (proved false by judicial investigation of the civil authorities, and condemned by the prelate of the diocese thereupon) is now approved and in full vigour, and the poor railroad that passes by Lourde making a very good business with holy water and pilgrims ; confessed to be false, yet educated English pilgrims going there. And what has science done to hinder it ? It leaves both the imagination and the higher wants of man's heart and conscience wholly unreached ; it cannot satisfy heart and conscience, having none ; it can explain the development of ova and protoplasm ; but of what comes of me when all my ova, and what they tell me can alone rightly be called protoplasm—a living combination which chemistry cannot reach, are gone in death, not one word can they say ; no gleam of hope, no cry of conscience met. A God unknown on earth makes all darker still beyond it : for God, or even for man, no love ; for

self, no conscience. What has science to do with them? Affection is at the utmost warmer blood as to this world!

The whole moral world is wholly and absolutely outside their reach. Morality they have none, they will tell me it is the pursuit of the good of all. And what is that good, and who is to decide it? Their happiness; but for no two men is it the same, if I take man's thoughts. It may be scalping, or opium, for the existence of passions forms no part of their philosophy. Many good people are not aware where philosophy has got to. Kant, in his treatise on morality,¹—a man not nearly so bad as the fruits of the philosophy he set going,—declares in terms that if the will of God, or fear of God, be introduced, there can be none. It is a principle outside man. Morality is the principle of pure reason applied to practical conduct. But he admits at the end that how the principle of pure reason can be so applied it is impossible to say. Mill tells me that justice is the animal desire for vengeance modified by utility to all. Kant's is merely natural conscience with the name changed, and shutting out relationships with God and man, on which all morality is based. Mill, remark, feeling a motive was needed as a rule, makes vengeance the motive. Animal vengeance the sole motive of morality—the rule; one which has been never settled yet, save by Christ.

But my object now is to take up specially the question of miracles, and see how Scripture presents them. There are those who are opposed to infidelity who take them as the basis of Christianity. Infidels tell us there cannot be miracles in the nature of things, that general laws cannot be infringed, that the vast mass of evil alleged to be removed by them is the effect of natural laws, and cannot be taken out of their uniform operation, that where they are such as cannot be so viewed, as demoniacal possession and the resurrection, they are proved to be mere superstition, or false.

The first famous proof is, that they are contrary to experi-

¹ A translation of it is used in Dublin University.

ence ; and we had not experience of miracles, but had of human falsity. But first it is to be remarked here that it is a question of induction (not deduction), which only affords probability, and this Mr. Hume admits. He weighs probabilities, the greater against the less. But inductions have nothing to do with facts. Hume says—"When at last he fixes his judgment, the evidence exceeds not what we properly call probability." Now I conclude, for all practical purposes (and man as an earthly creature has to act on such induction), that, the sun having risen day after day, it will rise to-morrow. But do I believe it shines to-day by experience, or induction? Clearly not induction. That is induction which calculates in the future from experience of the past, having nothing to do with facts at all. And note here, talking of concluding for a long time hence how it will be is throwing dust in the eyes. For it is because it has always been the same I conclude it will be. But the whole proof rests on its *remaining* the same. There is nothing to foretell. One is the certainty of a fact, the other the probability of an induction. I may deceive myself, reasoning badly ; my senses may deceive me as to facts. But the nature of the proof is different. Induction has *absolutely* nothing to do with facts. Take even sunshine. I believe the fact that the sun has risen every day, not by any induction but as a fact on testimony, and hence conclude that it will ; but the ground of my believing is distinct. I may question the evidence of a fact ; but, question it or not, it is not induction ; and if I have to reason on experience of motives or circumstances, and bring in induction, it is then only a probability and not a fact.

The scientific men say the course of the physical world is such that it must have had a beginning, and must come to an end. If they are right, the sun will cease to give its light as it has done, and the experience of the past would not be a sound induction in an absolute way. And this leads me to another important principle, the character of the experience and the induction from it, and the whole basis of reasoning from it. It

is based on this, that the material phenomena in which we live are the limits of all man has to do with. Hence, in speaking of the good of all, the view of the object of man's life is confined entirely to the material system in which he lives. It is perfectly clear that phenomena and experience exist only in what is phenomenal, and induction from experience, as to what may or must be, cannot go beyond the sphere to which the experience applies. It belongs to that. It may so far go beyond what is material, as that we have a certain experience of men's passions and motives; but the motives are too various and unknown, and the will and circumstances have too much to do with it to have any definite general laws. And this Mr. Mill admits, though he reasons as if it were not so, and declares that he was founding a new science, to which he gives the name of Ethology, as sure as any science referring to matter; for these men can pretend to anything.

But this system of general laws, which in ordinary material things no one denies, is assumed to be the only possible existing cause for anything. Yet no one can go one step beyond observed facts with which reason has nothing to do, save classifying and binding them together by experience as cause and effect, from which man has an instinctive habit of thought that they will continue. But it is only what is observed, and continuously observed. Take such a thing as death. It was only after centuries,—if the patriarchal ages are true,—many long centuries—that death could be taken to be a law of nature. Seeing a man die, or a world destroyed, would not prove it, as Mill so illogically states. Man must have seen, what was practically, all die, to make it a general law. Till then life was the general state, and death might be casual. Thus the conclusion as to anything could be only after a regularly consecutive experience of facts not known by reason at all, but by sight or testimony, facts which (in its very nature, as I have said, and it is all-important to observe) reasoning never gives. It gives conclusions, or the natural tendency to think that what is, as a general law,

will go on as it has because it has hitherto, which while sufficient to act on, and no doubt meant to be acted on, yet can only give probability, which is never a fact, but necessary if the principles are true. That is, reasoning never can, in any case, give us a fact or truth, but a conclusion by deduction or by induction, a mere probability.

Let us have it fixed in our minds—No facts are known by reason. Thus the fact of Christ's existence in the world, or His miracles, cannot be the subject of reasoning, but of sense or testimony. All the conclusions of reasoning, or the inductions of man's mind, are founded on facts which are known without those, and form the basis on which they are grounded. But further, experience does not touch the origin of that which observation takes notice of. The experience being of phenomena cannot go beyond phenomena. Thus, the sun rises; but what makes it rise? We may find successive sequences, and come to where we can go no farther, as well as immediate ones; but this alters nothing. First or last we come to a point where something has produced the facts, or produces the facts, which form the experience. With that something science has nothing to do. Science does not go beyond the phenomena and conclusions from it. But here I come to a power producing these facts or these laws, of which reason has no cognisance. I do exist. I did not always exist. I began to exist. Of that, the first cause to which it leads, there can be no experience. Now whether I take "*causa causata*," or "*causa causans*," is all one. I have something that has given rise to the phenomena, something which science cannot touch or reason about,—admits it cannot (even Mill and materialists do). That is, a thing being no matter of experience and yet existing is certain. If I say anything had a beginning; clearly when it began, it was contrary to experience, or rather no experience did or could exist. This cannot exist, till the constant succession expressed by general laws had lasted long enough to be known as such. Science tells us things had a beginning. That is, there was a time when judg-

ing by experience had no place at all, and yet facts were there and true, or experience never could have come to exist.

I quote one passage from Mill: "This class of considerations leads to a conception which we shall find to be of great importance; that of a permanent cause, or original natural agent. There exist in nature a number of permanent causes, which have subsisted ever since the human race has been in existence. . . . These have existed, and the effects or consequences which they were fitted to produce have taken place (as often as the other conditions of the production met) from the very beginning of our experience. But we can give no account of the origin of the permanent causes themselves. Why these particular natural agents existed originally, and no others, or why they are commingled in such and such proportions and distributed in such and such a manner throughout space, is a question we cannot answer. . . . The co-existence therefore of primeval causes ranks to us among merely casual occurrences. Not only, for instance, is the earth itself a permanent cause . . . the rotation itself is entitled to be ranked as a permanent cause. It is, however, only the origin of the rotation which is mysterious to us." This last I may touch on, but do not pursue here. He then states that no event happens *in the known universe*, which does not depend on some preceding one, the necessary, or, in other words, the unconditional consequence of some former collocation of the permanent causes. He admits that these effects, though invariable while these causes coexist, would, if the co-existence terminates, terminate along with it. "We can only calculate on finding these sequences or co-existences where we know by direct evidence that the natural agents—on the properties of which they ultimately depend—are distributed in the requisite manner."—*Logic* (Ed. viii. pp. 398-400). But all this, "at least unless some new condition of a power capable of constructing the universe should supervene" (400).

Another able materialist, but who declares himself at the

same time a Christian, arrives at the same result, after quoting indeed part of what is quoted above from Mill.

The method of science is thus essentially sceptical, and continually leads to reject all interference of casual powers not themselves phenomena, till we reach a point where analysis can go no farther, and we are compelled to admit a primordial cause or causes, of whose nature logic and science can tell us nothing.

Thus we are conducted to a blank wall by a method which is wholly powerless to penetrate the mystery which lies behind. The only thing it conducts to is not really what these authors say. The last says, "What we may term logical or negative atheism;" the former, who could not—being melancholy almost to madness for several years—but see the misery and degradation in which men were, and even creation itself, and not believing in the fall of man, concluded that a God of very feeble power, but in the main benevolent, had made the best he was able out of the materials he had at hand. The simple and only true history of the matter is this—Man is so constituted that he cannot conceive a thing which has a form or individual existence without a cause. He sees something so existing: it came into existence by a cause; hence he goes on to a primordial cause because he cannot conceive anything existing without one. But that is exactly what a first cause does, it exists without one. That is, he cannot conceive it. He knows it *must* be. *What* it is he cannot conceive. That is where man's mind ends, so that such is the result of science; "it conducts us to a blank wall by a method which is wholly powerless to penetrate the mystery which lies behind." Poor comfort to those led by it. Or, to use the larger work, and say with Mr. Mill, "We can give no account of the origin of the permanent causes themselves. Why these particular natural agents existed originally, and no others, or why, etc., is a question we cannot answer."

Now, in these statements, the substantive truth of which cannot be denied, we have the proof that the whole *a priori*

argument against miracles entirely fails. Science, based on experience, reaches no farther than the actual sensible course of things already set in motion within the present limits of our senses or experimental discovery. Now, *within that course*—and science knows nothing but that, as science—we have of course no reason to expect a change so far as we reason *from that*, and this is all we can do. It is indeed tautology. It would not be a course of things else.¹ But it does do something more. It leads us to the blind wall, to *its* own end; but to what discloses that there is something of which it knows nothing, for it proves that everything we know comes from something that preceded it. This is a fixed principle, then. There are primeval causes of which we know nothing but that they exist, save that they must have a cause of which science is simply and wholly ignorant,—cannot touch, as beyond its kind and sphere of knowledge. Things exist of which to science the origin is not known. What the men of science know is only the actual course they follow when they exist. Of their origin, of the force which gave them that course, what imposed on them the form of operations we find them to have, of everything that is constituent, science is ignorant; the constituted it can inquire into. Not only this, but it must, for its conclusion, have the circumstances, the collocations of existing things, their conditions of existence, just the same, or else all conclusions fail, indeed are false, have no bases, for they are drawn from what exists. Hence the condition is inserted by Mr. Mill, and very justly, “unless there is a counteracting cause.” One step farther. Mr. Mill tells us, that any one who knew all the agents, their collocations in space, the laws of their agency, could predict the whole subsequent history of the universe, at least unless some new volition capable of constructing the universe should supervene. Now, there is not much science in this, which merely says that a state of things going a regular

¹ This is not strictly true, if, as men of science affirm, the course itself proves its beginning and its ending. But this hardly affects present practical use of it.

course would continue what it is unless something changed it, a proposition which I suppose no one would contradict, save by reason of another possibility that the course is a changing one (as is said to be the case), so as to come to an end.

Further, I must add that it is not necessary to change the universe: a power which could originate anything could do that without changing an atom, anything whatever, of the regular course of things, though he might introduce something new which was not of that course. Thus a man might rise from the dead and go to heaven, or an angel come down from heaven and leave the course actually known to science untouched. I am not saying any such thing ever happened, but that a power which can originate does not necessarily change anything in that beyond which science cannot go. Men may go on eating, drinking, dying, and an angel come down, or a man may be raised, without anything of experienced phenomenal order being changed. This might go on as usual, and, physically speaking, its course be predicted just as before. When the man died, science came to its absolute end, to the blind wall, as much as in primeval causes at the other end, and the angel go away again, and no one care whether he had been there or not. Science can know nothing but the existing course of sensible phenomena, and presume its continuance as it is, if nothing interfere. If it attempts to go farther, it must say, I cannot answer, or knock its head against a blind wall.

But then, mark, we have this positively recognised, that there is a primeval cause, perhaps causes¹ (for they do not like to own *one*,—it would be too near God,—though Mr. Mill in the most wretched way did), whose origin is wholly unaccounted for. Science has its sole task to investigate their course when they are at work, but their origin and the origin of the laws which govern their course must be ascribed to a source of which science is ignorant. The course they follow is the whole it can inquire

¹ Yet the unity of plan and law is the strongest possible inductive proof that the primeval cause is one.

into ; their existence is a "casual circumstance," stands by itself, is no part of the general law which science can discover when it is in operation. The conservation of force now insisted on alters this in nothing ; it is only a more general law, which we cannot apply beyond the universe subject to observation, nor does it reveal its origin more than the rest. Let evolution be true, which in some respects it may be, and cells and protoplasm be the starting-point of everything. You only have the starting-point of development, only what is material with possible action, as organic, on mind. As to the origin you are exactly where you were. A volition capable of originating, science can tell nothing of, cannot say it does not exist. For science, save that there is the insuperable conviction of a cause, it is the other side of a blind wall. This being so, all that denies the possibility or credibility of a miracle is wholly out of court. Experience has nothing to do with it. It is not the subject of its knowledge, or this knowledge would not be experience. That knows the course of what is, and nothing more ; but the origin of all that is, and of the force that acts in the uniform operations which they call a general law, is out of their reach, but must be, for these things so governed exist ; and it may of course operate independently now, as it did in the origin, when it could not be a matter of science, for the knowledge of a general law was only when they had existed long enough, and been so operated on as to be able to predicate a course. Of these causes or cause there never was knowledge in science. They were there when the ground of science was laid. They had an origin, and what originated them may originate a miracle, a casual circumstance, for what was originated were only "casual circumstances" at first. Science can tell us nothing about those "casual circumstances ;" such are altogether out of its sphere. No experience applies here, and so of miracles. I do not say this proves any particular miracles true, but it proves the reasoning as to their credibility and possibility utterly foundationless and false. Whatever power produced, was the origin of the first, may be of the other, and is just as active in one as in the other. All the

appeal to experience is only to say that the continued action of general laws, which they can explain as a mere fact, is not the same as the power that originated them, which they cannot explain at all. And even this, which in a certain sense may be admitted, so far as that it is a different kind of exercise of it, they cannot say. For my own part, I am satisfied that the force or power which created and set the universe in movement is a power which keeps it in movement. The material world would not move itself unless it was moved, and the power and will which started it must always operate to continue it, or it could not continue. This is the true conservation of force: the perpetual operation of Divine will, just as it operated at the beginning in setting what appear now as general laws agoing. It is always exactly the same thing. This force was acted by and followed a certain order in starting, by will and power, and it continues by the same power and will every instant. It has never been proved that the power which sustains is not the same power which at first originated. Science knows no more of one than the other. It only knows phenomena and the recognition of general laws by which they are governed, that is the fact of constant sequence, or uniform effects when all is already there, the *whole of which* is as to its existence confessed to be a casual circumstance, just as a miracle is. Both are known by sense or testimony, and by no other means.

The infidel argument is utterly illogical. It is this—"We cannot admit a proposition as a law of nature, and yet believe a fact in real contradiction of it. We must either disbelieve the alleged fact, or believe we were mistaken in admitting the supposed law." But this is merely saying there is no possible power in existence but the law of nature, which is not only not proved, but the contrary is admitted. We have seen that it is admitted that there are primeval causes, of which science knows nothing—that is were contrary to experience. The effect B, they say, must follow from A, as it has always done, unless there be some counteracting cause; confining thus all possibilities to

the existing phenomena, *i.e.* assuming the whole question; denying anything else can be, yet admitting primeval causes. That anything happens not the consequence of existing phenomena, they say, must be disbelieved. A general conclusion that the usual phenomenon will follow no one disputes, because it always has. How the phenomena themselves did originally, unless it be a changing, not an unchanging course. But it is not the question. That is, whether Z cannot do something, which is neither A nor B, or set A in motion to produce B. The consequence is supposed in the order of known phenomena. But the conclusion cannot go beyond a positive one: that there will happen a consequence when these causes act according to the known course. The action of power (for law is not power, but order produced by power) cannot be touched by that order, unless originating be denied, for that is power independent of existing order, and an origin, no part of the sphere of science, is admitted; were it not its possibility cannot be denied. With that science has nothing to do. Mill then takes the ground that we must first believe in the existence of a being with supernatural powers before we can believe miracles. Now this proceeds on the supposition of our large ignorance of natural causes; a pretty plea for men of science who profess so to know nature, that the course of it is so fixed that we cannot believe anything that contradicts that course; nay, which is not part of it. Now, when there is the consciousness that they cannot be denied, there must be previously the belief of supernatural power. But supposing we did so believe, which it is clear to me that we may, and must without any miracles at all, that would not help us on a bit, because on their own showing it may be from some unknown cause. Nay, they say that He who formed the course could not interrupt it. But this previous belief is not necessary. I may now assume miracles, for the question is their cause. Events happen which no known cause ever yet produced. They happen not of themselves. There is no antecedent natural cause discoverable; they happen only by the

intervention of particular persons, and do not exist when they are not there. A man walks on the sea, stops the earth going round, raises a dead man who was buried and passing into corruption. All outward evil disappears before a given individual, a word suffices even when he is not there. No sorrow or evil withstands his word. The facts happen before hundreds of thousands, and to thousands, and nobody is able to call them in question, they cannot deny it. You say, But I do not believe what really would be miracles, as Joshua's stopping the day, or Lazarus' resurrection, etc. I quite understand you, but you do not, because they *would* prove the supernatural power if admitted. Now that is our present question, and you contradict your own statement; and I say, that a man who could deny that miracles cannot prove miraculous or supernatural powers, as they might be attributed to causes unknown to boasting science, ought not to write on logic, or pretend to analyse the true character of induction. Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought. The truth of alleged miracles may of course be disputed, their character be investigated; but to say that miracles, if true, cannot prove supernatural power, but that this must be first assumed, is in every sense absurd, and worthy only of infidelity and men of science, who cannot get beyond phenomena and the petty investigations of the general laws which govern them; very entertaining I admit, but which in no possible case lead to a right affection or the sense of moral obligation.

And this is the proposition of the Humes and Mills, and the anonymous author of *Supernatural Religion*.

But Mr. Mill makes one or two remarks of great importance here: "The miracle, as an extraordinary fact, may be satisfactorily certified by our senses or testimony." But then there is a power which can interrupt the course of general laws and act by its will so as to produce "casual circumstances." Mr. Mill will say there is no miracle, but a previously unknown law. I only admit an extraordinary fact. But I have a fact that is not accounted for by any known law or cause. Adequate evidence

is admitted of facts, and that there is no way to account for the fact. Suppose the fact to occur at the command of an individual, and repeatedly, and to be contrary to every known law, as walking on the sea. We have clearly what is not the effect of general laws but contrary to them, and attached to an individual and those empowered by him. That there may be evidence of it is admitted; to deny it is merely returning not to evidence or science, but to the assumption that there cannot be, which is just a *petitio principii*, which before he did his best to deny practically, but now, pleading the ignorance of science, seeks to throw necessary uncertainty on its being supernatural. We find, if adequately certified, they always happened by the intervention of given individuals, never without them, that they never happened before at any time, by any natural cause known or unknown, they belong to no general laws, and they always happened when the will of these gifted persons interfered.

The other remark is that an important element of the question will be the conformity of the result to the laws (read character, for with laws given to others, save as sanctions, they had nothing to do) of the supposed agent.

I have said that the statement that a miracle can be certified by observation or testimony is important, as it was sought to be proved impossible. This may be easily understood by the statement, "If an alleged fact be in contradiction, not to any number of approximate generalisations, but to a completed generalisation grounded on a vigorous induction, it is said to be impossible, and to be disbelieved totally."—Mill's *Logic* (8th edition, ii. 115).

We have already seen there is no ground for this, for the induction is only from the course of nature known as general laws. And the miracle, if such, is a casual circumstance, like the origin of permanent causes, and has nothing to do with these laws, or it is not a miracle. The statement, then, that "we cannot admit a proposition as a law of nature and yet believe a fact in real contradiction to it" (Mill, ii. 167), is simply a statement that there can be no exercise of power other

than the course of nature known to us. Which is simply absurd and a mere assumption, contrary, moreover, to their own admission,—that the origin of all is by some power which science knows nothing of.

In sum, we have come to the conclusion, or rather gathered up their admissions, that casual circumstances have taken place revealing power not within their experience or the general laws of science, and of which science can give no account. And that is just what a miracle is.

Let me now consider the way in which Scripture presents miracles. It is alleged, and Christian apologists seem to acquiesce in it, that miracles are the proof of Christianity. This is a great mistake. They are graciously given of God in compassion to man's weakness to confirm the Word. But the revelation of God in the Word, His nature and actings, are the first things. Thus we have in Mark xvi. the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word by signs following. So in Heb. i., God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. And this is so much the case, that a faith *founded* on miracles is not owned of the Lord, the moral element which links man's quickened soul with God is wanting. "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover on the feast day many believed in His name, seeing the miracles which He did; but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." It was a human conclusion, drawn from the testimony of His works, and a just one; there was no new life, no moral renewal, it was "what was in man." Hence we find as a fact in the ways of God, that, as a rule, miracles were wrought only at the introduction and establishment of a divine religious order, or where it was abandoned by those whom He had not yet abandoned; in a word, where a testimony needed to be confirmed in this way. Thus Moses wrought miracles but no prophet in Jerusalem, where, however evil the people

were, as a system the religion established by Moses remained, ever wrought miracles. When Israel had set up the golden calves, and God visited the people to maintain a testimony of the truth, for a poor remnant Elijah and Elisha work miracles. Again, whatever the miraculous power, it was to confirm the truth proposed, never for self. Paul leaves Trophimus at Miletus sick. Yet how many had he healed? Epaphroditus was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him. Hence, if a miracle was wrought leading away from divine truth the miracle-worker was to be stoned (Deut. xiii.) In mercy to man, adequate outward testimony was given, leaving man without excuse; but faith which God owned rested in the Word, and its effectual working morally in the heart. So the Lord puts the double character of His testimony: "If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin, but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." But while condemned for rejecting this testimony, faith formed on this alone is not owned, because it was purely human faith and not the moral power of the revelation working in the heart, and faith which is owned is always by the word. Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth. "My sheep hear My voice. He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life. The words that I have spoken unto you they are spirit and they are life. It is equally even the ground of judgment. The words that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day."¹ Thus, while special miracles confirm the truth, yet if they are not attached to the truth known from the Word they are to be rejected. The Word is the test. Further, closely connected with this is the fact that these miracles were entirely separated from any honour attached to the persons who wrought them, though of course they attested the divine character of their ministry; they were

¹ See John x. 38; xiv. 11; and other like passages.

wholly a testimony borne to the living word, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all He taught. This is true even as to Moses' works of power; as *Exod. xvi. 8*, and elsewhere, "What are we, your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." And when once they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips, saying, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock," as an expression of the strict regime of the law, he was not suffered to lead the people into Canaan (*Num. xx. 10*). So, *Acts iii. 13*, Peter disclaims all regard to himself or John, putting Jesus alone forward. The Lord's power and resurrection are that to which the miracles testified. This gives a definite character to them. There was no personal relief, as we have seen, no self-aggrandisement by them, no glory sought for themselves or for their company. So Paul and Barnabas (*Acts xiv. 14*). Now, it was the opposite of this in every other case. It was to glorify the individual, a St. Anthony, or Gregory Thaumaturgus, or Martin, or the church corporately,—in a word themselves. They were always from motives, or for objects, which the scriptural miracles never were. The religion was already established as a religion, for which they had been needed. They were wrought in mercy to a tigress who brought a deer-skin in recompense to the saint for giving sight to her cubs, and was told the saint could not work miracles for her if she went on with such work; or setting a cow right whom a demon was riding, whom the saint only could see, the cow coming and kneeling to him, and she was ordered to go quietly back to the herd, which she did. This saint promised Satan salvation if he ceased to tempt man. Or let any one take the miracles of the pseudo-gospels, and see the miracles attributed to Christ, and if they cannot discern the difference of these and Scripture we need not be troubled about their judgment as to anything. The things I have referred to were in the very first centuries. The church was utterly fallen. It is a constant fact in the ways of God that He gives counter-checks. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. The form of holiness

cannot be received as of God if it be not founded on the truth nor what is presented as the truth if it be unholy, nor one who presents truth itself as a minister of God if he be unholy. So pretended miracles, or apparent works of power, if used to confirm what is not the truth of the word, are to be at once rejected. I may be unable to explain them. That alters nothing, they are not of God. He can only give testimony to the truth. If the sign be one of real power, as we have seen in Deut. xiii., if it deny the Lord or His word, it condemns the worker, but does not deceive him who knows the Lord, and walks with Him. This supposes the truth known; the testimony of the Lord in the word received, and that is our case, or else a heart deceived by falsehood, which of course cannot discern. And here we see the importance of the scriptural fact that miracles were on the introduction of the truth and to confirm it. Their holiness of walk, truth and power, went inseparably together. It was not a record of past miracles; nor, on the other hand, when truth was there, a means to judge pretended ones by, but the truth introduced with the accompanying testimony, which none could deny. In the case of Christ neither heathen nor Jews denied them; they might ascribe them to Beelzebub, or magic, or the shem hammaphoresh, but the facts were there. Miracles were a present visible testimony which, in point of fact, did so affect men that the religion was established in the face of, and in despite of, all the power of the world. For, after all, Christianity exists, and has had a cause of its existence. That that existence was identified with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is unquestionable for any sober-minded person. Next to His person and death, of which even heathen authors (of course of more weight with infidels because they believed no truth) testify, came the truths they testified of, which indeed could not be separated from Christ's person and work, but with these, both in the case of Christ Himself and those He sent out, miracles accompanied the testimony to confirm it, and the testimony was believed, and the

religion was founded, in the midst, doubtless, of violent opposition and persecution, but the testimony and the miracles were before the eyes of those who did believe. The account is, that they saw persons who had been dead and buried, alive again and conversant with men. All sickness at once healed. Lunatics, and those held to be possessed—for the difference is clearly made—instantly healed and delivered. And a religion which has possessed the civilised part of the world, was founded through the effect produced making head against every prejudice and the whole power of the Roman Empire. And divine truth such as meets and heals man's soul introduced by it. Other religions have been compared with it. Mahometanism, every one knows, was propagated by the sword, and gives a sensual paradise of houris consecrating men's lusts. Buddhism, the most interesting phenomenon in the world, had no god, and was despair at the state of human nature without a remedy, and its founder obtained—Nirwana—practical annihilation by eating too much pork when he was fully eighty years old. Now he is a kind of god, and in one vast country where it prevails, embodied in a man, and when he dies another is ready prepared, and the living power passes into him. The miracles the word of God insists on were for the establishment of the faith, and the faith was established, and the grace and truth taught in it shines yet with undiminished and undeniable moral lustre, while its shell is picked at by those who do not like the truth itself, because it has a power which speaks too plain to conscience; proves itself too clearly divine for the conscience to like it.

And this leads me, too, to the character of the miracles, which, as Mr. Mill says, ought to be characterised by what suits the law (character) of the author of them. Let us consider them in this view.

Christianity views man as guilty and lost by sin, and while recognising the law as the just measure of what was required from man, yet none having fulfilled it purports to be the revela-

tion of God in sovereign goodness to save what was thus lost. Now, Christ's miracles and those of his disciples were not merely signs of power, but all of them of goodness as well as power. There is but one absolute exception, and the accessory of another. The cursing of the barren fig-tree, a usual figure of the Israelitish nation, that is of man under the old covenant. This is finally judged, and it was never to bear fruit. The other was the case of the swine, when the miracle itself was a striking and mighty act of delivering goodness, and a sufferance thereupon of the demons showing themselves such as they were; a sad picture of what happened to the Jews when they rejected Christ as the Gadarenes had. The allowance of the manifestation of the reality of these evil spirits is a remark of one of the old so-called fathers. With these exceptions, all the miracles of the Lord were the expression of goodness present in power, that man might be won back to confidence in God. Every outward effect of sin, all the evil that was in the world, was removed and set aside when met by the power that wrought in goodness amongst men. This did not change man's heart, but it did reveal God's, and that was what man wanted. God came into the midst of sinful men showing that love flowing from His own thoughts and nature was greater than the sin and evil that was in the world. For what we have in Christianity is what never was before. God came out in grace revealing Himself in goodness when man was a sinner, and man gone in, in righteousness, into the divine glory. So that God's love and God's righteousness should be revealed to sinners far from Him. Now, no one can show that one miracle of Christ's, or of those sent by Him, was not thus power displayed in a way suited to the present need and sorrow of man. Moses' miracles, though partly the glorious deliverance of a people and the proof of governmental care, were not always this. There were judicial wonders suited to the position of the people when God was hid behind the veil and the people placed under the law and tested there. To be exact, I should add one temporary judgment pronounced by

Paul on Elymas, a sad picture of the state of the Jews resisting grace, and, after all, the means of far better blessing to the proconsul, before whom the question of the truth of Christianity was raised. The miracles of Christ were then not only perfectly suited to God's nature and character, but perfectly suited to man and the purpose of Christ's mission, and the expression of it where man's heart could feel and understand it. His birth, if God was to be thus manifested, so that if man should learn God's nature and feel His profound interest in him, was exactly what it must have been, a true, real man, born of a woman, but perfectly sinless ; such was the suited temple for God as near to man as God could be, and yet God near to him. As to the resurrection, having become capable of dying to accomplish the work of redemption, and having accomplished that work, there was the recognition of its effectual value for the justification of every one that believed. God had accepted it, and inseparably from this a—to us—new life,¹ and a new state of it beyond the effects of sin, in a people of which he was the first-born and head. And thus mark that all His miracles were an essential part of an immense scheme of truth, the only key to man's state in connection with God's righteousness and mercy, and the only full and real revelation of what He is which exists in the world. The infidel may condescend to have to say to God, provided He keeps far enough away from him for them to have nothing to do with one another ; but this is a revelation, when man, beyond all controversy, is in sin and misery and degradation, as a fact, if there be no revelation—a revelation of God having to do with him in grace and love, and yet maintaining His holy and righteous nature, no trace of which is found anywhere else. But, further, while miracles were a confirmation of the word, which was the proper and express revelation of God's mind, they were also a testimony in and of themselves, for they told not simply of power but of goodness, of God working in goodness in the

¹ Christ had life in Himself, and could not be holden of death, but I speak of what it is for man in general.

midst of sorrow and misery, and that in the most definite and distinct way. He had compassion on the multitude. Still there was distinctly and definitely a testimony to the person and truth, or, to speak again as Scripture speaks, the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and word and works were a like testimony to it. Hence, too, both belonged specially to the person of the Lord and his immediate followers, whose part after his death I will speak of just now. Thus in John x. 37, 38, we read, to the world, "If I do not the works of my Father believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in Him." To the disciples (John xiv. 10, 11), "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. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." I add what follows for another point that will come before us. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father." Again xv. 22, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin, but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Thus both the word and the works give testimony to all the expression of the perfectness of the person who was there. Of God's living dealing with men. As to the word, this is the force of John viii. 25—*την αρχην ο τι και λαλω υμιν*—in principle and wholly what I say to you. His words were the expression of Himself. He was the truth, and the truth thus expressed was the revelation of Himself and so of the Father. This gives a distinct character to His words and miracles, and the difference between His and all others. None could be in themselves a similar testimony. The fact that the

apostles, and probably some on whom they had laid their hands, wrought miracles, and more and greater works than Christ Himself, may seem a contradiction to this. A few words here may be called for. It was a necessary consequence of the truth as to Christ. As to His life He was the necessary and natural witness to Himself. But this manifestation of God in grace in the world was only half the truth. If he as God descended here in love, becoming a man, as man He is gone up into heaven, the righteousness of God being so revealed to men through the Holy Ghost sent down. Of this the Holy Ghost, speaking and acting in men sent out by Christ, was the witness. "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to my Father." But the testimony was still to Jesus alone, the apostles disclaimed all glory for themselves. The miracles were all for the establishing of Christ's religion upon earth, and belonged entirely to that testimony, either to His coming here from on high or to His being gone up on high as man. No miracles of wandering Jews or Christians in subsequent times can be compared with them, and he who can compare warnings to grateful lionesses and demons riding on cows' backs, done to the honour of thaumaturgs, must have lost every trace of moral sense and divine apprehension. The infidels must remember that the judgment we form on things is sometimes a test of the state of our minds. The state of the church fell with the departure of the apostles, and even in their time. All, says the apostle, seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ; and John and Jude both testify that the failure was come in their days. The history of the church shows it utterly fallen in doctrine and practice at once, as all that had been entrusted to man ever had. It is all very well to talk of the primitive church with those who know nothing about it. But the doctrine and practice were such as are not fit to be put upon a drawing-room table for common reading, and that what was read in the churches forty or fifty years after John's death; one hundred years after this corruption was general. That superstition and spiritual ignor-

ance governed the "Fathers'" minds, there is not the smallest doubt. Milner in his Church History admits that not one ever held the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith. I should go further, but let that suffice. It became quite early the practice to get drunk in the churches in honour of the saints whose memorial had taken the place of that of the demi-god on the same site. In Africa, Augustine tried to put a stop to it, and was nearly stoned for his pains; he excuses "the primitive church" by saying, they thought it better to get drunk in honour of a saint than in honour of a demon. But more of this in detail hereafter. The disposition of the Jews to believe all sorts of signs and wonders is insisted on by infidels, as in the book *Supernatural Religion*, referring to Lightfoot, and Schoetgen, and Gfrörer, quoting the Talmud, etc. Now this is freely admitted. But such infidels forget that the Jews as a body did not receive Jesus as the Christ. Light had come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. John the Baptist claimed repentance without miracles, *those whose consciences* were reached received the Lord's testimony, but none else. They might rejoice in the miracles for present comfort, but did not believe, so that the faith in Christ was exactly in contrast with this superstitious temper of the Jews; one would think that these wise men had forgotten that Christ was crucified, rejected, and that the Jews' wonderful love of the marvellous failed to reconcile them to the light, perhaps helped to darken their eyes. At any rate the argument is worse than nothing, because they did not believe because of the truth that came with the miracles, but rejected him that wrought them; ascribed them to Beelzebub—anything rather than receive the truth, and the judgment they were warned of came upon them. I should not demand better evidence of the difference of the human mind and the divine as communicated in the gospels than for a person to read the spurious gospels, if he has patience to get through them, and compare the senseless fatuities of what was not written by inspiration in those days and the four gospels,

and if he cannot find out the difference he is quite fit to be an infidel author. Christ when a child was making little mud birds and ponds, and it was the Sabbath, and a big boy came and broke his ponds, the birds took flight and went away, and Christ said, As you have dried my ponds, may you be dried up, so he dried up and died. In this kind of way he became the means of the death of so many that his mother had to keep him at home in the house. He maltreated the master that taught him his letters in a like way. Let me remark here that Scripture gives perfectly and soberly according to God, what there are legendary traditions of, or the truth of God's ways in connection with Himself, where man's imagination has invented a mass of false statements to impose on man's fears or love of the wonderful. Thus, take the Book of Tobit, the expression so far of Talmudical and Jewish ideas when they had not present revelation, and the Scriptural account of the service of angels, and see how the last is worthy of God and comfortable to us. The denial of these things as if it was a settled point, and sober men had given it all up, is all very well for infidels and those who are afraid of them; but they must know that men as sober and as sound as they fully believe in the scriptural statements of angelic administrations and demoniacal power; the Sadducean denial of a world of spirits is prejudice not sober judgment, as if power because it was not visible and material could not exist. The Scriptures—and in spite of infidels, Christians believe them—are plain as to the ministration of angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." As regards the wickedness of man they do believe in the fall of man, they do not believe that God made the world as it is morally. They see man degraded in abominable idolatries where Christianity has nothing to do with it, where in the highest state of civilisation they worshipped and do worship objects that mark the lowest possible degradation, and indulge, even the wild Indians, in the careful practice of nameless degradation them-

selves ; they know that in the centre of modern civilisation, man let loose and boastingly casting off Christianity and God, indulged in horrors too horrible to repeat. They know that where there are not such outbreaks, and where there is a great profession of religion, sin and vileness prevail and scarce hide their face, and they do not believe that God made the world in this state. They leave that to infidels. They believe, knowing God to be holy and good, that man is a fallen being. The evil state is a fact. They will excuse its violence as rising up against oppression, there is a measure of truth as to certain parts of this, but they are only deeper in the mire. Where did the intolerable oppression come from ? and is violence, glutting in blood and debauchery, the only remedy they have ? Further, God's remedy they reject, and are helping people to reject, to their own destruction.

Kuenen is referred to in *Supernatural Religion* as a very able book. With sufficient contradiction to make their judgment of little worth, all these rationalists are in substance on the same ground. The Pentateuch is not a really historical book at all, but a compilation from a few old documents partly made in the time of Judges, partly in David's or Solomon's reign, partly after the exile. There, at any rate, it received its priestly form. Every divine element completely excluded, of course therefore, no prophecy. Hence, when events later than the professed date of the writing are found, it was written after these events. Jahve was the national god, but Monotheism was only that into which they gradually grew up (through a Semitic tendency). Some think Jahve (Jehovah) a Canaanitish god ; at any rate it was one party, and a small one, who held to his exclusive worship ; other gods being equally recognised, even in the Pentateuch, and by the best kings. One party would have fellowship with the Canaanites ; another drive them wholly out. I may mention two cases as specimens of their systems. As it is rejected as historically true, and what professes to be of Moses invented or legends, they try and compose

a system, putting things together by the probabilities drawn from man's motives; rejecting all thought of *any* revelation of God—of course all prophecy and any mind of God in the matter. The whole is put together and compiled finally after the exile, with the object of exalting the priests and the authority of Jahve. But I must give in my specimens: Abimelech was disposed to unite Canaanites and followers of Jahve, and did get power thus. Gaal was a Jahvist, according to the system. Gen. xlix. was written in the time of the Judges. But what is to be made of vers. 5-7, the judgment on Simeon and Levi? According to them, the then state of Simeon and Levi led the poet of xlix. to put into Jacob's mouth this judgment of the tribes. That comes, says Dr. Oort, from Gen. xxxiv., written at that time, "for we know of no other inducement for the invention of this story than the covenant made between the cities of Shechem." But it is not certain that we should know the inducement, says Kuenen, and xxxiv. was written long after. Oort himself had a difficulty,—the statement in the 13th verse, that they dealt deceitfully. But that is easily met: it is interpolated. No, says Kuenen; it is a confused reminiscence of the time of the Judges, long after Gideon and Abimelech. It is well that those interested should know the principles of Dr. Kuenen, so lauded by the author of *Supernatural Religion*. At the beginning of his book, speaking of the standpoint of his history, he tells us it is one of a number of monographs of the principal religions. The idea of including the Israelitish and the Christian among the principal religions deserves approbation and applause only if there exist no difference between these two and all the other forms of religions. The idea of a special divine revelation, he says, would place too deep a gulf between them and others to count these among them; and at the end he adopts the statement of Mr. Reville, that if liberal Judaism prevails (for they have their rationalists) it will closely approach liberal Christianity, which, by its openly avowed Unitarianism, will not excite the same repug-

nance as orthodoxy. A fusion is hardly probable ; but if all religious sects laid down their weapons, religious sentiment would only gain by it. Of course, if a man believes nothing, though there are principal religions, there is nothing to fight for. Divine revelation does not exist ; and then, whether Gen. xxxiv. be an existing fiction of the time of Abimelech, or a much later writing of confused reminiscences of that time, is very little matter, and may be left to Dr. Oort, and Kuenen who would hail a fusion of Judaism and Christianity, on the ground of there being nothing divine in either. The other specimen I would cite is, that the prediction of Gen. xlix. 16, 17, is a clear proof that the chapter was written in the time of the Judges, more precisely of Samson ; for then Dan rose up with some vigour. Such are the speculations we are to have, instead of the Word of God, publicly accredited by the Lord Jesus and the apostles. These are merely instances that occur to me, or rest in my memory. The whole system is composed of such. I have entered more into it elsewhere. I have read Kuenen, Ewald, Bleek, Graf, and looked at others. But, as I have said, they are,—though the one upsetting the other in detail so as to destroy their proofs,—just the same in substance.

Supernatural Religion is a catalogue *raisonnée* of all the infidel German books ; an advocate's special pleading against revelation. But while I avow I have not read the half of those he quotes, I cannot say he is fair in those I am acquainted with. I don't charge the author with false quotation, but with leading the reader to the opposite conclusion, as to what he quotes, to that the quoted book would, if the context be read.

I quite agree with Dr. Trench that possession means possession ; the case of Legion leaves no manner of doubt. But whatever Mede and others may say, these cases are expressly distinguished from lunacy, as Matt. iv. 24 ; and not only the Evangelists speak of devils coming out, but the Lord expressly desires them to come out. And the case of Legion seems given expressly to show it is really so, as one of the "Fathers" re-

marks. Even now, with all their boasting, in cases of epilepsy the doctors on *post-mortem* examinations fail generally to find any adequate trace of disease. Scientific men have to learn that they are not all the world, and Christians who are afraid through their pretensions and yield to semi-rationalism, are the most contemptible of all writers. Milman says our Lord adopted the current language of the day because unbelief in spiritual agency was one of the characteristic tenets of the unpopular sect of the Sadducees ; as if the Lord Jesus would maintain as a truth in the minds of the people a false doctrine on a most important point where the Sadducees were right, for fear of losing His popularity by identifying Himself with them by speaking the truth. Why should He even have said anything and not merely heal the sick person. It is next door to a blasphemy. Meyer says all the efforts to explain away the history of Legion are useless. Either you must take it as a true history, or recognise legendary parts and separate them, and take the story of the swine as the reminiscence of some mishap. He is as unbelieving on these points as the rationalists could wish. Lange's explanation, which Canon Farrar has borrowed, Meyer treats with the contempt it deserves. The existence of good spirits and bad, the very dread expressed by them of judgment as yet "before the time," and the operation of divine power in miracles, is too interwoven with the whole structure of the Gospels to take them out without destroying its whole texture. I have already remarked that the allegation that the superstition of the Jews accounts for it, proves only the folly of the reasoner who makes it, for they were not believed in by the Jews at all. That there are many inexplicable facts, false miracles also, and wonders done by evil power is recognised in Scripture ; but we are tested in such cases by them ; they would deceive, we read, if it were possible, the very elect, and the power of spiritual discrimination, or the want of it shown ; and all that the author of *Supernatural Religion* does is to confound them all together, showing his own incapacity to discern. Real miracles, such as those of the Old

Testament, are not at all the same as the New Testament. Divine power was of course shown, and in grace to a people owned of God to found or guard a testimony; but the whole scene of the Lord's ministry was the expression of power in goodness in a living person there, or in a still mightier testimony to His name and redemption when He was gone. But I ought to state why I account the statements of *Supernatural Religion* to be unfair. I just remark that the statement as to the book of Enoch, though very common, is entirely unfounded. The doctrine of Jude and that of this book are quite different as to the passage alleged to be borrowed. I do not call this unfair; it is too common. There was a tradition probably as to this prophecy, and the author of the book of Enoch uses it for his own objects; and in Jude the Holy Ghost gives us it, according to the truth of it. It is to me pretty clear that the book of Enoch was written by a great partisan of the Jews, and enemy of Christians, and not long after the destruction of Jerusalem. He sees up to the destruction of his tower, but then can see no farther, but is full of all promises to those faithful to Judaism. Enoch, lxxxviii. 22, 23, refers pretty clearly to the destruction of the temple by the Romans, and he could not perceive whether they afterwards entered the house; in xcii. we have the final judgment. Lawrence gives the passage in question thus from Enoch, "Behold He cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon them, and to destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against Him." Now there is in Jude a prophecy in general analogous, but copied they are not. In the book of Enoch the *saints are judged*, and the wicked destroyed. Judgment on the saints is unknown to Jude. It is the doctrine of the book of Enoch, because he holds the Jews to be God's people. He says just before, "while judgment shall come upon all the righteous;" executing judgment on the preserved is the doctrine taught. Nor is the destruction of the wicked in Jude; nor is there anything of the speaking of ungodly sinners in the

book of Enoch. Both the words and doctrine are different ; nor is there the least proof that the book was before Jude. My own conviction is that the book of Enoch was written after the destruction of Jerusalem—I suppose, in that case, after Jude's epistle. The idea that the prophecy was current before both is fair enough, but for copying there is no ground whatever. There are many passages in the book of Enoch which would lead us to suppose they were taken from the New Testament—doubtless some merely proverbial sayings used by both. Both the chronological elements and the contents of the book lead, on the closest scrutiny, to the supposition that the book was written by a Jew, who was obliged to admit the judgment of his saints, those faithful to Judaism, and treated the Christians as a perverse set, had picked up a good many truths which a Jew could own, and wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, but sought to make the Jews still believe in the accomplishment of the promises made to the nation. It is curious as exhibiting a picture of the current notions of that day. He puts the Christ as existing before the creation, but hidden ; calls him Son of man, but this is in the Old Testament ; he makes the flood come from the world getting a tilt. I do not then speak of this as unfair. It is second-hand and superficial, but it is a current notion, only it has no foundation. But there is what I consider unfair. The author—as he does in countless other instances, stating as proved and certain, because the infidel clique he belongs to have so settled it, what is far removed from being so—tells us “ It has been demonstrated that Ignatius was not sent to Rome at all, but suffered martyrdom in Antioch itself on the 20th December 115.” He quotes then Bleek as witness of this statement. Now Bleek adopts the date, which had been greatly disputed, but in these words (Clark's *Eng. Trans.* i. 158), “ Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred at Rome under Trajan A.D. 115.” In the same place (*Sup. Reli.* i. 268-9), we find “ there are no less than three martyrologies of Ignatius, giving an account of the martyr's journey from Antioch to Rome, but they are all

recognised to be mere idle legends, of whose existence we do not hear till a very late period. In fact, the whole of the Ignatian literature is a mass of falsification and fraud." The author quotes Milman, ii. 101. Milman says nothing about it there. He does reject the acts of martyrdom, but expressly declares that he was sent to Rome, and in 102 gives a summary of his journey to Rome as we have it in Ecclesiastical History, and quotes Cureton's epistles as of authority, and fully receives the account of his journey and seeing the brethren on the way, using it as proof there was no general persecution. The author quotes also Ewald, vii. 314. Now Ewald does reject entirely the three martyrologies published by Dressel. But he not only holds the whole history itself to be true, and the author's statements wholly wrong, receiving Cureton's Ignatian epistles, but discusses it at length, and considers that the Syrian epistles have lost some passages which have been found in the Greek. As to Polycarp's epistle, he not only receives it, but says, appealing to Irenæus' (iii. 3, 4, a e) quotation of it, that its originating with Polycarp, people in our time have doubted and even denied, but that they were utterly wrong. "Es ist die grösste Ungerechtigkeit." That a mass of infidel Germans, no two of whom have the same theory, and make systems at pleasure, refuting one another, agreeing only to doubt what is true, may be cited, or Davidson, who does nothing but copy from them, no one need deny. But this seems to me very superficial, as well as unfair, in cases I have quoted. There is no original research into the questions, nor even care or fairness in quoting what is quoted in the cases referred to; a vast number I have not examined; that many German infidels sustain the author in many things he says I have no doubt of. As regards Justin Martyr, with all his details he seems to me very weak; and here also he has either borrowed or is only on the surface. That there were a multitude of accounts of Jesus current, written and unwritten, is notorious, and it is stated in Luke's gospel; that Justin, who was of Palestine, had heard and refers to such

is most probable. But these accounts never stood on the ground the four Gospels did. Origen notices, be his remark solid or not is alike as to this, that the others had taken in hand, which was merely human, not as Luke. Irenæus insists that there *could* not be more than four Gospels, of which I will speak further on, and Tatian made a harmony of these four—plain proof that in the very earliest ages these four were distinctly recognised. That Justin, who was of Palestine, was familiar with the accounts current as published there, and reproduces them, is most probable ; but no one can read even what is cited by the author of *Supernatural Religion* without seeing that Justin was fully acquainted with and recalls what he had read in the canonical Gospels. He does not take the roll down to copy it, but we could not have what Justin gives without our gospels.¹ As regards the gospel to the Hebrews, it can hardly be doubted that Matthew wrote some account of Christ in Hebrew, at any rate early Fathers so state ; but, after all, their statements are very vague as to what it was, and Epiphanius says it was corrupted, Jerome that he translated it, but that would prove it was not the canonical Matthew. What did he translate ? It does not affect our gospel, which is clearly original, as even the language proves. Jerome says he saw it at Cæsarea and translated it, so that there was such in the fourth century. Still the statements of Jerome are so inconsistent that it is hard to draw any clear conclusion from what he says. He says he translated it, and that it was practically the same as Matthew. This it certainly was not by his own testimony elsewhere. The writers of introductions, Bleek, De Wette, etc., say he gave up afterwards this thought, and I suppose did not like saying plainly he had been wrong ; but it seems to me the dates do not bear this out. I do not think he is much to be trusted in the matter. Papias—a man “σφοδρα μικρος νουν”—assumes there was such a Hebrew gospel by Matthew, but there were afterwards seemingly two

¹ Curiously enough, I have had to correct several quotations, carelessly made like Justin's, in reading over this paper.

differing editions ; a few of the "Fathers" accepted it ; but Origen, disposed to receive everything, says every one was free to use it if he thought it genuine, only not as authority. But it was in Aramæan, and there is no proof that Justin, a Greek, understood the tongue. He was a Greek, and though living in Palestine, it was in the Roman town Flavia Neapolis. Further, though he preferred being put to death rather than deny Christ, when, as is said, brought to martyrdom through a jealous philosopher, Crescens, yet he never gave up his philosopher's cloak, was a Platonist, and unsound in fundamental doctrines ; and though we cannot doubt his sincerity, was on the surface of Christianity. At any rate, the gospel to the Hebrews is surrounded critically with the greatest obscurity, with no proof that Justin understood it, or was one of Papias's "every one interpreted as best he could." All this part of the book comes to nothing. The inspiration of Scripture is known by divine teaching, it asserts its own inspiration formally, more formally, if possible, than the spoken word ; but its authority is demonstrated by evidence of every kind, such as no other book in the world possesses. The author quotes the writers of the Baur or Tübingen school in numbers, which is merely part of a progressive effort, not simply to undermine the authority of the New Testament history, but to do so by the invention of a system already seen through and refuted as alike historically unfounded and absurd, and which has now not merely lost its weight outside a few partisans, but has demonstrated the animus of the inventors and their untrustworthiness in every respect. It is this school that the author of *Supernatural Religion* relies on. We have seen that his quotations from others, themselves rationalist enough, cannot really be trusted. There has been little real research into the character of the gospels. The Fathers say Matthew wrote in order—chronologically in fact. Mark, on the contrary, no one knew how (supposed as he heard it from Peter ; this from the foolish notion that an apostle must be the author, from not really believing in inspiration). Now it is exactly the contrary,

Matthew's gospel bringing forth Christ as Messiah, Immanuel sent to the Jews, but rejected of them ; the kingdom of heaven and the church and the kingdom in glory being substituted for the present establishment of Messiah's glory, gives a perfect moral order of subjects with this view. Hence, too, you have in fact no proper history with a chronological sequence. This is given in one single verse (iv. 23), and we have his service in Galilee, and at the very end no ascension, but the whole closed with the remnant in Galilee and their mission to the Gentiles. In all the three gospels blind Bartimæus at Jericho begins the last events. There he is Son of David. Mark and Luke are chronological, and relate events in the same order, as far as they are the same, up to the middle of Luke ix., which terminates the history of Luke (save always the last events). See Luke ix. 51. From that verse to xviii. 34, it is in general his last journey up to Jerusalem, introducing various discourses by the way, and adding others to the same purpose, without note of time. In general, Luke will give a quantity of events together, and develop facts which have a strong moral bearing. The difference of John is essentially this : It gives not a history at all, but Christ as God the Word made flesh, the Jews being rejected altogether early in the first chapter, and so treated all through. The three first chapters are preface before His public ministry, John being not yet cast into prison—the two first going together ; the third, the foundation principles of the new thing, being born again, and the cross ; fourth, Judæa left, and the transition to the worship of the Father ; fifth, Life-giving power, and exclusive judicial authority of the Son of God as Son of Man ; sixth, Self-emptied and suffering Son of Man ; seventh, Glorified Son of Man, giving the Holy Ghost instead of appearing to the world ; eighth, His Word rejected ; ninth, His work ; tenth, He has His sheep at any rate (for John all through goes on the ground of electing grace), also the Gentile ones ; eleventh and twelfth, He is testified to of God as thus rejected as Son of God, Son of David, and Son of Man. But to take up

this He must die—episode of Bethany. In the thirteenth, He begins with what refers to His departure out of this world. These rationalists find the resurrection of Lazarus out of place, not having the most distant thought of the mind of God in Scripture, nor any idea, of course, that there is any.

To return to Justin Martyr, the author's account of his quotations is not at all trustworthy, and all that really bears on the true character of Justin's citation is left out. In the first place, Justin's manner of quoting is practically that of all the Fathers. They habitually quote not verbally, and put two passages together if it meets their point, just as Justin does constantly. Secondly, Justin also quotes very largely indeed from the Old Testament, which there is no question he received as proper Scripture, exactly in the same way he does from the New. He writes as a philosopher to the Gentiles, and habitually quoting the Christian writings, as authority would have been useless. He calls the gospels memoirs (a term borrowed probably from Xenophon's account of Socrates, showing the tone of his mind), the gospels written by the apostles and their companions, and says they were read in the Christian assemblies. He quotes them as such expressly—seven times we are told by those who have exactly examined the details. Five agree with our gospels; the others have variations; one a transposition of words, probably right; the rest inaccurately recorded with the same sense, and two words added—"and walk"—found nowhere else. He gives the substance as it stood in his mind; the common way of patristic quotation, as of our own. As to the other professed quotation, we find it in others of the earliest Fathers in different words and order; and, just as in Justin, by Fathers who beyond all question recognised the four gospels and nothing else. That Justin used other traditional accounts, and perhaps the gospel of the Hebrews, is very likely. There is no question that the four gospels were held to be of paramount authority at that date. Tatian's harmony of the four was made only some twenty years after; and Jerome recounts the same of Theophilus

a few years still earlier. When the *Supernatural Religion* says competent critics agree, it only means the infidel Tübingen school so hold. Take not only Westcott, who may be thought a prejudiced churchman, but Bleek's introduction, a theologian sober-minded and candid, but as free-thinking as any rationalist could desire, and the statements alleged in *Supernatural Religion* to be quite certain are treated as certainly false. The system followed by the author is a mere and evident effort to get rid of the large and developed testimony given with so much fulness in Justin to the Christian gospels. The citations, says Bleek, are for the greater part unquestionably taken from our present Gospels.

Few, as I have said, in words saying it is written in the memoirs, but quoting them as they were in his mind with a reference to other current statements as to those found in other writings of the Fathers. The allegation which refers them to one given writing or to heretical sources has no foundation, though the doctrines and position of Justin would give no guarantee for his own soundness. He was doubtless a Christian, but still a Platonist philosopher. It seems another philosopher got him put to death through jealousy. This statement, accompanied by a reference to Bleek in p. 289, contradicts all Bleek's teaching (as does 293), and is as careless as it is unfounded. As to inspiration, indeed, none of them believe it; but as to the repute and esteem in which our four gospels were held in Justin's days, Bleek is as clear and decided as possible, and as to the use of them by Justin Martyr, among others. See with other places section 261-2. That infidel Germans have disputed over it, as in p. 288, is perfectly true, seeking by all means to undermine the Scriptures and contradict the testimonies which support their authenticity. The whole of this part of the book is full of statements which are unfounded. It is not my part to go into it in detail here. When he says (215) that the first and second epistles of Clement have a canonical position, it is merely trifling with the fact of their being in *Cod. Alex.* There

are three hymns there also. He himself says the second was rejected, as every one who has enquired knows. In Justin's reference to the Lord's baptism, instead of all being referred to the apostles' memoirs, he carefully distinguishes what is in them, which is found in fact in our gospel, the Holy Ghost coming down like a dove, from other things which are not there, but stated by other Fathers. And this is also the case in his second reference to Christ's baptism (*Supernatural Religion*, p. 317), what follows is special pleading. I have no interest in defending the "Fathers," one has only to read them, and specially the Apostolic Fathers, to see the difference of inspiration and the unsound and immoral stuff they write. You fall down a precipice from God to man! It is treated as an extraordinary anomaly that Justin could quote as he did if he received the four gospels. It is a common thing with Fathers. Thus Bleek speaks of this when insisting on Justin's use of the four gospels (section 87). These variations are of little moment when we remember that the Fathers seldom quoted Scripture verbatim and word for word. It is in this place Bleek gives the true account of what the author makes so much about (in 288). He assumes (367) that there were a number of gospels current—"In how many more" gospels—but this is falsifying the facts. That there was probably a gospel according to the Hebrews is not denied; but if there was, it was in Aramæan, which, as a rule, not one of the Fathers whose works are in question understood. A mass of apocryphal gospels we have—one has only to read them to judge of them. Traditions no doubt there were and referred to, but gradually lost. My business is in no way to justify the accuracy of Justin, but the attempt in i. 370 to prove his altering the text is the weakest absurdity.

Such passages are justly quoted by writers on the canon to prove that Justin was acquainted with the gospels; but to look for the words and to insist these must be found, and that it must be a quotation from some other, is trifling with Scripture. If I were to say Jesus condemns a person looking on a woman to

lust after her, as much as adultery, people would justly conclude I had read the gospels ; but who that it was some other apocryphal one ? It is just folly.

In communicating Christ's doctrine to the heathen for their information, it seems to me that Justin's statements are just what we might expect in a philosophical mind like his, proving clearly that he had read and used our gospels, though occasionally referring to other traditions, as all the Fathers did. If men were to consult him for various readings it would be the same kind of folly as the author's who is looking for the identical words. Justin is communicating Christ's moral instruction to the heathen, and it is done in the most natural way. His repeating the summing-up and motive is thoroughly so. He spoke thus, he taught thus, he said thus, just show the true character of the citations. The author of *Supernatural Religion* does not even understand the force of the reasoning. The existence of the gospel according to the Hebrews is admitted and known, though perhaps seriously altered by certain parties, though never in the canon. The possibility of Justin having used it is not generally denied. What is said is that his quotations are sufficient to prove he knew our gospels. That is a question of judgment on comparing them. The possibility of another gospel having what is in Justin does not alter this. If it be produced with the whole passage as he has it, and all else is consistent, we shall have another witness. I do not believe it is or can be. Nor have they any hint of the existence of any such thing in all the writings of that day, save the gospel according to Peter, the supposed reference to which is quite otherwise understood by sober critics, as it is in the only place in which Justin refers to it.¹ What were the numerous other works in use in the early

¹ The gospel of Peter is a well known but lost book. We are chiefly acquainted with it through an extract from Serapion of Antioch in Eusebius, H. E. vi. 12. He had found it in the assembly at Rossus in Cilicia, and not read it through, but hearing some had been misled by it, got it and read it, and tells them that there was a great deal that was right, but some parts were perverted ; but this was in 191, twenty or thirty years after Justin's death. It is mentioned

church? Various accounts were current but were lost, I may say, at once, in the prevalence of the four gospels recognised as an authority and divine, and so used. And the author must remember that what we have in the written gospel are the accounts of what Jesus said, and three witnesses or four alters nothing if they are true. The facts may be called to memory by the Holy Ghost according to Christ's promise, according to the point they were connected with, and a writer quoting it may give it according to the point which is in his mind, and in the connection which the subject he is on suggests. The question, further, is not whether Justin may not have known other current writings or traditions, but whether what he writes furnishes evidence of acquaintance with the Scriptures, particularly with the Gospels, as we have them. We have only to read what he says to be convinced of it. The four canonical being acknowledged thus as such. The way in which the *Sup. Rel.* insists on verbal quotation is, for any one who has read Justin or other Fathers, perfectly absurd. Indeed, in the apologies it is the last thing we should look for; these are addresses sent by a philosopher to the heathen authorities to give an idea of what the Christians were and did, to clear them from certain charges, and sometimes appealing, to show the principles they held, to what their master had said. I must say the discussion on Justin Martyr and other like writers seems to me to be the poorest piece of superficial criticism I

by Origen in Matt. xiii. 54-56 (iii. 462, De la Rue). But he merely says that it was held by some that James and Jude, etc., were sons of Joseph by a former wife, and that they had received this as a tradition taken from a gospel entitled of Peter or James. Theodoret mentions it as the gospel used by the Nazarites. That there were two kinds of Ebionites, one using only the gospel of Hebrews, the other only that of Matthew, so that he had no idea they were the same. The Nazarites, a sort of Unitarians, holding the law as valid, who used only the gospel of Peter (*Theod. Hær. Fab.* ii. 1-2). Jerome, under Peter, the first of his *De Viris Illus.*, says the gospel of Mark was called the gospel of Peter; but under Serapion xli. he speaks of a current gospel under the name of Peter, under James ii., a foolish story out of the gospel according to the Hebrews, which he says he had lately translated.

ever wearied myself with reading,¹ full of unproved assertions too, the difficulties raised by Fathers and traditions diligently searched out second-hand. The reconciling Papias and Irenæus, and Jerome and others, proved to be difficult, but no serious research after truth at all. It is simply putting into English the infidelity of the Baur school, Schwegler, Hilgenfeld, etc., and nothing else. Of course all inspiration is ignored. Bringing up uncertainties of what may be, to prove what is to be uncertain, and the positive testimonies to mean nothing. What is not spoken of may be true, hence what is said cannot be. The Fathers, as to their judgment, are worth nothing; tradition as untrustworthy for certainty of details as you please, but they suppose and prove to an intelligent mind certain facts. My faith does not rest on external evidence, but there is a certain kind of pretentious destructive criticism which is profoundly contemptible. Our critic speaks of many other gospels, our four thus coming into an uncertain mass. But no one can examine the facts without knowing that these four were, from the earliest days, recognised as distinct. But which are these many? He speaks of the Egyptian, the gospel according to Peter, the Ethiopians, and all depends upon this kind of thing. But these — unless the gospel of Peter once mentioned in a phrase of disputed meaning—are all the same, if we can trust various patristic accounts. Adapting an account, say the gospel according to the Hebrews, to the Ethiopians was very natural, but is not another, and says nothing about the recognition of the four which were not counted with them, nor does it alter anything. The gospel according to the Hebrews and the Ethiopian were not in Greek, so that reasoning from quotations is utterly without force, but it serves a turn. I must add that I do not think an honest man, knowing our gospels, could read the passage in Justin through, and hesitate one moment as to his acquaintance with them. It is a long discourse, in which he brings forward, to satisfy the heathen, the

¹ To tell the truth, I never yet thought it worth while to finish the book.

various teachings of Christ as they stood in his mind from the gospels, to clear the Christians from the false notions held of them, quoting as I might quote Scripture myself, sometimes verbally exact, sometimes the sense, and bringing in passages from another place which gave the connected thoughts which were in his mind for the heathen. There is one passage, "and walk," not accounted for, in reference to the cross, and not a whit more accounted for by the infidel writers. For their view of Justin's quotations there is not the least ground whatever. In one place the author of *Sup. Rel.*, to make it easy to think that he used a Hebrew gospel or other Jewish traditions, says he was a Jewish Christian; whereas he states himself, as was the case, that he was a heathen, and after trying Stoicism, Peripateticism, Pythagoreanism, and Platonism, found rest in Christianity; visited many Grecian cities, and afterwards went to Rome. The best thing the reader can do is to read the passage chiefly referred to (in my copy of Justin, Col. 1686, p. 61-66, about a tenth of the whole apology from the beginning).

As to the apocryphal gospels which remain to us, of which there are several, their contents speak for themselves; a proof of the total want of spiritual discernment in the primitive church, and also how impossible it was for an age which concocted, and more or less valued, such stuff, could have produced anything in the least resembling our gospels. In this sense they afford the strongest proofs of the inspiration of the others. The epistles according to the Hebrews, of Peter, to the Egyptians, are not extant, and so afford a fine field for rational criticism, the connection of these with Justin I have spoken of. In Bleek's introduction, sec. 119, and also 87, 88, the reader will find the whole system fully judged. Bleek is a rationalistic critic. Perhaps it may be well to quote his words (Clark's *Translations*, Lec. 119, i. 335): "But with regard to the memoirs of the apostles, so repeatedly cited by Justin, it is at once quite clear that these were not some single treatise, but a collection of writings differing from one another, and usually called gospels."

Now, since he expressly attributes these writings to the apostles and their coadjutors, we are directly led to conclude that they were the canonical gospels we have, which ecclesiastical traditions and their very titles assign partly to the apostles and partly to their fellow-labourers and disciples. The citations made from the memoirs are, at any rate as to the greater part, unquestionably taken from our present gospels, only, like most of the Fathers, and according to his own practice in Old Testament passages, Justin uses greater freedom in quoting, and mixes together the text of different gospels, especially Matthew and Luke. He describes them as written by the apostles and their companions. The supposition of some modern scholars that what Justin refers to and makes use of was some one distinct work is clearly false. Again: "His own words (Justin's) explicitly declare that they were more than one, and the citations themselves witness that all our four canonical gospels were included." (Sec. 87, p. 242.)

De Wette says (sec. 74, p. 124) of the gospel to the Hebrews: "This is the oldest (of the uncanonical gospels), but its use is traceable no further back than Hegesippus (about A.D. 160), nor beyond the circle of the Jewish Christians; for the orthodox Fathers, far from placing it on a par with the canonical gospels, reckon it among the ungenune." And (76, 125) as to the current acceptance of the four gospels; "Various countries and parties in the church also furnish testimonies which run back nearly to the Apostolic age." Again, as to the gospel to the Hebrews, he says, "But the oldest accounts contradict the idea of its being an original and independent work by representing it as apocryphal, and as wavering between Matthew and Luke" (sec. 63, p. 88). One of these alterations indicates a Greek original. Hence the opinion that the gospel to the Hebrews is the most ancient gospel writing falls to the ground (sec. 65, p. 93).

Justin mentions as the source of these sayings and accounts, writings left behind by the apostles and their assistants, which he calls memoirs of the apostles, also gospels. The old opinion

that they mean our canonical gospels is by no means contradicted by the inexactness of the citations, for it is probable, nay it is established by the repetitions that occur, that parties cited the gospels, as sometimes the Old Testament writers, freely from memory . . . and gospels which were read in the assemblies of the Christians cannot well be other than our canonical gospels, all of which (Mark and John more seldom) he made use of." (Comp. s. 66, p. 94.)

De Wette goes into the objections which I have already gone over, but I do not go further into them. Those whom I have now quoted are in the fullest sense rationalist writers, but sober and serious men, who weighed facts, instead of indulging in inflated and foundationless speculations, where there is no trace of a search after truth, but merely the effort of an advocate to prove his point.

It is perhaps well to remark that the gospel according to the Hebrews indulged in the grossest form of Jewish mysticism. We read "The Saviour said, My mother the Holy Ghost took me by one of my hairs and carried me to the great mountain Tabor," and much more (Gfrörer, *Tahr. der Heils.* Stuttgart, 1838, pp. 332 ff.) This is quoted by Origen only saying, "if any one received it," in Jer. *Hom.* xv. 4. He elsewhere definitely declares the church had only four gospels, the heretics many. Jerome quotes it, on Micah, lib. ii. cap. vii. vol. vi. 521, Ed. Vall., where he states he had just translated it, so that it was not a mere Ebionitish addition. So in Comm. Isa. xi. Vall. iv. 156.—Juxta Evangelium quod Hebreo sermone inscriptum legunt Nazaræi. But it came to pass that when the Lord went up out of the water, the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended and rested upon Him, and said to Him, My Son in all the prophets I expected thee, that thou shouldest come and I should rest on thee, for thou art my rest, thou art my first-born son, who reigneth for ever.

So iv. 485. He quotes the strange phrase, my mother the Holy Ghost took me by a hair, etc., from the gospel according

to the Hebrews, which the Nazareans read, adding that no one ought to be offended, as spirit is feminine in Hebrew, masculine in Latin, and neuter in Greek, that thus being of the three genders in the three principal languages respectively, we might know that what is different is of none, going pretty far in owning the work. Origen excuses it also, *De la Rue*, iv. 69, but on the plea that as Christ called those who did His Father's will, brother, and sister, and mother, so we might call the Spirit His mother. But the passage of Jerome on *Isa. xi.* proves it was a systematic doctrine, and the gospel probably heretical, on the system of Simon Magus and Helen. Yet Jerome translates it and says, many call it the authentic Matthew. This, it is said, was in A.D. 398. Later still, A.D. 415, he says it was in the library of Cæsarea (the Nazarenes there using it); the gospel according to the apostles, or, as many think, according to Matthew (*Dialogus iii. contra Pelagianos*). He quotes or refers to it very often. A.D. 321 circa, he speaks of it as in the Cæsarean library, and composed in Hebrew letters and words. Who translated it into Greek was uncertain (*De Viris Ill.*) The Ebionites, he says, used it, joining them and the Nazarenes, where he speaks of lately translating it. But the Nazarene copy he translated. The Ebionites at any rate were divided into two classes, one certainly heretical, as were the Nazarenes or Nazarites. Origen, he says, often used it. Jerome translated it into Greek and Latin; strange if he thought it the same as Matthew, and Matthew translated by we know not whom.

That there were but four gospels recognised is perfectly clear; Jerome, Irenæus, Origen, all speak decidedly. Jerome speaks of the others as concocted, of the writers without the spirit and grace of God, that to the Egyptians among them—not naming that according to the Hebrews, but he does that according to the twelve apostles, and this in *Dial. iii. contra Pelagianos*, he declares to be the same. He then goes on to say that the church has four, which the Lord poured forth as the four rivers of paradise, and four angles and rings, by which, like the ark of

the Lord and keeper of the law of the Lord, she is carried on unmovable bars (liguits); and then speaks of our canonical gospels, and referring them to the cherubim, connects the four animals there represented with the four gospels, and declares that only four ought to be received, and the rest as useless fables to dead heretics. (Preface to Matt. vii. p. 1, Vall.) He was somewhat late in date, but Irenæus says the same thing. He says, lib. iii. 8, There can be no more than four, nor can there be fewer. There are four regions of the world, and four principal winds, and as the church is spread over all the world it must have four columns, whence it breathes forth life. So he who sits between the cherubim has given us a fourfold gospel, composed by one spirit *ενι δε πνευματι συνεχομενον*, referring, I apprehend, to the *τεχνητης Λογος ο συνεχων τα παντα*, and he then enters largely into the four cherubims, saying the gospels are consonant to those in which Christ is seated. Irenæus had been showing that the heretics themselves received one kind one gospel, another another, but in result all four, and were self-condemned by what they did accept; but the church all four, the sure and full pillars of the truth.

I will now cite one or two of the miracles of the apocryphal gospels, heretical often it may be, but in general mere fables, but often valued by the "Fathers."

Christ was sent to one master, and told him all the letters and their meaning, and the master brought Him back, and said He must have been born before Noah. Then to a more learned one, and the master having raised his hand to beat Him his hand withered and he died; then Joseph said to the divine Mary, From this time we will not suffer Him to go out of the house, since every one that opposes Him is struck with death.

There was a rabid boy who, when the fit took him, bit every one, and being in company with the boy Jesus, sought to bite his side, and struck it so that Jesus cried, but Satan fled out of the boy like a mad dog. The boy was Judas Iscariot, and it was that side was pierced with the lance.

Then he was making figures of animals and birds out of mud. Now, he says, I shall order them to move. Are you, said the boys, the Creator's son? But then he ordered them, and they went and came back when he called. At another time at a dyer's he threw all the articles out into the yard; the dyer was in a great way about it, when he returned them piece by piece of the right colour. He made all Joseph's work fit exactly.

He went out to play, but the boys left and hid themselves, and when in each house they were denied to be there, what have you there in the furnace? Three-year-old goats, said the woman; and he said, Come out here to your shepherd, goats, and they came out like goats and leapt around him, and the women were all terrified, and besought him; and then he said, Come, boys and let us play, and immediately they were restored to their proper form.

Then he made ponds and twelve little birds, three of a side, and a Jewish boy, Hananus, it being the Sabbath, came up and reproved him and destroyed his fish ponds, but he, clapping his hands on the birds, they flew away piping; and Hananus coming up to destroy the fish ponds of Jesus also, the water disappeared, and he said, as the water disappeared, Your life shall disappear also, and immediately the boy dried up.

I will now take up some of the gospel miracles, and, first of all, using that of Matthew, as the structure of the gospel is very evident with a little attention, and the place and character of the miracles through it.

The difference of the three synoptical gospels and the fourth is this. The three first present Christ as Emmanuel—Messiah, the prophet servant, and Son of man, to men, and, in a narrower sense, to the Jews. Whereas in John this is not the case; it reveals what Christ is in Himself, that the world, when He was revealed in it, did not know Him, though He made it, and that His own rejected Him. But that He put into the place and privilege of sons those who did receive Him a new thing, but

then they were born of God, not of the flesh nor of man's will. The Jews are therefore treated all through as reprobate, but He declares that He would have His sheep out from their midst, and others from among the Gentiles; and then the Holy Ghost is spoken of as living on the earth instead of Him, when He was gone as man to the Father.

Now this presentation of Christ in the three first terminates and reaches its climax in the transfiguration, which changed all, for it was as a revelation bringing in a glorified Christ. This divides the three first gospels into three parts; the history of the Lord up to the transfiguration (His birth, as Mark gives the prophet, being there left out), the continuance of patient mercy up to blind Bartimæus, with various instructions, chiefly for the coming time; and, from meeting with the blind man, His last presentation as Son of David to the Jews, and the details of His being taken and crucified. Miracles Christ wrought at all times, even to the last days, when He was free in the temple, healing the ear of Malchus at the moment of his capture. Perhaps we may call the greatest of all His living miracles was His giving up His own spirit to His Father on the cross.

• But, in the active life of Jesus, it is the time which closed in the transfiguration, beginning after His temptation in the wilderness, which forms the proper period of His working miracles as a testimony. The goodness expressed itself at all times in them, but that on which it rested, "or else, believe me, for the very works' sake," was from his victory over Satan, binding the strong man, till the transfiguration revealed a wholly new order of things coming in connected with a rejected Christ, from which time He forbade His disciples to tell men that He was the Messiah, saying the *Son of man* must suffer, though still till His hour was come continuing His work of grace. The general character of the Lord's miracles I have spoken of. The revelation of God in power and goodness that He might be known and trusted by man; man, wicked as he might be, have confidence in Him. As the beginning of Eve's sin was losing

confidence in God's goodness by the guile of Satan, if God did not seek their happiness fully they must seek it for themselves, as even now, hence will, lust, transgression, so now, God was there to give in perfect goodness blessed ground of confidence in Himself; but, I add here, so graciously and perfectly suited to the state and need of man. The person who can be insensible to the perfectness of the revelation of God in goodness to man in Christ down here is incapable of feeling what God and goodness is.

But I turn now to look at the miracles recorded in particular as suited to the special testimony given, and first Matthew. The general testimony is in iv. 23. "And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people, or, as expressed by Peter (Acts x), went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. Matthew's testimony is to the Lord as Emmanuel and as Jesus, that is Jehovah the Saviour. For He shall save His people from their sins. He was Jehovah; but first of all Jehovah, according to promise to His own people. Hence his genealogy is traced from Abraham, and also David, to whose seed the promises were made; as Paul states it in the Romans, of the seed of David according to the flesh, a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to perform the promises made to the fathers, as this He was rejected; and then comes in another character and title, proved Son of God with power, according to the "spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead." This last, on which Christianity is really based, is not our subject. The order of the gospel is this: iv. 23, had gathered multitudes around Him. He announces to His disciples, but in the audience of the multitude, the principles of the kingdom, and who were such as could enter, adding reward in heaven itself when suffering for Christ existed. There is nothing of redemption or justification in it. In viii. we have the Lord personally as Jehovah, still as rejected

Son of man ; in ix. the character of His service down here—grace. x. Mission to the Jews alone, any other forbidden ; but from verse 15 carried on after His departure, but still in the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. xi. His ministry as well as John the Baptist's in their midst rejected, but John owned by Him, and He as Son of God revealing the Father and calling the weary to Himself for rest. xii. His utter rejection of and by the pharisaic Jews, and final break in principle with the nation. xiii. He is out of the house, and unfolds the status of the kingdom when the king was rejected. xiv. xv. His mercy as being still there continues in a sovereign way, but the principles of what is brought in anew, both as to dispensational position, trial, and relationship, are unfolded ; then pharisaism, man's religion, man's heart and God's laid bare, the great foundation truths of his dealing in Christ. xvi. The church replaces Judaism. xvii. The glory of the kingdom does, only for all this He must die. xviii. Individual and collective directions founded on the new thing. xix. and xx. to xxviii. complete these new principles and their consequences. Verse 29 of xx. begins the last events up to the Lord's death and resurrection, only you have no ascension ; the remnant are sent out from Galilee to the Gentiles.

Now in chapter viii. we have the person of the Lord as present here. First, He meets the leper. The cleansing of the leper was a simply divine work. On the other hand, not only the leper was put out of the camp, but if any one touched him he was put out too. Here the leper had seen the exercise of power in the Lord, but was not sure of His willingness, His love. If thou wilt thou canst. With divine authority and reassuring love the Lord says, I will, be thou clean. But more, though He were Jehovah who cleansed in love, He had become a man in grace ; touched man, so to speak ; not infected or unclean with the uncleanness of man, but healing and cleansing them in grace through faith. He put forth His hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. Impossible to have a more striking testi-

mony of all that the Lord was in this world than this miracle. Next I find the recognition of universal divine authority in a Gentile. Though come amongst the Jews according to promise, God could not be confined to Israel; there was greater faith here than in heartless self-sufficient Jews; speak with a word and all was done, and so it was. Next, in home mercies, He *bears* our griefs and carries our sicknesses (not our sins here, though these were the fruit of sin being here). He not only heals with a word divinely, but comes as man in this power to know our sorrows. Still He is the rejected Son of man, not having where to lay His head, but come into the midst of an evil world, God manifest in the flesh. Adherence to and following Him at all cost was the test of righteousness, but following Him led into dangers and difficulties. Calm in the midst of the power of evil, rejected though He might be, He commands creation. All the power of the enemy, moreover, allowed therefore to be manifested, quails and bows before Him; not the less rejected for that, for man, who cannot drive away Satan, gets rid of God by his will even when come in grace.¹ His presence disturbs him too much. In chapter ix. we have the same divine power in the midst of Israel, but the character of His mission, through His person of course as manifesting God, still shines out. It is grace, He declares to the poor paralytic that his sins are forgiven him; the scribes in their hearts within judge Him as guilty in attributing to Himself what belonged to God only. He replies by exercising the power united to that of forgiving in Jehovah's ways with Israel in Ps. ciii., while taking still the place of Son of man. "Who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thy diseases." Forgiveness and healing, such was His mission if they would receive Him come in grace in the flesh. He proved the announced power and dealings of Jehovah present, but as Son of man by

¹ But at the end of chapter xiv. we have Jesus after the trials received joyfully, after He had rejoined the disciples in the country where he had been rejected.

the exhibition of it in that part of what was announced which was sensible to men in goodness. Then he calls Matthew, not come to call the righteous but sinners. The departure of the present bridegroom is noticed, and the change from form to power. But then what was passing in Israel? Come to heal what was ready to die, He has in fact to raise the dead, for dead in sins we all are ; but whoever by faith touched the hem of His garment was even then healed of a disease which no human physician could cure. But blind and dumb were men (Israel), as well as spiritually dead. We have here, then, miracles which show present healing there for faith which nothing else could afford ; we have what was really in its fulness being wrought, raising the dead, the blind eyes opened, the tongue of the dumb loosed, and also, as ever, the harvest more plenty than the labourers ; forgiveness and grace, the true character of what He was, being brought in, but showed in acts which manifested in present power what man could feel in his body, as in sorrow and evil down here, what God was, and that as present in goodness in the midst of man. The character of the mission and the character of the miracles are inseparably interwoven, and both the expression of the character of God come down here and dealing in grace with man.

In the sad close of this chapter we see the effect on man's unchanged heart of goodness in power of this manifestation of God ; rather than receive the Lord they ascribe miracles which they could not deny to the power of the devil. But the time for entirely giving them up was not yet come. Divine patience had yet a work to do. The unfaltering love of Jesus continues to seek the poor of the flock, if the Pharisees preferred blasphemy to grace, preaching the gospel, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people, for He had compassion on the multitude, weary sheep without a shepherd, and this led to a further manifestation of power and grace, He sends others into the field, the harvest was plenty and the labourers few. Ever is it so.

In x. we have not only power in goodness but power to give power, and that is properly divine. Their work here is wholly confined to Israel. The mission to the Gentiles was from Christ as risen (xxviii.), but by His gift they were to exercise the same power as He did. But it was seeking the remnant in Israel. If the house was worthy peace was to rest upon it. The chapter is divided into parts all referring to Israel, their work then, to the end of verse 15; from verse 16 more general and continued, still in Israel, after His death till the Son of Man came; but at present they must expect rejection; it is our lot in this world. They were not to fear. Not a sparrow fell to the ground, not merely without God but without *their Father*. For the Son revealed the Father's name; but we have seen this tested men. They could not stand the revelation of God. It brought out the enmity of the human heart against good, and especially against God; an enmity which, stronger than natural ties, wrought most where the relationship was nearest, and where the hated object—for hated, alas, as Christ has proved it is—is more galling. The disciple is not above His Master; we have to take up our cross and follow Christ. Thus divine power, and its manifestation in goodness, and its rejection, go together as before. This is fully developed in a solemn commentary on all in xi. The ways and works of the Lord are summed up as testimony to John Baptist, now in prison, on the question, Art thou he that should come? The blind saw, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, the souls of the poor were cared for, but blessed he who was not stumbled at the rejected Son of man—power in goodness and rejection; the Lord gives, not receives testimony. But the solemn warnings of the Nazarite prophet of the wilderness, and the gracious association of grace with sinners to win them, men alike rejected. But this brought all to a point, the mighty works were in vain. In fact the truth of his person, too glorious for man as he was to receive, and in the perfect submission of Christ to His rejection as

come among the Jews, His eternal personal glory, the Son revealing the Father in grace to burdened and needy hearts, taught submission withal by His own, that they might every way have rest, was what was really there, the new thing, and glory in grace shine out through the rejected but obedient Son of man. The twelfth chapter completes the statement of the position in which Christ is here found, as well as that of the Jews as a body. There are but two particularised miracles referred to in it. The Sabbath was the seal of Jehovah's covenant with Israel; as with the rejected David, so with the rejected Son of David, all things in Israel were made common; a greater than the temple, too, was there, the Son of man was Lord of the Sabbath; had they understood mercy as contrasted with mere law they would not have condemned the guiltless. Under the Son of man's authority as Lord of the Sabbath they were guiltless, but in their state of soul the Jews could not understand this. In the synagogue there was a man with a withered hand; convicting them of hypocrisy, well-doing was the manifestation of God and not the legal Sabbath. The old covenant was passing away. He withdraws and heals all that come. Meek and lowly, the time would come for him to show judgment. He then works the second miracle referred to above, casting out a devil. The people say—Is it not the Son of David? The Pharisees repeat their blasphemy—He casts them out through Beelzebub. Now all was brought to an issue. If it was by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God¹ was come amongst them, they were openly blaspheming; divine power they could not deny, they were fully condemned, and at the end of their history would come under the full power of Satan. He did not own relationship in nature with Israel down here, those in whom His word wrought were His true relations. His connection with man was through what He brought, not what was in man, though He was a true man. This closes the proper history of His ministry

¹ Note here, Matthew says of God. That of heaven could only be when He was gone to heaven. It was at hand.

or service in Israel, though in divine mercy it continued, but with a testimony modified in character. But what His miracles were in testimony is clearly seen, and what they meant and said. His final breach with Israel leads to His going out and announcing the kingdom of heaven, but without the present king; full of interest, but not introducing any miracles. It is the first thing presented as taking the place of Messiah then presented on earth, but in xiv. His mercy continues, though in a sovereign and divine way, not as Messiah, Son of man, presented to them. The putting to death of John Baptist brought actual rejection close to His Spirit, a solemn moment, felt deeply by the Lord, so that He retired apart, but the multitude came; but the feeling for others or the solemnity of the moment never hindered the readiness of divine goodness. He was moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes; He meets it as Jehovah will fully in the last days, according to Psalm cxxxii. He will satisfy her poor with bread. This as a sign He does. He then goes on high to pray—as He now is—the disciples left to toil their way across the sea without Him, and rejoins them and all is still; and then is joyfully received where once He had been rejected, but historically exercises the same divine power in goodness; goodness above all the rejection and heartlessness of men, the hem of his garment made perfectly whole. xv. is a very remarkable chapter, but I must touch on it only in connection with the miracle. There human will-worship, as contrasted with God's law, and really to the temporal advantage of the priests, is utterly rejected: man's religion in alleged offerings to God as contrasted with God's law. Next man's heart, the source of all the evil; and then with one of the accursed race of Canaan, so that as come to Israel there could be no blessing for her, the reckoning on God's heart in sovereign goodness met at once a response. He could not deny Himself, or say God is not as good as you suppose. He was divinely above the barriers of Judaism and dispensation, and divinely good. Again, the miracle is a present witness of what and who He is. He

returns to the field of ministry in the land of Israel, and satisfies yet again the poor with bread in the same divine way. I have no doubt there is an intentional specific difference between this and the 5000, the 12, and the 7. This latter more specifically divine with the remnant, but it is not here the place to enter into these details of interpretation. The general principle of wonted mercy, verse 30, gives us again His full and constant character. In xvi. we find the church substituted for a Christ present on the earth, on the confession of Jesus as Son of the living God, and the keys of the kingdom¹ given to Peter, but no special miracle demands our attention. In xvii. we have the kingdom in glory. This was the Son of man revealed in the glory of the kingdom.

Here we find the disciples themselves unable to use that power in Christ which faith would have done. Only separation of heart and spirit, and reference to and confidence in God, could wield it and set aside the power of Satan down here. This answered, so to speak, to the coming glory of the Son of man, and made Satan powerless in presence of a humbled Saviour. But now, for all that, the new place belonging to the disciples, connected with His resurrection, is strikingly brought out. The coming glory did not belong to Christ's then position, that was the fasting and praying part of His path, they were not to speak of the vision of glory till He was risen. But meanwhile He shows divine knowledge and divine power over creation. Those who collect the didrachma for the temple ask Peter if his master was not a faithful Jew. Christ shows His divine knowledge of things in anticipating Peter, but puts Peter in the same place with Himself, that *we* offend not. They were both children of the great King of the temple, that *we* offend not. Then He shows His power, making the fish bring the needed money, two didrachmas, and Peter was to give it for me and thee. Redemption has brought us into the

¹ Not of the church. Keys of the church is a thought unknown to Scripture.

place of Sons with Christ. Grace bowed to the lowly place, but power over all creation showed who was there ; but grace then brought believers into the place of new and infinite blessing in which Christ stood. This blessed "me and thee" closed, in fact, the path of Christ here with the displayed glory. We have characteristics of the walk suited to this new place of the disciples individually and collectively, but the present testimony to Christ was over, they were charged indeed not to say any more that He was the Christ.

We have one notable miracle in xxi. The fig-tree of God's planting, Israel after the flesh, man under the old covenant, when the Lord of the vineyard came seeking fruit, was judged as fruitless for ever. Herewith the manifestation of the truth of Satanic power in the swine are the only miracles which were not the direct exercise of power in goodness. But they not only confirm the constant character of all the others, but show the state of man and God's judgment of that state as to man's responsibility, when all the testimony of grace and power had been given. The story of the didrachm showed the new place in grace ; that of the fig-tree man's condition under responsibility and law as he was. In xx. 17 to 28 are shown Christ and the disciples place here below as finally rejected. Then 29 begins His last presentation to Jerusalem as Son of David, and God's testimony to Him by the mouth of babes and sucklings. The mercy indeed continued, but the testimony was closed. He who believed He was Son of David received sight, the rest were judged. The greatest miracles of all were His death, giving up His own Spirit, when He could say, It is finished ; and His resurrection. But these were either for stability of faith to believers or for the display of power in others as the subject of their testimony. Our subject has been Christ's own works as a testimony to His person, and the true character of God as so revealed.

For the present I close this paper, already extended far beyond my thought in commencing it. It may be interesting to examine the other gospels, and study any peculiar aspect of

the miracles connected with them. But for the general principle what we have found in Matthew fully suffices, and gives a character of divine goodness and entering into our sorrows which infidelity cannot touch, and, through the hardening of heart it always produces, cannot feel or see the beauty of.

THE POST-CAPTIVITY PROPHETS ;

OR,

THE EFFECT OF THE WORD OF GOD.

THREE in number, and named Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, the post-captivity prophets differ markedly from their brethren who prophesied before the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. The former prophets dwell on the past history of the people ; these chiefly on their then present and future. The judgments announced by the earlier messengers having been executed, the chastisement richly deserved had been endured ; so the black catalogue of crimes, which formed so heavy an indictment, is no longer dwelt upon, and the sins of their fathers are only alluded to to advise their descendants of the certain fulfilment of God's word. Words of encouragement the remnant hear from Haggai and Zechariah, instead of predictions of coming judgment ; and we witness, as it were, a fresh start of the people, to see if those, who were a standing memorial of the nation's unfaithfulness and of God's truth, would act better than their fathers, profiting by the lesson the captivity ought surely to have taught them.

The glory connected with the king's throne in Jerusalem had long departed, and the house which Solomon had built "exceeding magnificent," had been defiled by the tread of uncircumcised feet, pillaged, and finally burnt. The wealth which characterised the reigns of David and Solomon had gone to swell the coffers of Gentile monarchs, and a poor and feeble remnant were now the representatives in the land of Canaan

of a nation which had once been illustrious, victorious, and prosperous. Shorn as they were of earthly wealth and temporal power, they were lacking in yet higher things, which their fathers could bear witness had been among them. In common with other nations they might have mourned over the loss of wealth and power, but they had to acknowledge greater losses in the absence of those favours which had been peculiar to Israel. No sacred fire burned on their newly-erected altar, nor was the Shechinah with them any longer, that cloud of glory betokening the divine presence, which had accompanied them from Egypt, and abode on the mercy-seat till the days of Nebuchadnezzar (Exod. xiii. 21, 22 ; Ezek. x. 18, xi. 23). Miracles, too, attestations of the divine commission which prophets of old had received, were worked no longer ; and the Urim and Thummim connected with the high priest's breastplate were confessedly absent from that which was worn by Joshua the son of Josedech (Ezra ii. 63). All that man could make, the ark excepted, they might possess ; but those peculiar tokens of God's acceptance of the house and of the High Priest they found themselves without. Yet, though deprived of the manifestations of the divine presence, and the proofs of divine power, they were not bereft of that which could guide them in darkness and cheer them in sorrow—the word of God. Their return, and the rebuilding of the temple and city, were proofs that God had not forsaken them ; the presence of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were tokens that God would still instruct them.

From the days of Jeremiah the godly ones of Israel in the land of Babylon had been cast upon God's word as to the duration of their captivity, which, beginning with Jehoiakim was to end with Cyrus (Jer. xxix. 10 ; Dan. ix. 1). Now the returned remnant were to find how the prophetic word, which could sustain hope in captivity, could stimulate and teach them, being their only light in the days of sorrow and oppression in which their lot was cast. For, having been constrained

by power from without to cease from building the temple, they rose up to renew the work at the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah. The effect of the word of God is in this case beautifully exemplified. Difficulties vanished. Their reasoning that the time to build the Lord's house had not come (Hag. i. 2) was refuted in an instant. Jeremiah's prediction of seventy years, to which perhaps they referred, it was now seen was to be computed from the captivity which began in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxv.), and not from the destruction of the temple in the eleventh year of Zechariah. The nation's captivity, not the temple's desolation, it was of which the prophet of Anathoth had predicted the duration. Their mistake was now corrected, yet not by the turn of events in their favour, but by the prophesying of Haggai, the Lord's messenger. The reason of their scanty harvests and unsatisfied appetites was now made plain, the Lord's house laid waste, whilst they built and dwelt in their own. Obedient to the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, activity was again displayed in providing materials for the building of the house, and the tools laid down through fear of man were taken up in the fear of God. The visit of Tatnai, the governor, with Shetharboznai and their companions, did not deter them; the demand for their names did not terrify them. They answered them respectfully but firmly, and whilst they referred to Darius for instructions the Jews went on with their work. The decree issued against them by Artaxerxes the usurper was still in force, but the word of God encouraged their hearts, so, in spite of the opposition from which they had so recently suffered, and the yet unrepealed decree, they came and did the work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God. The word of God, apart from all manifestations of divine power, emboldened the people to brave the king's resentment.

What a change had come over them. And now, since they had begun the work in faith and obedience, the Lord, ere

that six months closed in which Haggai had first addressed them, vouchsafed a second message, saying, "I am with you." His presence and approval, not His power to be openly displayed on their part as before, was that of which God now assured them, and that encouraged them. He had said it; they believed it; and the work of the house went forward afresh. Tatnai referred to Darius respecting the existence of the alleged decree of Cyrus, of which the Jews had spoken, and to learn the reigning sovereign's will. The remnant, now assured of the divine presence, waited not to learn the king's pleasure, for prophecy had burst out afresh; and since they were obedient, new communications were vouchsafed.

When the foundations of the house were laid in the reign of Cyrus, we read of the effect produced on those who had witnessed the former one (Ezra iii. 12). Now whilst carrying on their work anew God would not have the builders discouraged, so they learn that "the latter glory of this house" (for this it was which Haggai really said) "shall be greater than the former." The magnificence and splendour with which Solomon embellished the house, was to be far surpassed by the glory which shall yet attach to it; and in that place, where they had recently experienced the oppression of the ruling power, the Lord would give peace. How fully God was entering into and taking up the cause of His people! As subjects of Darius it was their part to acknowledge the Persian supremacy; but the throne of kingdoms, that imperial power which dominates over other rulers and vassal states, Haggai assured them should be overthrown by the Lord, for the strength of the kingdom of the heathen will He destroy, the chariots and those that ride in them shall be overthrown, and the horses and their riders shall come down every one by the sword of his brother. This is still future. Will this be succeeded by anarchy? No, for to Zerubbabel, David's descendant and the Lord's ancestor, promises are made (Hag. ii. 20-23). That throne so ancient, and to outward eyes untenanted for so long, will then be seen to be

worthily filled by Him who enjoys the unclouded favour of the Father. The consequences of their forefathers' sins the returned remnant had still to feel, as they witnessed the house in process of building, and bowed to the Gentile yoke; but these reminders of the past, they learnt, will be obliterated at a future day; since the blessings of fruitful harvests from the day that Haggai thus addressed them, were declared to be the earnest that the future he sketched out should surely come to pass (Hag. ii. 18, 19).

In this prophetic service Haggai did not stand alone. "At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall the matter be established." And though, when God speaks, none should ask for a confirmation of the veracity of the divine communications, He is pleased at times to provide such evidence as shall abundantly confirm what has been previously declared. In this case Zechariah, a priest (Neh. xii. 16) and prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, was associated with Haggai in the work. Three times had Haggai spoken before any of the prophecies of Zechariah were uttered. In the sixth month Haggai had reproved them for their supineness in the building of the Lord's house, and cheered them with the assurance of Jehovah's presence. In the seventh month, during the feast of tabernacles, he predicted the future surpassing glory of the house. Then in the eighth month, after the year's festivals were over, Zechariah commenced his ministry with an exhortation to the people not to act like their fathers, but to hearken to God. For, at the outset, he reminds them that in nature they are not better than their fathers, and that they are the children of those who had been grievously punished for their idolatry. But what hope could there be for a bright ending to the nation's history, when, blessed as their fathers had been, the throne had been overturned in judgment, and captivity and subjugation had been righteously their lot? The children remained unchanged in nature, prone to act like their fathers, that was clear, from the admonition at the outset of Zechariah's prophetic service. To build on national improvement would

have been delusive. The hopes for the future must rest elsewhere. The judgments at last poured out on their fathers attested God's faithfulness to His word, as their fathers had acknowledged (Zech. i. 6). On God's faithfulness then they were now to rest, to His word they should hearken. Generations had come and gone, but God's word had not failed of fulfilment. Generations might come and go, but His word must be accomplished. What a comfort to draw from their afflictions and subjection to a foreign yoke, the sure confidence of future deliverance and blessing. They were nationally, they are still, witnesses to the abiding faithfulness of His word, as displayed in judgment; hence their condition, however sad, could comfort those who were feeling it.

Two more communications by Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month complete the collection of his prophecies, as far at least as they have been preserved; and the visions of Zechariah, just two months afterwards (Zech. i. 7—vi. 15), conclude the series of revelations vouchsafed to the remnant that year. Five months of that eventful year had passed before the spirit of prophecy, last bestowed on Daniel in the third year of Cyrus (about fourteen years back), fell on any others of the seed of Israel. Then seven times during the remainder of that year did the Lord communicate His mind by His servants Haggai and Zechariah. How the hearts of the godly ones must have rejoiced, as they received these repeated tokens of the Lord their God's abiding interest in their city and nation.

“Unto you that hear shall more be given,” is a principle enunciated in the New Testament (Mark iv. 24), but acted on in the Old. The remnant had heard, and obeyed. The word had effected a lodgment in their heart; and God, acting in grace, which far surpasses what man could expect, in adding to the sacred volume gave them in the visions of Zechariah several glimpses of the marvellous future in store for Jerusalem, the land, and the people. Both by visions and prophecies the remnant were to be instructed; the visions depicting the state

of things which shall exist, the prophecies detailing circumstances through which the remnant must pass ere the end arrives—that final blessing and peace in store for the afflicted, despised, yet chosen people of God. Two points connected with the future Haggai had briefly touched on—the house and the throne. On these Zechariah enlarges, and the people, who had shown themselves obedient to the word of reproof by Haggai (i. 2-11), are permitted to gaze upon the distant future, brought within the scope of faith's horizon by the visions and prophecies of the son of Iddo.

At night, when all were asleep, a fit emblem of the world's unconcern for God's ancient people and their land, Zechariah had visions of that future which shall dawn upon his country and people, and heard the words of the Lord himself (for the man was Jehovah) announcing His return to the city of His choice (i. 16). Two years roll by before we have another date. Then in the fourth year of Darius, two years before the temple was finished, the question of Sherezer, Regem-melech, and their companions, relative to the continued observance of the days connected with Jerusalem's past sorrow, called forth in the Lord's goodness the outline of the remnant's history, running on to the commencement of the reign of peace (vii.-xiv.) Casting the eye over these prophecies could any one doubt of the Lord's love for Israel, or of the settled purpose of His heart concerning Jerusalem? The people did not deserve what Zechariah was commissioned to foretell, that all will admit. As a nation they had long before forfeited all claim to God's favour, or restoration to the place of honour upon earth, which they had once enjoyed; yet Zechariah traces out, not conditionally, for that would have made the case hopeless, but as a certainty, which shall be witnessed, more than restoration to their former condition, even pre-eminence on earth to a degree never yet known (x.-xii), whilst the full metropolitan character of Jerusalem is announced, which has never yet been enjoyed (xiv.) And all this, be it observed, is brought out after the people have hearkened to and obeyed

God's word. Acting in obedience to the word they prospered in their work, and the Lord was then pleased to communicate more of His mind.

Years after this passed, during which the political condition of the returned remnant varied. Protected by Darius they were troubled in the early part of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, for the wall of Jerusalem, rebuilt we know not when, had been broken down under circumstances which have not been recorded, and her gates had been burnt with fire (Neh. i. 3). This was the dark side of the picture, which serves, however, to bring out in bolder relief the better fortunes of the house and of the wall. The temple, finished under Darius, was beautified under Artaxerxes (Ezra vi. 15 ; vii. 27), who sent Ezra the scribe with offerings for the house of God ; and the wall, over whose destruction Nehemiah wept, was repaired and dedicated by this pious man with the full sanction of the Persian king.

Exposed as they were to these vicissitudes—at one time protected by the king, at another the sport of some unscrupulous court favourite as Haman, or trampled on by provincial governors—what, it may be asked, during all this time was their moral condition? That, too, varied. Stirred up as one man by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah to complete the house of God, we learn that ere Ezra reached the land in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, were again mixed up with the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites, taking of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, the hand of the princes and rulers being chief in this trespass (Ezra ix. 1, 2). The matter was investigated. Separation from the people of the land and from the strange wives was insisted on, and offerings were brought by those who were concerned in this trespass. Thirteen years later Nehemiah reached the holy city, and during his tenure of office had to reprove the people for usury ; separation

too from the mixed multitude had to be effected, and the profanation of the Sabbath corrected. Besides this, the question of mixed marriages had again to be dealt with; the family of Eliashib the high priest, as that of Jeshua's in the days of Ezra, having joined in this trespass (Ezra, x. 18; Neh. xiii. 28). How crafty was the enemy. Faithfulness, however, to God triumphed over all fear of man.

For a time these efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah appeared to be successful, but the people soon relapsed into carelessness; and indifference to God's house and to God's honour was unblushingly manifested; so that when Malachi commenced his ministry the reproof of both priests and people was urgently required, and occupies the chief part of his book. The Lord's love for Israel was openly questioned, notwithstanding all He had done and all He had foretold (Mal. i. 2). The priests despised His name, and when accused of it by the Lord, demanded proofs of the charge. The people wearied Him with their words; and when told of it seemed unconscious of what they were doing (i. 6, 7; ii. 17). The sin denounced by Ezra and Nehemiah Judah had again given way to, having married strange wives, and for no just cause sanctioned the divorce of the wife of their youth.

A ministry of reproof was needed for this; a ministry to awaken slumbering consciences, and to make souls bestir themselves to depart from uncleanness and iniquity. Malachi's ministry partially accomplished this. The effect of the word of God on the people in the days of Haggai we have seen, the effect of the word by Malachi is also recorded. "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another" (iii. 16). Infidelity and self-interest had penetrated deep into the ranks of the remnant, yet some were found who feared the Lord. Malachi's testimony acted on these, for, after his reproofs had been uttered, they spake often one to another. A remnant of the returned remnant were still true to God, and proved it. Hearts exercised by the word found each other out. They spake often one to another.

What they said is not recorded; it is their attitude at this crisis which is described. Often perhaps they communed in secret, for it does not appear that these took a place of public witness for God. Malachi filled that post; then these, fearing the Lord, held intercourse one with another. A movement, doubtless, was in progress of which many around were ignorant; and, though perhaps they heard not what these godly ones said in their communings one with another, there was One who overheard all, however gently whispered; and witnessed all, however unobtrusively done. "The Lord hearkened, and heard." God's word had met with a response in their hearts, and the Lord took note of it. To their contemporaries perhaps but little known, to posterity quite unknown, to God each one was well known, and their names are recorded in His book. "A book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." How graciously does the Lord act to His people! We record names and deeds in books, that, however treacherous our memories may be, the persons or their acts should never be forgotten by us. In history lie embalmed, as in a catacomb, the actions of the great and good, preserved to future ages, though all eye-witnesses to them have long ceased to exist. Our failing memories and transient lives call for this means of perpetuating what once was deemed worthy of notice and of approval. But He, who is the beginning and the end, who is, who was, and is to come, from whom no secrets are hid, "who ne'er forgets," as we sing, "though oft forgot," needs not a written record to preserve before Him the remembrance of actions and conduct of which He once approved; yet He would assure His people that all is recorded, and not one thing, however small, has escaped His notice, or will remain unrewarded.

To attend to the prayer of the afflicted is, we know, the Lord's wont. But here was no cry that we read of, here was no prayer for deliverance breathed forth. They were not speaking to God, but to one another; exercised in heart about the things of God. It was to catch these utterances that He was attentive.

“The Lord hearkened, and heard.” As the Lord Jesus joined Himself to the company of those two who communed together and reasoned on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, so, at an earlier epoch, the Lord Jehovah was an unseen but attentive listener to the exchange of thoughts between these godly ones in Israel.

From Haggai’s ministry outward activity resulted. In the days of Malachi communing together about the things of God was the right effect produced by the word. By the labours of Haggai and Zechariah the people were stirred up to work ; through the ministry of Malachi the faithful took heed to their walk. And, as at the former period new communications of God’s mind were vouchsafed, as soon as obedience to the word had been manifested, so now the Lord’s appreciation of these faithful ones is revealed, and their future set before them. “They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” To be a peculiar treasure unto God was held out to Israel at Sinai on condition of obedience (Exod. xix. 5). Here these faithful ones are assured of this distinction, for they shall be enumerated amongst His treasures. To do great things was not their work, but faithfulness to God is ever valued by Him ; and true service He reckoned it to be when these consorted together, separated by the word from the iniquity prevalent around them. To a future day He pointed them, and as the representatives of His earthly people He foretold by Malachi their portion, who will have feared Him and have thought on His name. The day when He will count up His jewels will be a day of wrath for the wicked, and His people shall then discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. What Asaph, speaking by the spirit of prophecy, presents as a difficulty for God’s saints, in a time perhaps not far off (Ps. lxxiii. 1-17), to be solved ere the day of the Lord comes only by acquaintance with His unfulfilled designs, will, when that day

dawns, as Malachi predicts, be patent to all the living saints. For the day of their acknowledgment by God is the day when the wicked shall be burnt up root and branch. Zechariah had brought out the future of the people of Israel, and of all the families of the earth, as well as the complete overthrow and judgment of the nations who shall burden themselves with settling the final destiny of Jerusalem (xiv., xii. 3). Malachi is concerned with the final scene on this world's stage in the history of the two great classes in Israel—the righteous and the wicked. In Zechariah we behold more of the political, and in Malachi of the moral aspect, of matters concerning the people at the commencement of the day of the Lord. So by the son of Iddo is detailed what Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will do against their enemies at that time ; whilst Malachi restricts himself to apprising the faithful of the complete reversal of the general lot of the righteous and the wicked. The period for patient endurance of evil will have passed away, and those who shall have known oppression shall tread down the wicked, they shall be ashes under the soles of their feet (iv. 3). The first dawning of that day it was not given to Malachi to write about, for the rise of the morning star is outside that range of prophetic truth in which the prophets of old moved. St. John speaks of it, for it concerns the church of God (Rev. ii. 28, xxii. 16). Malachi speaks of the sunrise in which the earthly saints will be interested. And what a sunrise he can speak of, such a sun as never has risen upon earth—the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings. The wicked will experience its scorching heat burning them up most effectually, those who fear the Lord's name will bask in that Sun's rays, and flourish as calves of the stall. Now God makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good ; then for the wicked there will be devouring fire, but for the righteous the gladdening influence, undimmed by mists or clouds, of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The day of the ungodly's prosperity will end when the day of the righteous begins. Here the prophet stops. But since he deals with moral

classes, not nations or families, he closes his book in a fitting way, admonishing the godly to remember and obey the word, and to wait for the forerunner, the prophet Elijah.

The effect of the word of God on hearts in the days of the post-captivity prophets, with their corresponding results, it has been attempted here to trace out. The proofs of faithfulness on these occasions we have seen differed widely ; but the future placed before the people, whilst differing in many of its features, is in perfect keeping with the service each obediently rendered ; and there is a principle, common to them all, a rule of general application, viz., that to souls subject to the divine word God's mind can be more fully disclosed (Colos. i. 9).

RESTORATION.

IN reading the prophecies of Hosea one cannot fail to be struck with two things—the insensibility of Israel to their moral condition, and the yearning of Jehovah over the people He had chosen. “When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria” (vii. 1). When this was the prophet does not state. Perhaps 2 Kings xiii. 3 may throw light on the matter. God had interposed in the days of Jehoahaz, and given Israel a saviour, “so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians, and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as before time.” What a picture of security and rest after trouble have we here. Did they not value this respite, which surely they could well appreciate? Let us hear the historian again, “Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein; and there remained the grove also in Samaria.” God’s recent intervention on their behalf made no more permanent impression on the people than did His several gracious dealings with them, from their earliest origin in patriarchal days to their entrance into the land under Joshua. That all was not right with them their political condition in the days of Hosea might prove to the dullest of intellects; but how to rectify matters was another point.

This is brought out in the prophecies of Hosea in a most beautiful way. His presence among them witnessed that God had not finally cast them off; his official position as Jehovah’s prophet was a sign that they had departed from the right way. And, since the great feature of this book is God’s moral dealings

with those who have wandered far from Him, with a view to their ultimate restoration, and that in the fullest of blessings, so we see portrayed in Israel's history what God's people may become if they turn away in heart from Him; and we learn what is the only road to be traversed if restoration is to take place, and favours from God are to be again enjoyed.

Glancing at the book we may see it divides itself into three great parts—the historical outline of events from the day of Hosea till the ultimate return, and recognition as God's of the people He has now disowned (i.-iii.); the moral condition of the people (chiefly the ten tribes) in the days of the prophet, because of which judgment would have to take its course (iv.-x.); and the past dealings of God in sovereign grace with the people, closing with the future dealing with their souls, because of which those "lo Ammi" shall become again "Ammi," and "lo Ruhamah" rejoice in the full tide of mercy then to be experienced (xi.-xiv.). Attention to this order will help us in the study of the book.

In the first portion we get Israel's present political condition predicted, like the woman of chap. iii. waiting for the prophet, abiding "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim," with the promise of future blessing, but only after she has been allured into the wilderness. God's gracious dealings are thus promised at the outset. But why is the distant future brought forward "after many days"? Was He not willing even in the prophet's day to deal in grace? He was, but they were unwilling to receive it. This the second portion brings out.

Nothing is more common than for any one smarting under the consequences of disobedience to look for some way of getting free from the present distress. But, like a man caught in a net, who, the more he struggles, the more he gets entangled, and at last sinks down exhausted by his efforts, yet still a captive; so does the soul, which knows not the divine way of

restoration, weary itself with fruitless efforts to get free from the condition induced by its disobedience. Is God, then, hard to be entreated? The surrender of His only Son for us, when ungodly and without strength, must ever be a sufficient, an overwhelming, answer in the negative. God desires the restoration of His people. He who wills that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, longs, may we say it, for the recovery of His children who have strayed. But how shall this be accomplished?

What Israel in the prophet's day would attempt, we learn: "They shall go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find Him" (v. 6). Was it not right to bring sacrifices? He had commanded them. Why, then, would God not receive them? Because this step on Israel's part was really an endeavour to approach Him as if nothing had happened. They would bring sacrifices as of old, and then look for His favour. Now, such conduct would be no confession of their grievous departure from His ways. Had they never sinned, sacrifices ought still to have been offered up, as they will be again in the Millennium, when the law will be written on their hearts. Thus the mere outward conformity to the Mosaic ritual was no recognition of their grievous declension. God would not have this conduct. "They shall not find Him," is the warning of the prophet. "He hath withdrawn Himself from them," is the oracular announcement of the sure failure of all such measures if attempted by the people.

In a similar way do not souls sometimes attempt to act now, and with a corresponding result? The end looked for is not secured because there is no acknowledgment of failure. Activity in service, attention to duties, can never obliterate the past nor atone for previous neglect. After failure has come in, we cannot present ourselves before God as if no failure had taken place. Hence acting, as He ever must, according to what He is, if Israel would thus approach Him, He could only withdraw Himself from them: and of this they are warned beforehand, not left to

find it out afterwards. But if He should withdraw Himself, how should they follow Him? how penetrate the thick darkness in which He enshrouded Himself? As far as they were concerned, their condition seemed desperate, the case hopeless. It was so, had not God been willing to act in grace, being desirous to restore them as a nation. At the close of the chapter this is brought out.

“When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb; yet he could not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.” They confessed by their action what their condition was, but took steps in their own wisdom to recover what they had lost. Need we wonder that disappointment attended them? Their plan had failed. “He could not cure you,” proclaimed the inability of any man to effect such a restoration to blessing as they needed. Far worse, however, than the mere failure of their efforts was the insult to Jehovah of which they were thus guilty. They had turned from God to man. Would He forsake them? He would, but not finally: “I will go and return unto my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early” (v. 15).

The Lord would withdraw from them until . . . not a final withdrawal. That would have ended in everlasting rejection: they must feel, however, the consequences of their sins by the absence of Jehovah from their midst, until—they acknowledge their offence. Confession must take place; then He would again be gracious. He had not withdrawn Himself hastily: their conduct necessitated it. It had not been the wish of His heart; but their pride and obstinacy left Him no other course to pursue. Now, apart from them, He would await the acknowledgment of their sins. Renewed activity was not what He wanted. How ready is man to proffer that! Confession He desired; then activity and worship would find their place. Such was the line marked out for Israel. Would they follow it?

To show God’s desire for the people’s restoration, the pro-

phet, His messenger, immediately, on this announcement, exhorts all to return. There was but one course open for them ; surely they would take it. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord : for He hath torn, and He will heal us ; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us : in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know ; we shall (so we should translate) follow on to know the Lord : His going forth is prepared as the morning ; and He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth ;" or, as some render it, "as the latter rain which waters the earth." Human resources had failed ; there was still the unfailing divine one open to them. "He hath torn, and He will heal us," etc. This was not the language of uncertainty, or the utterance of one clutching hold of what might prove unequal to the exigency of the case. It was the language of one who knew from whence their troubles came, and who was assured of the true remedy. Thus the prophet spake ; but not a word of response have we from the people. Life as from the dead and returning fruitfulness he depicted ; but all in vain. He spake to what was dull and insensible to its welfare. He exhorted ; but to no purpose. They did not turn to the Lord ; so judgment had to take its course. The afflictions of those days were not enough to bring them to their right mind, so yet darker times must come, and severer trials must be endured, ere confession would be drawn from their hearts. "My people are bent to backsliding from me : though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt Him" (xi. 7).

The prophet's exhortation unheeded, for the people in his day there was no hope of averting the threatened judgment. They deserved it, as these chapters (iv.-x.) bring out ; therefore all their "fortresses should be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle," and transportation to Assyria would be undergone. Was there any hope of recovery in the distant future ? There was, because they had to do with God, who had

dealt in sovereign mercy with them at the first. So, commencing with chap. xi., another key-note is struck, not the past and present doings of the people, but the past dealings of God with the nation and with their ancestor Jacob ; and now it is not the deserts of the people, but the heart of God that Hosea so beautifully depicts. He could not give them up, though they had so grievously sinned against Him. Restoration, both national and spiritual, should take place. As Admah and Zeboim He would not make them : the exiled nation should return, ransomed by God from the power of the grave, and redeemed by Him from destruction (xi. 8, 11 ; xiii. 14).

Again, therefore, the prophet speaks, and this time there is a response. Is it that he acts in a different manner to what he did before (vi.), and therefore they listen and answer ? Does he justify them, or let them justify themselves ? Far from it. He exhorts them to return to the Lord their God, for they had fallen by their iniquity. No excuse for them is allowed, no extenuating circumstances admitted. "Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity," yet there was hope. Confession, however, must take place before they can again enjoy the light of Jehovah's countenance. How should they then confess who had, as a nation, so grievously sinned, and aggravated it by refusing to comply with the exhortation of the prophet in his day ? The Spirit of God by the prophet puts the words into their mouth. God teaches them what to say, who, now so fearfully chastised, have sought Him early in their affliction. They cast themselves upon God, saying, "Receive us graciously ;" and learn from His immediate response what they can look for : "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely : for mine anger is turned away from him." Confession made, no uncertainty or torturing doubt is allowed to remain in their hearts. God speaks at once, and how beautifully ! He will heal, and He will love, and He will refresh. They had abused His gifts in days of old. He will make them fruitful on the earth in the days yet to come ; and predicts it in most beautiful language, abounding with illustra-

tions from nature. The dew which revives the plant after the scorching heat of the day, and the fragrance which perfumes the air on a summer morning, the tender lily and majestic cedar, with the corn, wine, and oil, proofs of fertility, are all needed to depict their final blessing, for healing will take place and returning freshness and fruitfulness be experienced. And Ephraim will discern the difference, as he will say—"What have I to do any more with idols?" Then Jehovah will answer—"I have heard him, and observed him." And to Ephraim's rejoinder in the happiness of his heart—"I am like a green fir tree," the Lord will give him the word of caution—"From Me is thy fruit found."

Different, indeed, are the circumstances of Israel in the past and in the future from that of God's children in our day. The principle, however, on which restoration to the enjoyment of divine favour and renewed fruitfulness can be experienced is the same. God desires the blessing of His people, but confession after failure is the appointed road to it. Subjective teaching, too, whilst needed to show man what he is, does not, as Hosea sets forth, draw out the heart to God. Objective teaching is needed for that. The appeal in vi., after the setting before them of their way (iv. v.) is unheeded. But the recital of God's ways with them (xi.-xiii.), which brings out His character in grace, evokes a response from them. Are they peculiar in this? This book, it is true, is full of special application to the condition of Israel, amongst whom the prophet laboured; but its closing words show its value for all time. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein" (xiv. 9).

THOUGHTS ON MICAH.



THERE is a significance often in a name in Scripture, attracting attention to something to be remembered, or witnessing of some gracious act of God either to His people as a whole or to individuals among them. Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Joshua, are instances of this. Nor are these names, so significant, confined to early days. In the time of the kingdom, as in that of the patriarchs and wilderness journey, we meet with examples of the name illustrating something connected with the one who bore it. In the days of Ahab and Jehoshaphat we find it, and in the reign of Jotham we again meet with it. Elijah, raised up to recall Israel to the confession of the true God, bore witness, as his name imports, that Jehovah is God. The heathen widow of Zarephath learned it to her joy; the people of Israel acknowledged it at Carmel; and the two captains of fifty with their companies discovered it to their confusion and destruction. The ministry of Elisha was of a different character, and his name would teach it. Elijah vindicated the divinity of Jehovah, Elisha exhibited His saving and healing power. At a date subsequent to these devoted men, in the south of the land, at Moresheth, was born the prophet Micah, an abridged form of the name Micaiah, by which he is spoken of in Jeremiah xxvi. 18, in the Hebrew text, which means *Who is like Jehovah*; and his writings seem intended to illustrate what his name challenges all to disprove, that there is none like Jehovah of Hosts, the mighty God of Israel.

Called to the prophetic office when Hosea was ministering in Israel, and before Isaiah had announced to Ahaz the

miraculous conception of Immanuel, ere Samaria had received within her gates for the first time since she became the capital of the kingdom of Israel, a conquering army, he appears designed by the Lord Jehovah to direct the nation, if they would attend to him, to their only stay in the times of calamity which were fast approaching. By Hosea God taught the people the only way of restoration for those who have sinned against Him. In the pages of Isaiah He described the King yet to be on the earth in power, and the blessings to be enjoyed under His reign ; and in Micah, whilst taking up in some degree the moral condition of the remnant, and the future blessings under the Shepherd of the sheep, the Lord shows the apostate people of the prophet's day that there is none like Himself, Jehovah their God.

Opening, as has been observed, with the closing words of his namesake who stood before Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii. 28), as a summons to all the nations to hear what Jehovah has to witness against them—Jehovah from His holy temple, Micah speaks at once of the destruction of Samaria, and depicts the march of the Assyrian army to Jerusalem through Judah, in which, places hitherto unmentioned in Scripture, would be witnesses as long as time should last of God's visitation on account of sin. "Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir, in nakedness and shame: the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth; the mourning of Beth-ezel shall take from you its standing" (i. 11). Saphir would experience captivity, whilst Zaanan would be afraid to venture forth on its behalf, and Beth-ezel be too much occupied with her own sorrow to help a neighbour city in distress. Places known, tenanted, and beloved by those who dwelt in them, too small, probably, to be noticed in the day of Israel's greatness, are thus connected for ever with the nation's calamity. Right well did they deserve this infliction, as the prophet proceeds to declare. The sorrow occasioned by an invading army is grievous, but that was not the first occasion when oppression and violence, and insecurity of possessions had been experienced. Often must the cry of the oppressed and

defenceless have ascended up to heaven ere Sennacherib's armed hosts overran Judah. Neither rank, nor that which so often appeals to man's heart with success, the helplessness of women and children, was suffered to stand in the way as a barrier against lawlessness and covetous desires (ii. 1, 2, 8, 9). Of reproofs they were impatient; to the prophets of God they would not hearken, but desired them to keep silence. "Prophesy ye not, say they to them that prophesy" (ii. 6). Yet the people believed in the existence of a prophetic Spirit. It was not the ignorance of those who thought there could be no revelation that Micah reproves, but the determined spirit of opposition to all that came from God, whilst ready to receive what a lying spirit might enunciate. "If a man walking in spirit (or vanity) and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people" (ver. 11). A time of enjoyment was what they wanted, present ease and the indulgence of the appetite, without reference to the future, was enough for them. Wine and strong drink was all they cared to hear about. What did such people deserve but rooting out, and that for ever?

All the nations assembled to hear the Lord's controversy must own that punishment was justly the due of such a generation as this; but all are called on to hearken, and to learn that there was none like God, as the prophet, unable because of Israel's sin, to promise present ease, can yet speak of future triumph. Desolation and captivity were near at hand; but restoration and prosperity is the future in store for them. "I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee: I will surely gather the remnant of Israel: I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold; they shall make a great noise by reason of the multitude of men." Security, plenty, and increase shall be theirs when this takes place. Different had been, and were in the prophet's day, the fortunes of Israel and Judah, but at the time of which Micah prophesies they will be united. Together will Jehovah set them as the sheep of

Bozrah. Exposed to the ravages of the Assyrian they both were, they shall be "as a flock in the midst of their fold," or rather "pasture." Besides this, there was something which directly concerned the nations. The breaker shall go before Israel, even their king, the Lord at their head; and whilst to Israel He will act as a shepherd, the nations will find Him to be the breaker who will remove every barrier raised up to oppose the return of His people, and to keep them still in subjection to a foreign yoke. Amos had predicted the captivity of Samaria. "And ye shall go out at the breaches, every cow at that which is before her" (iv. 3). Micah predicts their return when they shall safely and without hindrance pass out through the gates of the cities of those who have ruled over them. Far better than present ease and strong drink was this. If the false prophet would predict, but in vain, a time of self-indulgence and fleshly gratification, the true prophet could speak with certainty of something, though distant, yet far more cheering; not alleviation in the midst of adverse circumstances, nor present indulgence in the face of a victorious invader, but a bright future of complete deliverance from a foreign yoke, and peace and plenty with the Lord as their Shepherd in their midst. Polluted was the land in the prophet's day; it was no fit resting-place for the people of the Lord then; there will come a time when it shall be clean, manifested by the Lord's presence afresh, and He will be actively engaged in restoring His people to their land, never more to be dispossessed of it. How short-sighted were the people of Micah's day! What a vista of coming blessing does he present!

Again, the prophet summons people to hearken. This time it is to the heads of Jacob and to the princes of the house of Israel that he speaks. Their sins and those of the false prophets are stated. The rulers shall cry to the Lord, but He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings. The prophets shall find it night to them, they shall not have a vision; it

will be dark with them that they shall not divine ; “the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed and the diviners confounded, yea, they shall cover their lips, for there is no answer of God” (iii. 4-7). What should they do then? Where should they turn? Their prayer shut out from God’s presence; the future, as far as they can foresee it, pitch darkness, with nothing, unless God should intervene, but despair to overwhelm them; this is a pitiable condition indeed. Their deserts are clear, but there is none like God; so, whilst He will make the false prophets conscious of the darkness, His own messenger can penetrate the gloom and map out the future of the people.

This he does. Judgment must be executed, and that on Jerusalem. In chapter i. the prophet had spoken of Samaria’s overthrow, here he announces the overturn of Jerusalem. David’s city must be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem which Solomon enriched become heaps, and the mountain of the house, where the Shechinah had been, should be as the high places of the (rather, a) forest, *i.e.* what it was in Abraham’s day (Gen. xxii. 13). Of Samaria we read of nothing but destruction; the stones were to be poured down into the valley, and the foundations to be discovered. The ivory house, one of the glories of Ahab’s reign (1 Kings xxii. 29), must perish; and to Samaria, so beautiful in situation, fitted for a metropolis, Micah holds out no prospect of returning prosperity and beauty. Of Jerusalem it is otherwise, and in language, found also in Isaiah, he predicts its exaltation and metropolitan character, as the habitation of the God of Jacob would be again within it, to which not the tribes only, but many nations in the last days, shall go up. The Lord Jehovah at Jerusalem, His rule shall be obeyed among the Gentiles, peace and plenty be the portion of all nations, and the long-exiled people, afflicted of God for their sins, shall return and become a strong nation, and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even for ever. There had been a season of prosperity and power under David and Solomon;

that shall return, for unto Zion shall come the first dominion, the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. No room will there be for contrasting the future blessing, when enjoyed (as in Ezra iii. 12), with what their fathers had known in the palmiest days of the kingdom, for the first dominion shall come to Zion, and the final issue of the Babylonish captivity shall be redemption from the power of their enemies, and their overthrow by the people they have so trampled on and despised.

Very clear is this outline, and very decided is the language. It could not be otherwise, for the plan is of God, and the words have been selected by the Spirit of God. In common with Isaiah, Micah speaks of the future of the temple, yet he does not simply travel over ground which others before him have trod. He shows his competency to declare by the Spirit of the Lord what shall be in the future, as he speaks of the birthplace of the Messiah, not elsewhere predicted, and tells of the returned remnant's rejection in consequence of their treatment of the Eternal One.

Living after the fulfilment of part of his prophecy, we can mark the exactness of his predictions and understand the statement concerning things yet future. Rejected of Jehovah for their rejection of the Christ until Jerusalem shall travail in birth with child, the prophet marks the difference between that which characterises the epoch in which we live and that which will come after it, "the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." Now they form part of the church, then they will be reckoned with the nation. "And He shall stand and feed (*i.e.* as a shepherd his flock) in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide: for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth." And, as the prophet has told out what the people of Zion will do to the enemies gathered together against them at Jerusalem (iv. 12, 13), he also tells us, what none beside him predict, the victorious march of the once oppressed and captive people into the very region of the earth from whence

the conqueror of the ten tribes had come forth (v. 6). Then, turning back to the land, his home, and the home of the nation when restored, he advertises all of the changes that will be witnessed. He knew it as a land of chariots, and horses, and strongholds, and witchcrafts, and groves. The chariots and horses forbidden to Israel (Deut. xvii. 16), and witchcrafts shall cease, and the groves be cut down, and the fenced cities, those silent but impressive witnesses of lawlessness and violence and weakness, shall be needed no longer. Vengeance, too, will be executed in anger and fury, not upon Israel, but on the heathen, such as they have not heard. Who but God could trace out such an outline, now partly fulfilled? And who but He would address a confessedly guilty nation in such language as this?

A third time the prophet summons witnesses to hearken to what the Lord saith. The nations, and the leaders of Israel have been respectively addressed; now he speaks before the mountains, and the hills are to hear his voice, "for the Lord hath a controversy with His people, He will plead with Israel" (vi. vii.) His dealings with them at the outset of their national existence are referred to. How had He wearied them that they had turned from Him? Had He not brought them up out of Egypt, redeemed them out of the house of servants, and provided them with all that they wanted—Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, the king and lawgiver, the priest, and the prophetess? Had He not also withstood Balaam at the close of their wilderness career? These acts proclaimed His righteousnesses (so Micah wrote). But of what could they speak? The remnant confess their sin, the wickedness of the rest God exposes. But if the best of them could only take the ground of confession, what could they, standing on the ground of law, look for but judgment? Where then should they turn? There was but One to whom they could look—Jehovah, against whom they had sinned. For Him they must wait as the God of their salvation, knowing that He would hear them. This the remnant declare they will do, and

the prophet can assure them that their confidence will not be misplaced. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause and execute judgment for me : He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness," are the words provided by the Spirit of God for the daughter of Zion to use. "In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed," is God's immediate answer by the prophet, speaking of the certainty of Zion being rebuilt. When that takes place, they will assemble to her from Assyria, and from the cities of Egypt (not the fortified cities), and from Egypt (not the fortress) to the river,¹ and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain. The flock of God's heritage shall feed in Bashan and Carmel as in days of old, and Israel, the prey and sport of nations, shall prosper, whilst abject fear shall take possession of the Gentiles, because of the Lord and of His people (vii. 9-17).

Recording this bright ending to so dark a beginning, well might the prophet break out at the close in words expressive of wonder at the God whose servant he was, and whose purposes of mercy toward Israel he was commissioned to declare. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion on us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." His character, His faithfulness, are the stay of His people. Sinned they have, and that grievously, but God delighteth in mercy. Judgment is His strange work, but mercy is His delight. What a character of their God, and ours too, will that be for them to meditate upon! Unworthy of any favour they are, but God's word is pledged to Jacob (Gen. xxxv.

¹ *i.e.* the Euphrates.

12), and the origin of every promise He gave them as His earthly people was His kindness to Abraham. The grounds on which He could thus act must be sought for elsewhere. What God is, and will be to His people is what Micah was charged to declare. And surely it will be found at the close of the nation's long night of darkness and bitterness, when the remnant of Messiah's brethren shall have returned to the children of Israel (as the faithful in the prophet's day which preceded the Babylonish captivity, and the faithful during its continuance, and the returned remnant of Ezra's and Nehemiah's time, in the midst of the alternations of hope and fear in which they lived, severally proved), that God's faithfulness and truth are the stay of His people. To show mercy is His prerogative (Psalm lxii. 12). So, though the nation turned from Him in Micah's day, He will surely bring back His people in power. When all was dark, He alone could, and did, shed light on the scene. And when all is fulfilled, the closing words of Micah's prophecy will be the language just suited for His finally ransomed people. We, too, know what it is to find comfort in the knowledge of His character and of His faithfulness to that which He has announced (Ephes. ii. 4-6 ; 1 Thess. v. 24).

THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY.



IN the recent attack on the genuineness of the Book of Deuteronomy as part of the law given by God to Israel through Moses, Professor R. Smith attempts to support his case by "the Bible evidence, of a kind," he tells us, "which does not strike the ordinary reader of Scripture." We will state his position in his own words. "To realise its full force one must gather together all the laws upon a single topic, which are scattered through various parts of the Pentateuch, and compare them one with another, and with what is recorded of the practice of God's servants, of men like Samuel, David, and Elijah, in later times than the days of Moses. We find two or three laws on the same subject, one in Exodus, one in Deuteronomy, another perhaps in Leviticus or Numbers; but the provisions of the several laws do not appear to agree. Then we turn to the history, and we find, let us say, that Samuel and David conformed their practice to what seems to be the natural sense of the law in Exodus, but habitually broke the law of Deuteronomy. We cannot suppose that these inspired men habitually violated a law of God that was in their hands, and therefore it seems probable that they only knew the law as it stands in Exodus. But we follow the history still further. We find that in the time of Isaiah and Micah corruptions had crept in which the law of Exodus was not strict enough to meet. We find these prophets contending against the corruption not on the grounds of the other stricter law of Deuteronomy, but by direct prophetic revelation. Then we come down to the time of Josiah, and find

that he had the law of Deuteronomy in his hand, and put down the evil by appealing to it. Are we to suppose that all this time Deuteronomy had existed, had been copied and recopied, but never put into practice? If Moses gave two laws, why was one strict and the other more lax, and why was the laxer one alone known for so many centuries? Is it not more reasonable to think that the law of Deuteronomy was not revealed till the corruptions arose with which the old law was unfit to cope? There is nothing in such a supposition improbable or unworthy of the Divine wisdom. The whole growth of the Old Testament Church was directed by the continual prophetic revelation. And it is only reasonable to believe that this inspired guidance watched over the law, as well as over the other concerns of the people.”¹

When (perhaps some bewildered reader will ask, if Professor R. Smith’s assumption is correct) was the law of Deuteronomy revealed, and the covenant based on it made known? He tells us that the covenant of Deuteronomy, the terms of which are given in chaps. xii.-xxvi., was not revealed in the days of Elijah, and probably was revealed sometime between Isaiah and Jeremiah, “in order to give practical effect to the teaching of the former prophet and his helpers” (p. 13).

Is all this sober truth? Let us test it. In the days of Isaiah and Micah the law of Exodus, he tells us, was inadequate to meet the corruptions which were dealt with by direct prophetic revelation. These prophets were pretty much contemporaneous, so an examination of the way Micah deals with the people will sufficiently test the allegation in question. He reproves them for idolatry in chap. i. 7; just that which was forbidden by the second commandment. He reproves them for covetousness in chap. ii. 2. Now, that was forbidden by the tenth commandment. And though in Exodus xx. the word *fields* does not occur in the text of that commandment, Moses, when reciting the commandment in Deuteronomy v. 21, which was given

¹ Answer to the amended libel by W. Robertson Smith, 2d edition, pp. 10, 11.

him for them at Sinai, distinctly introduces the word on which Micah founds one of his charges, showing that the commandment in Exodus condemned the act especially noticed in Deuteronomy. Thou shalt not covet his field, God had commanded His people. "They covet fields," was part of the prophet's indictment against the people. In chap. iii. he reproves the leaders and teachers among them for their unrighteous ways towards Jehovah's people, reminding us very much of the direct command in Exodus xxii., xxiii. In chap. v. 12 witchcrafts are denounced, which Exodus xxii. 18 had clearly condemned. The *asherim*, too, translated "groves," are also condemned, about which God, in Exodus xxxiv. 13, had expressed His mind. In chap. vi. 8 they are reminded of the conduct which God desired should characterise His people, and He condemns unrighteousness in business and the perversion of justice. We turn once more to Exodus xxi.-xxiii. for the inculcation of justice and mercy, whilst Leviticus xix. 35-36 affords us evidence that scant measures were condemned when as yet the people were dwelling within sight of Mount Sinai. The allegation therefore falls to the ground that Micah met the corruptions of his day only by prophetic revelation and not by the law of Moses, for the law given in the wilderness of Sinai convicted the people of his time, and justified the heavy indictment that the Lord by His servant brought against them.

But Professor Smith has more to tell us. "The prophets after Samuel were not the rulers of Israel. They revealed God's will, but had no power to enforce it in actual practice, except so far as they could persuade rulers to give it their sanction. Hence a prophetic new edition of the law was only a plan or programme submitted to the nation—a Bill, as it were, not an Act of Parliament. Josiah, perhaps, was the first king who adopted this programme of a code, though it may have been partially in force during the latter years of Hezekiah" (pp. 26, 27). To this, and much more that could be quoted, one might well exclaim, in the language of the heathen writer, *Credat Judaeus Apella, non ego*. Just to think

what such statements involve! God's word by the prophets, if it was God's word, had no authority in itself till accepted by the nation, or the ruler on its behalf! It was like a bill presented to Parliament for the acceptance of the nation, and depended for its validity to be obeyed on the persuasive power of the prophet over the mind of the ruler!! Such statements, however, are not in accordance with facts. For God's message by Jeremiah vii. 13, xxv. 3-11, xxxv. 14-17, shows that the Lord held the people responsible to hear, and answerable, too, for their refusal to obey, the voice of His servants the prophets; and the captivity in Babylon, as 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15-17 shows, gives the lie to such statements.

One more extract to let the reader understand the Professor's view of Deuteronomy. "I believe that the laws of Deut. xii.-xxvi. were originally published either alone, or with the introductory address in chapters v.-xi. as a preface, and perhaps some part of xxvii., xxviii. as a conclusion. [Could he tell us what part?] The question is, Whether the person who took up this originally separate book into the account of Moses' last labours and final exhortations to Israel was thereby guilty of fraud upon the readers such as to destroy the character of his book, and forbid us to accept it as part of Scripture? The present book of Deuteronomy contains in addition to the code of chapters xii.-xxvi., several long speeches connected by a slender thread of narrative, the substance of which may be given as follows:—In the land of Moab, after the slaughter of Sihon and Og, Moses addressed the people and expounded to them the law (i. 1-5; iv. 44-49). He also separated three cities of refuge to the east of Jordan (iv. 41-43). He further commanded the people to write the law on stones upon Mount Ebal, and perform there a solemn service of blessing and cursing (xxvii.) Further, he wrote the law, and entrusted it to the priests, with a charge to read it publicly once in seven years. He also wrote and recited a prophetic song in connection with his last charge to Joshua. He then blessed the people, and ascending Mount Pisgah died there,

lamented by the people. Now it is clear that the historical value of these details is really independent of the question, whether the code which comes in in the heart of the book has or has not been re-edited by a prophet later than Moses. The adoption of my view of that code does not in any way forbid one to believe that Moses solemnly set the law before the people previously to his death. It implies only that an editor of the Pentateuchal history, having the Deuteronomic code in his hand, and knowing it to be the form of the laws of Moses binding on the people in his own day, felt that it would be useful for his readers to have it inserted in immediate connection with the warm exhortations to follow God's law that occupy the chapters immediately preceding its present place. It is clear that this course, instead of deceiving the people, was a simple and natural guard against misconception. Had this writer followed up the words of xi. 23, 'Ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day,' by giving the old law exactly as it came from Moses, with all the obsolete provisions which the new law had changed, he would have run a risk of betraying some of his readers into a wrong course of conduct. For, after all, as I must again and again point out, the Israelites went to this book not for antiquarian information about old laws, but for practical directions in daily life. I think that this view of the matter will commend itself to ordinary common sense as reasonable, and by no means inconsistent with veracity" (pp. 29-30).

One may well doubt whether such a view would commend itself to ordinary common sense as by no means inconsistent with veracity, for it makes the prophet, by incorporating into the books of Moses laws which were not there originally, resort to a subterfuge, because he felt that such insertions would be useful to his readers! If the prophet had acted in this way he would have left God out of his thoughts, and have compiled or edited the book according to his own judgment, and apart from any divine guidance. But who was this prophet? The Professor

undertakes to enlighten us, but without acquainting his readers with the source from whence he got his information. He was, he tells us, well known in his own day, and no mean man among the prophets, but "it was his duty, which he performed so singly and with such self-denial that his very name has been lost, not to lay stress on his own work and the novelties it contained, but to make the people feel that Moses though dead still spake [which, under the circumstances, was a lie]; that his law [but these new enactments, we have been told, were contrary to the true Mosaic legislation] was not an obsolete curiosity [yet this act of the prophet would show that it was], but, wielded by a prophet's hand, could still be Israel's guide to the knowledge and fear of Jehovah" (p. 24).

Leaving to Mr. Smith the task of harmonising his own statements, let us turn to Scripture to learn what it has to say to all this. It so happens that we have an instance of an alteration in the law of Moses made by a prophet, and by divine direction. Now how did this prophet proceed? Did he act as Mr. Smith suggests his nameless prophet did? By no means. For, instead of the alteration he introduced being foisted into the Pentateuch, it appears only in the historical books, yet it was held to be binding ever after. Further, the prophet's name is openly stated. And we must add, however strange it may seem in the eyes of rationalistic critics, this manner of procedure answered every end for which it was designed. We allude to the alteration made by David as to the age when the Levites were to commence their service in the temple. According to Numbers viii. 24, the Levites commenced work at twenty-five years of age and upwards, but they did not bear burdens till of the age of thirty. By the last words of David they were numbered from twenty years and upwards, and commenced their work for the service of the house of the Lord at that age (1 Chron. xxiii. 24-32), since the burdensome wilderness work they would no longer be called on to perform.

Here, then, is an instance of a deliberate alteration in the law

effected through the instrumentality of a prophet, the validity of which was never questioned, any more than the introduction of music into the worship of Israel, which was effected also by David (1 Chron. xxiii. 5). God could, and God did, make the change in the law about the Levites, and introduced into the ritual that for which Moses had made no provision. He did it by a prophet, but it was done openly, and it needed not the artifices suggested by Professor Smith to ensure its acceptance as the Lord's mind for His people. For in the days of Hezekiah the ordinances of David were remembered and carried out (2 Chron. xxix. 25-26). In the days of Jeshua and Zerubbabel these same ordinances were acted upon by the returned remnant (Ezra iii. 10). Hence the supposed prophet of Jeremiah or Josiah's date had before him the precedent of David, Gad, and Nathan, as to an alteration, and an important one, in the law of Moses, the validity of which was acknowledged by all in his day. Why then should he shroud himself in mystery, and work deceitfully with the writings of Moses for a purpose of which he had full proof could be successfully effected without any subterfuge or concealment?

Again, we are told that Josiah had the law of Deuteronomy in his hand, and put down the evil by appealing to it. Surely he had that law, but not that only. The book found is called "the book of the law of Jehovah by the hand of Moses" (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14, which may well have been the very copy written by Moses, and deposited by his command in the side of the ark (Deut. xxxi. 9, 25, 26). But whether it was that copy or not, there is evidence that Josiah must have had, and that he acted upon more than what was written, in the book of Deuteronomy. The answer of the prophetess Huldah indicates this, when she said by the word of the Lord, "Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read; because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their

hands, therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched" (2 Kings xxii. 16, 17). Now part of what Huldah speaks of is not found in Deuteronomy, but is plainly stated in Levit. xxvi. For though Deut. xxviii. predicts the sorrows of the people, if they should fail in the keeping of the covenant, Levit. xxvi. 31 it is which openly states what Deut. xxviii. 52 can only be said to hint at,—the destruction of their cities and their sanctuaries, and all because of idolatry; which sin is especially mentioned in that chapter in Leviticus (xxvi. 1). No wonder the king put down idolatry with that chapter of Leviticus before his eyes. Nor need we wonder at the answer of the prophetess announcing God's judgment on Jerusalem, when we peruse that part of the law of Moses. Deuteronomy xxviii. treats of the effects of disobedience on the people; Levit. xxvi. predicts divine judgment on the land if Israel should turn to idolatry; Huldah's answer announces judgment on both. Professor Smith boldly asserts that the king acted according to the law of Deuteronomy, but gives us no proof that his statement is anything more than a mere assertion. A reference to the history and to Deuteronomy evidences, we submit, that his statement is unsupported by the word; and who, indeed, could limit the king's acquaintance with God's law to the last book of the Pentateuch, of whom it is written, that "Like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to *all* the law of Moses" (2 Kings, xxiii. 25). So far, then, as we have tested the grounds by Scripture on which Mr. Smith would base his arguments, that the covenant, the terms of which we have in Deut. xii.-xxvi., is not exactly that which came from Moses, we can only rise up from an examination of them under the conviction that the teaching of Scripture is very different from that of the writer in question. But he goes further, and attempts to show from Scripture itself that the Deuteronomic code "cannot have been published in its present form by Moses, because it contains

precepts which can be proved, from other parts of the Bible, to have been revealed at a later date" (p. 10). Into this we will now look.

"These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb" (Deut. xxix. 1). These words plainly declare that there was a covenant made with them in the plains of Moab, in addition to the one made with them in Horeb. Now the book of Deuteronomy is the only portion of the word which professes to give us that covenant at all, and it professes to give us the whole of it. Part, too, of this book clearly was in existence when Joshua, with Israel, entered the land, for the twelve tribes under Joshua carried out the service appointed by Moses in Deut. xi., xxvii., at Ebal and Gerizim (Joshua viii. 30-35), on which occasion there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them. The covenant made in the plains of Moab, whatever it was, Joshua and Israel were aware of, and the blessings and cursings of Deut. xxviii. are connected with the observance or non-observance of all the commandments which Moses himself commanded them, or, to quote his own words, "which I command you this day" (see xxviii. 1, 15, xxix. 12, xxx. 2, 15). Now it is inconceivable that the terms of the covenant, on the observance or not of which so much depended, were not definitely settled till ages after the people had crossed the Jordan; yet, accepting Mr. Smith's theory, we are pledged to that. Further, it is wholly unlike God's ways at any time with men, placed on the ground of responsibility, that He should not have given them His full and definite commands, which they were responsible to keep; and who could conceive a true prophet of God, in the face of these words of Moses in Deut. xxviii., xxix., and xxx., already referred to, with those words also of the lawgiver in iv. 2, before his eyes, and the announcement of the

prophet like unto Moses, for whose advent they were to wait to give them further revelations, foisting into the law of Moses commands, which he knew, whatever others did, that they were never given to Israel by the son of Amram, on the east of the river Jordan? The supposition is most improbable, and the acceptance of it would involve us in a host of difficulties. What, then, are those proofs from Scripture on which Mr. Smith seeks from his readers acceptance of his views?

“The law of Exodus xx. 22-26, allows the Israelite to approach God by sacrifice, and encourages him to expect His blessing in all places where—by some act of revelation—Jehovah has recorded His name. Such places were the ancient sanctuaries—Bethel, Shechem, Beersheba, Hebron—where God had accepted the worship of the patriarchs, or newer shrines like Gilgal, consecrated by some mighty deed of the Lord for His people. This law was strictly followed by Samuel, Saul, and David. They sacrificed at many shrines, but only at places known of old by some historical record of God’s name; or, if they raised a new altar, it was raised in memorial of some great mercy, whereby God associated the record of His name with a new place of worship (1 Sam. xiv. 35; 2 Sam. xxiv. 25). Not so the law of Deuteronomy (see especially Deut. xii.) That law knows only one legal sanctuary chosen by the Lord out of all the tribes of Israel, and where all sacrifice must be offered. Every other sanctuary is heathenish (xii. 1-4), and all other sacrifice is will worship, without foundation in divine law (xii. 8), and not to be tolerated after the people are settled in Canaan (xii. 9, seq.) This law, if it was actually uttered by Moses, would come into force as soon as the ark was settled at Shiloh (compare Deut. xii. 5, 10, 11, with Joshua xviii. 1; Jer. vii. 12), from which time onward no other sanctuary could be other than superstitious” (pp. 11-12).

Now this passage bristles with blunders. Scripture is misquoted; Scripture is misunderstood; and facts of history are really, though probably unconsciously to the writer, perverted.

The Lord in Exodus xx. 24 said—"In all places where I *shall* record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee." Mr. Smith, who is a Hebrew scholar and should know better, writes as if Jehovah had spoken in the past tense, "have recorded," instead of "shall record." The effect of this mistake is to make Bethel, Shechem, Beersheba, and Hebron, as well as Gilgal, some of the places referred to, whereas by the Lord's word they are all of them expressly excluded. For in Exodus the Lord is looking on to the future; and the first place in which He did record His name was Shiloh, as He Himself, by His prophet Jeremiah (vii. 12) tells us—"Go ye now unto my place, which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first." Hence not one of those places mentioned by Professor Smith were in God's mind when He gave that promise to Moses, and not till the event mentioned in Joshua xviii. took place did God record His name for Israel in any place in the land. The statements of Scripture, the very words of Jehovah Himself, directly overturn the statement of the writer of that paragraph. Bethel, Shechem, Beersheba, and Hebron, were places connected with patriarchal worship. At Shechem and Gilgal Israel had been, and these places were connected most closely with their history; but the national association with them was prior to the erection of the tabernacle at Shiloh, where God set up His name at the first. Further, the Lord never recalled His people to worship at any place because of its connection with a patriarchal altar, for sanctuaries they did not, that we ever read of, erect. The only exceptions to this assertion that might be quoted are really no exceptions to it. We refer to Shechem and Mount Moriah. On Mount Ebal, near to Shechem, Joshua did build an altar; on Mount Moriah David did sacrifice to God; but on neither occasion was the altar erected because the site had once been used as a patriarchal sanctuary, or the place of a patriarchal altar. Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, were resting-places of the tabernacle previous to the building of the temple; but not one of these places figures in any way in the histories of Abraham, Isaac, or of Jacob. So far,

then, from Mr. Smith's assertion being correct, the Lord seems to have carefully guarded His people from going back to such places. Jeroboam led Israel back to Bethel. The Lord did not, though in the days of the Judges¹ and of Samuel the children of Israel resorted to it. God bore with that then; but never, that we read of, commanded it. Again we are told that Samuel, Saul, and David, sacrificed at many shrines, but *only* at those known of old by some historical record of God's name, or any altar they raised was raised "in memorial of some great mercy, whereby God associated the record of His name with a new place of worship" (1 Sam. xiv. 35; 2 Sam. xxiv. 25). Is this correct? Samuel built an altar at Ramah (1 Sam. vii. 17). Saul's first altar was built on the battle-field, or near it, between Michmash and Aijalon, the witness rather of his folly in hindering the victory, than of a great mercy whereby God associated the record of His name with that place for worship. David built an altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite by express command from the angel of the Lord, in order that the plague should be stayed among the people (2 Sam. xxiv. 18-25; 1 Chron. xxi. 18-27). But that they sacrificed *only* at places known of old is an assertion without foundation as regards Samuel and Saul, and misleading as regards David. And we do not read of any one of them raising an altar in memory of some great mercy God had shown them. David raised his to obtain one. Not one of these three did that which Mr. Smith asserts. We need not then wonder, if facts in history are so misstated, that the difference between Exodus xx. 22-26 and Deuteronomy xii. should be misunderstood. For the ground taken by Mr. Smith to prove that Deuteronomy xii. is a law that was not given through Moses is founded on a mistake. He confounds the permission to erect altars for burnt offerings and peace offerings with the recognition, when in the land, of only one lawful sanctuary.

¹ The ark was at Bethel during the war between Israel and Benjamin (Jud. xx. 18, 26, 31). There they sacrificed, but on an altar reared up for the occasion (xxi. 4), the tabernacle and brazen altar being evidently elsewhere.

Exodus xx. speaks of altars, Deuteronomy xii. of a sanctuary. Keep these distinctions in mind, and the alleged contradiction between Exodus and Deuteronomy on this point at once disappears. God allowed the erection of altars anywhere in the land for burnt offerings and peace offerings to be offered thereon. He thus provided for His people to express their thankfulness, or devotional spirit, whenever they were so minded. But on these altars no sin offering, trespass offering, or meat offering, such as Levit. ii. prescribes, were the people authorised to offer. Further, to keep the people, when in the land, from idolatry, which the doomed nations had practised and still carried on, God gave Israel the law relative to the one sanctuary, and that by Moses. Besides this, Deuteronomy speaks in chap. xxvii. of an altar apart from the brazen altar, and Joshua with Israel erected it (Josh. viii. 30). Now is it not strange that the nameless prophet, whom Mr. Smith would introduce to our notice, should incorporate a law into Deuteronomy to supersede the law of Exodus, when there was in that very book a command, undoubtedly given by Moses, in full agreement with the law of Exod. xx. as to the erection of altars elsewhere than at the sanctuary? Why did he not eliminate from the Pentateuch chapter xxvii. of Deuteronomy, that one part of the book should not clash with the other? Surely, if he could insert, he could also strike out. But Deut. xxvii. was not struck out, nor was Deut. xii. inserted by a nameless prophet.

For Deuteronomy chapter xii. cannot be the production of a prophet about the time of Hezekiah, Jeremiah, or Josiah. If so, that law was not extant in the day of Phinehas. How then shall we account for his language to the Israelites east of Jordan? What means, too, the answer of the two tribes and a half? Both the questioner and those questioned recognised that which Deut. xii. insisted on, viz. the tabernacle, and the altar connected with it, as the one place of national worship (Josh. xxii. 19, 29). The language of the one party and the answer of the other would be inexplicable on Mr. Smith's hypothesis, but both

are quite in keeping with the acceptance of Deut. xii. as part of the law given by Moses.

We rest not, however, here. For 1 Kings iii. 2 gives the true reason why, till Solomon's time, the people sacrificed and burnt incense in high places, "because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord till those days." Scripture explains it all perfectly, but in explaining it refutes this theory, whoever may be the author of it, and convicts those who adopt it of ignorance on this point of the written word. Evidently, then, Deut. xii. was known, and owned to be God's law in the early days of Solomon. Could Samuel, Saul, and David have been unconscious of it? How much at fault in this matter must the verifying power of the critic be, who fixes on the time of Jeremiah or Josiah for the introduction of a law which was evidently known in the days of Solomon! We cannot, however, wonder at any mis-statement of facts when we read the astounding piece of information that "there is not a hint of anything exceptional in the worship of Israel between the fall of Shiloh and the building of the temple" (p. 12). A charity schoolboy might correct this. Nothing exceptional in their worship, when all that time the ark was away from the holy of holies, and no atonement could therefore be effected! Nothing exceptional in their worship, when Levites were with the ark in Jerusalem to minister before it continually, and all the priests were sent by David to the tabernacle at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi. 37-42)! Nothing exceptional, when by the slaughter of Abimelech and the priests at Nob, Abiathar the high priest had to take refuge with and share the fortunes of David (1 Sam. xxii. 23)!

Another ground for the contradictory assertion, that the laws in Deuteronomy "are the laws of Moses in a new edition, embodying modifications which cannot have proceeded from him" (p. 20), is based on the law about a king in the xviii. chapter of that book. It is argued that in Samuel's day that law was not on the statute-book (pp. 21, 22). A reference to what did take place, as recorded in 1 Samuel, will put the matter in its

true light. The people went to Samuel and said, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (viii. 5), language very similar to that of Deut. xvii. 14, which was the prophetic announcement of what would be the expression of their hearts and lips. A simple reader would probably conclude that the people had that very law of Deuteronomy in their mind when preferring their request to the prophet. Compare 1 Sam. viii. 5 with Deut. xvii. 14, and let the Hebrew student turn to the originals, and see how close is the resemblance between the actual words uttered and the language which God foretold that they would utter. Did Samuel say they were asking for something never contemplated? No. He was displeased when they said "Make us a king to *judge* us," and Scripture makes us understand, from the Lord's answer to him, something of the feelings of his heart. "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me" (1 Sam. viii. 7). The prophet viewed their request as a personal slight to himself, who was the judge. The Lord knew that, and showed him that He knew it. As yet the true reason for their request, and their sin in asking for a king, had not been laid bare. In 1 Sam. xii. 12 it all came out, "When ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king." Here is the clue to the difficulty, if anybody really has one. The thought of a king was nothing new, the prophet's mother had spoken of it (1 Sam. ii. 10); but the motive for desiring one was wrong. Thus the history explains all that needs explanation, and surely demonstrates what unstable ground that incident would be whereon to rest an argument against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Next, let us glance at the law of manumission in Exod. xxi. and Deut. xv. 7-18. In the former, if a father sold his daughter to one who betrothed her to be his wife, her husband could not send her away in the year of release. In the latter, both bondsmen and bondswomen were to go out free. Are these laws irreconcilable with the belief that both were given by the

lawgiver? We have only to mark the difference between them, and the mountain of difficulty disappears like a dissolving view. Exod. xxi. guards the interests of the bondswoman whom the master had betrothed to be his wife. Deut. xv. guards the interests of the bondswoman who stood in no such position to her master. But here an objection is raised. "If a bondswoman, as a rule, went free after seven years, why does the law of Exodus specially provide that the wife, who came in with her husband, was to go out with him" (p. 18)? The answer is most simple. Exodus does not speak, as Mr. Smith puts it, of the wife going in with her husband to slavery, but of a man previously married going into bondage. Under such circumstances he was the slave; so the services of his wife could not be claimed by her master when her husband was free. The perfect justice of these laws is well worthy of notice. What the man had before he became a bondsman remained his when his term of service was over. What his master had given him, whilst a bondsman, remained his master's when the year of release arrived.

Another difficulty is raised on the plea of variance between laws in Exodus and Leviticus and those in Deuteronomy. But why might there not be variances between them, as the altered circumstances, from the wilderness life to settlement in the land, would necessitate? And why should such variances compel us of necessity to reject the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy in consequence? There are variances in the laws. Compare Exod. xxiii. 4 with Deut. xxii. 1-3, and Levit. xvii. 3, 4 with Deut. xii. 21, 22. See also Deut. xiv. 23 compared with verse 24. Settlement in the land necessitated certain alterations; so, whilst those near to the sanctuary were to bring their tithes in kind every year, those at a distance were allowed to turn them into money, and to bring them up in that shape, instead of driving the animals before them. If such variances necessitate the rejection of the popular belief that Deuteronomy is part of the law given by Moses, are we to judge that Deut.

xiv. 23 is by him, and verse 24 by the unnamed and unknown prophet? The objections therefore raised on the ground of variance between Exod. xxii. 31 and Deut. xiv. 21 can be explained in this way. But it is curious that in stating the difference Professor Smith cannot state it correctly. "Another plain instance of variance between Exodus and Deuteronomy is, that the former (xxii. 31) commands the flesh of an animal found torn in the field to be thrown to the dogs; and so in Levit. xvii. 15 it is enacted that any one who eats such food,—be he an Israelite or a protected stranger,—must perform a statutory purification, and be unclean till evening. But in Deut. xiv. 21 the Israelite is allowed to present carrion to the stranger who lives under his protection, and he in turn is permitted to eat it" (p. 18). Exodus xxii. treats wholly of anything torn by beasts, which God forbade Israel to eat of. Levit. xvii. prescribes the legal purification should an Israelite, or a stranger in the camp—for that chapter treats of camp life—have eaten of anything torn by beasts, or of that which died of itself. Deut. xiv. treats only of that which died of itself (not of anything torn by beasts), which might be given to the stranger. A principle runs throughout these laws, viz. that Israel, as a holy people, were to be careful about their eating; but when in the land, that which died of itself they might give to the stranger, or sell it to an alien. As Mr. Smith states it, the reader would suppose that what Exod. xxii. forbade Deut. xiv. treated of. A perusal of the two passages compared with Levit. xvii. will, we think, demonstrate the contrary. Exodus only treats of that which was torn of beasts, *t'refah*. Deuteronomy, on the other hand, has in view that which died of itself, *n'belah*. Levit. xvii. mentions both, for they are really different.

The same want of accuracy is evidenced in the statements about the asylums and the altar, on p. 19. The cities of refuge were not sanctuaries, though they were sanctified or set apart to be places of refuge for the man-slayer; but the altar mentioned in Exod. xxi. 14, is none other than that which was afterwards

known as the brazen altar. This Mr. Smith denies, referring to Numb. xviii. 3 as his authority. Numb. xviii. forbids any one not of Aaron's race approaching the altar to minister thereat, but does not treat of any criminal or a person in danger of death taking hold of its horns for security. That a person could fly to the altar of the Lord, and take hold of it and live, Adonijah is a witness (1 Kings i. 50-52). That a murderer was to find it no place of refuge Joab learned, and his death attests (1 Kings ii. 28). A reference then to the Scriptures clears away this difficulty, and only demonstrates, in one more instance, the inaccuracy of the objector, and the sandy foundation on which he would rest so important and serious a statement.

Similarly as to the law of firstlings, detailed in Exod. xxii. 30, Numb. xviii. 15-18, and in Deut. xv. 19-20. In the wilderness they were to be presented to God on the eighth day, and the priests fed on them after they had been duly sacrificed on the altar. In the land the people were to sanctify them, and to eat them year by year before the Lord their God, in the place which He should choose: for those far off from the altar would have been overburdened if each animal was to be brought up on the eighth day. Claimed, however, by God, He gave them in the wilderness to the priests; but in the land, where the priests must have been better provided for in other ways, the people ate of them, yet only before God. But there is nothing in the law to say the priest did not share in the feast, though it is true he is not expressly named. In the one case, then, and in the other, the Lord maintained His rights; for these animals were His, and He gave them to whom He chose. But the reason assigned by Mr. Smith for the change, viz. that the local altars were abolished when the Deuteronomic editor inserted that provision in the law of Moses, is a pure unfounded myth.

Two other objections are raised in p. 21. We give them in the writer's own words:—

“The priest's portion of a common sacrifice, what is tech-

nically called a peace offering, was, according to Lev. vii. 30-34, the breast and the right leg [*shok*]. In Deut. xviii. 3 his portion is the foreshoulder [*z'roang*], the cheeks, and the maw. Dr. Douglas admits his inability to reconcile this discrepancy. Again, Deut. (xiv. 23, xv. 20) bids the people eat the firstlings in a feast at the sanctuary. Numb. xviii. 18 assigns the firstlings absolutely to the priests. They must be sacrificed, but no part of the flesh goes to the offerer—"their flesh shall be thine [the priest's], like the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder, it shall be thine." Dr. Douglas still thinks that this may mean that only the breast and leg are to go to the priest. But the words are plain to the contrary. The practice of the second temple, as we know it from Jewish tradition, is also against him. Moreover, his explanations will hardly square with the fact that the firstlings of an unclean beast had to be bought back from the priest, or else might be sold by the latter (Lev. xxvii. 27; Numb. xviii. 15); and, finally, there is another absolute contradiction in the laws, when Numb. xviii. 17 forbids the redemption of any firstling fit for sacrifice; but Deut. xiv. 24 *seq.* allows the animal to be turned into money, and the price spent at the sanctuary on any kind of meat or drink. How can such discrepancies as these be got over without the hypothesis of two editions of the law, not both published by Moses?" (p. 21).

As usual, there are inaccuracies in statement. The *shok*, whatever that was, in Leviticus, was assigned to the officiating priest, and the breast went to all the males of the priesthood. This distinction, if Mr. Smith has seized, he has not stated; but has told us something quite different, viz. that the breast and the right leg were the priests' portion in Leviticus. Then his reference to Lev. xxvii. 27 is all wrong. There it is the redemption of an unclean beast sanctified to God that is treated of. No man could sanctify his firstling of an unclean animal till he had redeemed it according to law, for till then it was not his but the Lord's. Mr. Smith first falls into a mistake, and

then would parade as a contradiction in Scripture what has no foundation in fact. Thirdly, he refers to Deut. xiv. 24, but omits to tell his readers that the provision contained in that and the following verses was only for those who were not located near to the sanctuary, verse 23 enjoining on those within easy reach of it to bring up the animal itself to God's altar.

On the laws of the firstlings we have already remarked. On the difference, as he states it, between the priests' portion in Leviticus and that in Deut. xiv. a few words are needful. In Leviticus the limb of the animal of the peace offering assigned to the priest is called *shok*, and so in Exodus and Numbers. In Deuteronomy it is called *z'roang*. Are these necessarily different limbs, the former being the leg and the latter the shoulder? Mr. Smith says, unhesitatingly, "Yes." The ancient versions—Chaldee, LXX, and Vulg.—differ from him, and they are in agreement with modern scholars, as Buxtorf, Rosenmüller, Fuerst. The truth is, *shok*, derived from a verb *shuk*, to *run*, fittingly describes the limbs on which an animal runs. In a biped those are the legs, in a quadruped they would take in the fore legs as well as the hind legs. Hence, in the Authorised Version, wherever *shok* is used of a man it is always translated as the leg, where used of a quadruped the translators have understood that it applied to the fore leg, being, equally with the hind ones, a limb on which it runs. The same holds good in our own tongue. We speak of the sheep's fore-leg when alive, but of a shoulder of mutton when it is dead. In accordance with this the LXX, uniformly where a quadruped is in question, translated *shok* by *βραχίον*, the shoulder, and this is the more remarkable, because in Numb. vi. 19, 20, we have both the above-named Hebrew words mentioned, and translated in that version by the one word *βραχίον*, just as in the Authorised Version. In their judgment, and we here give it only for what it is worth, *shok* does not of necessity mean only the shank. Giving, then, Mr. Smith every advantage possible, the most that can be said is, that if *shok* cannot refer to the

shoulder, there is a change here in the law. But it rests with the objector to make good his objection. That he has not done, and we believe cannot do.

“Again,” he writes, “Hosea (ix. 3, 4) cannot have known the Deuteronomic permission to kill and eat animals without offering them in sacrifice (Deut. xii. 15), when he says, that in exile the people must eat unclean food, because they cannot present their sacrifices at Jehovah’s house. He was still living in a time when all animal food was regularly presented at the altar, according to the law of Leviticus xvii. 4-10, 11.” Indeed, Leviticus (xvii.) had respect to camp life, as is stated in verse 3. The camp life for Israel had ended centuries before Hosea was born! Besides this, the prophet is setting forth the blessings of which they would be deprived; their enjoyment of the land they would forfeit (ix. 3), and peace-offerings, which were connected with feasting, they would then be unable to offer (ver. 4). Mr. Smith presents a mistaken view of the passage, and forgets Ezek. iv. 12-14, which elucidates it. See also Acts x.

One more objection completes the list. “The prohibition in Deuteronomy xvi. 22 of the erection of what is called a *maççeba*, that is, a sacred pillar or stone, set up like Jacob’s pillar, in connection with a sanctuary, cannot have been known to Joshua (xxiv. 26), Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 12), Solomon (1 Kings vii. 21), or even to Isaiah, who (ch. xix. 19) prophesies the erection of such a sacred pillar, as a sign of the conversion of Egypt. The reason for the introduction of this new law into the Deuteronomic code is easily found in connection with the suppression of corrupt local sanctuaries, as I have explained at length in my additional answer, p. 71, *seq.*” (p. 22). Now this statement is a very bad one. Inaccurate it is, but surely our readers will cease to wonder at that. But would it be believed, Joshua, Samuel, and Solomon erected no *maççeba*. And this Mr. Smith ought to know. Joshua and Samuel put up each a stone, Solomon made the two brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz. But the statement is a very bad one, because it would make out that Joshua, Samuel, and Solomon

in the days when he walked well, deliberately did that which God declared He hated (Deut. xvi. 22). For at whatever time, even according to Mr. Smith's theory, that law was enacted, it clearly expressed their God's abhorrence of such idolatrous erections. How, then, could He have guided David to provide for such a thing in His house at Jerusalem (1 Chron. xxviii. 11-19). But if Deut. xvi. 22 must be relegated to some post-Mosaic period, what shall we say to Exod. xxiii. 24, xxxiv. 13, and Levit. xxvi. 1, where the destruction of those already in the land is enjoined, and a prohibition against erecting any in Canaan is distinctly set forth (Levit. xxvi. 1)? Joshua, Samuel, and Solomon must, on the objector's hypothesis, have directly infringed this law, which is surely held by our author to be unquestionably Mosaic. The truth is, Israel were especially warned against erecting any *maççeba* in the land, because such had been connected with idolatry. Jacob in his day did erect one, moved by the sense of the solemnity of the place where he found God. And in Egypt by and by, when idolatry shall have been put down on earth, a *maççeba* will be reared up by those in that country. But Israel never were allowed, nor ever will be, to erect anything of the kind in the land.

And these are the objections by which the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy is to be disproved! What we said in an earlier part of this paper our readers will see is only too true. Scripture is misquoted, and Scripture is misunderstood. Inaccuracies, too, abound, and not one objection adduced by Mr. Smith in support of his theory has any real weight in it for the purpose for which he produces it. As for scholarship, in all this there is none, but a great deal of ignorance of the word of God is displayed. What effect such a production may have on those to whom it is addressed it is not for us to determine; but surely it will be an evil day for Christians in Scotland when such rash statements are accepted as valid objections against the Mosaic authorship of this book.

In conclusion, we would invite our readers to turn with us

from the thoughts of men to trace out the orderly arrangement of the book. It divides itself into three great divisions, chap. i.-xi. forming the first, chap. xii.-xxix. the second, and chap. xxx.-xxxiv. the third. In the first, the people are exhorted in view of their entrance into the land. In the second, the covenant to be observed when in it, if they would continue in their inheritance, is stated in detail, and the blessings and cursings which would result from their conduct are plainly declared. The third opens with God's provision for them in grace, when they should have been driven out of their land for their disobedience; and closes with the law-giver's death. But let us view each part more in detail.

The first part, chap. i.-xi., commences with reminding them (chap. i.) how they forfeited the land at Kadesh by their refusal to go up to possess it; and recounts (chap. ii. and iii.) how God wrought after that to bring them into it. Then their peculiar privileges are recounted, and their responsibility is pressed on them (chap. iv.-v.) After that they are reminded of the special feature of Judaism, that Jehovah their God is one Jehovah, to which they were to bear witness by declining all connection with idolatry (chap. vi.-vii.) Next, Moses tells them that they will not enjoy the land by virtue of their power (viii.), nor because of their righteousness (ix.-x. 10), but because of God's faithfulness to His word to their forefathers (x. 11-xi).

About to enter the land, Moses, in the second part (chap. xii.-xxix.) details the terms of the covenant made with them in the plains of Moab, besides that already made with them in Horeb. The observance of this was needful for their continuance in the enjoyment of their inheritance (xii. 1). Hence we have laws relating to their worship, the administration of justice, and government, with regulations about military matters, and such as concerned them in their social life (xii.-xxvi.) These are followed by the provisions for that solemn service on Ebal and Gerizim, when they would openly ratify the covenant and declare themselves bound by it (xxvii.) After

this come the blessings and cursings which would ensue consequent on their conduct (xxviii.), this part winding up with the reminder by Moses that all Israel there present, and all not there present, were equally parties to this covenant (xxix.), the danger of breaking which he pressed on them most earnestly.

The third part (xxx.-xxxiv.) foretells God's ways in grace with them after failure and exile (xxx.) But if possible to keep them from disobedience, the law was delivered in writing by Moses himself, to be kept in the sanctuary as a reminder of what was incumbent on them, and a song was to be committed to writing likewise as a testimony against them (xxxi.) Thereupon follows the song (xxxii.) which prophetically describes what they would be, and how God would act in the latter day when they had utterly failed. Then Moses blessed the tribes, enumerating them in the order, by the Spirit of prophecy, in which they would be located in the land (xxxiii.) With that his work was done, and Israel were left to await the advent of that prophet whom he had foretold like unto himself, to whom they were to hearken. So, with the record of his death (xxxiv.), and the notice of the special feature which would characterise that prophet in common with him (xxxiv. 10), the Pentateuch ends.

Thus the book is most orderly and methodical in its arrangement. This is seen when studied as a whole, but lost if we are to regard it as a kind of literary patchwork. And what should we think of God, who put the people under a covenant, the full terms of which were not known till about the days of Josiah? Would that be righteous? Would that be like our God?

CURRENT DENIALS OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

AS FOUND IN THE ARGUMENTS OF
SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERS OF
SEVERAL DENOMINATIONS.



THE shades of difference among those who do not believe in eternal punishment are numerous. They have been exposed very fully in F. W. Grant's *Facts and Theories as to a Future State*, but one or two points have been pressed so as to present the subject in a comparatively fresh way in Scotland, in the public teaching of some ministers of the United Presbyterian denomination. It appears also, from the report of a recent sermon delivered in the Cathedral, Glasgow, that this view is being spread more widely than among the members of a denomination, and therefore some notice of the subject may be seasonable.

This current view of the matter consists mainly of two parts—1st, that belief in the love of God renders it impossible to believe that He can punish for ever any of “His erring children;” and 2d, that it is impossible to believe in an “eternity of sinning,” but that to believe that “punishment is to be eternal means that sin is to be eternal,” understanding sin in that sense of “eternity of sinning.”

It seems to me that a very little submission to Scripture serves to show that this view is founded upon a false idea of God's love, that is, of God Himself; and also upon a thoroughly erroneous estimate of sin, which involves, consequently, a denial of the true condition of man as a sinner.

There is also an additional incongruity in this sermon, viz. that of regarding eternal punishment as if it primarily referred to the Christian, or were intended to be a motive to Christian life ; while the truth is that it has no relation to him personally at all, because Scripture declares that he "has been delivered from the wrath to come," and "shall not come into judgment."

Perhaps this sermon lets us into a part of the secret of the ready reception of this false doctrine by many Christians, and reveals at the root of it the lurking fear that after all they may have to undergo punishment for sin. But besides a bad conscience, which always makes us dread correction, it is only the lack of being established in the true grace of God which could permit the thought that one cleansed by the blood of Christ could become a subject of the punishment of sin. Thus either a lack of self-judgment, or a defective gospel preaching, or both, may lie at the root of the success of much of this evil.

1. The thought of God's love, which is now put forward as a reason for non-eternity of punishment, when fully expressed, is, that the Cross reveals His character in such sense as that the gospel of Christ is "the gospel of God's goodwill towards men ;" that "His heart can never change towards the sinner or his sin," so that "He must always love the one and hate the other, and deal with the sin He hates so as to do good to the sinner He loves ;" that, in other words, God as the Heavenly Father cannot punish "His erring children" after death with everlasting torment ; finally, that "eternal love" cannot rest short of the highest good and blessedness of the object loved, and that good will triumph over ill, so that the universe will be purged from sin, and God will be all in all.

Now all this assumes two things, viz. that God is nothing but love as far as man as an object is concerned, and that He is in the relationship of father to men as such. If these are disproved, the whole position falls to the ground.

But the Cross is far more than a revelation of God's love. It does show Him forth in love, His name be praised, as nothing else in the universe does, but inseparably associated with that there is in it also the display of His awful holiness, which made it necessary that sin must be estimated in the light of infinite purity and perfect obedience to God. It is in its entirety that it is a manifestation of God, and so we have no right, besides its being folly, to attempt to divide that display of Him, and accept a part as we please.

His love is indeed manifested in giving His only begotten Son, but all the magnitude of that gift, and all the infinite value and unspeakable preciousness of that Son to the Father declare the terrible necessity for, and extent of, divine judgment against sin, as we perceive that *He* was forsaken of God on the Cross. What man can measure sin in this way? Who but Jesus possesses infinite holiness and perfect obedience to God? Yet without these, how can there ever be a just estimate of sin on the part of those who are creatures, and as such bound to be subject to God?

But if God were only love, why the display of His wrath against sin, such that we see it even visited on His Son when in human form and "made sin"? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" was His cry, in the midst of all the anguish of spirit, bodily suffering, and external horrors shown in the Scriptures. And, in His case, time or duration adds no element to the matter, for He then (being such an One as He was) entered in an *infinite* degree into the full character of and judgment against sin. It is in the nature of things impossible that any mere creature can ever do this. By nothing short of an eternity of suffering that judgment and the consequences of sin can man (apart from grace) ever reach a true estimate of what sin is. So the Lord's word, "Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing," acquires a fearfully solemn force under such a consideration.

It is, however, now urged that, because Christ *has* borne that

judgment, therefore God must (or rather people undertake to say He will) give men the benefit of it in all time, and whatever their state. But this is not only gratuitous assumption, but also ^{so} positive untruth.

It is gratuitous assumption, for *God announces* in the gospel that He will apply the fruit of the Cross in grace only for a certain time; and how then dare men say that He must always go on applying it, and even to those who refuse it and die impenitent, or are declared disobedient to the gospel, when the Lord appears from heaven? See the solemn words in Luke xiii. 23-28; Matt. xxv. 10-12; Acts xvii. 30, 31; 2 Thess. i. 6-10.

It is false, because the fruit of the Cross is not even now presented as salvation to any apart from "the obedience of faith" in them. "Whom God has set forth a propitiation *through faith in His blood,*" is what we read in the gospel, and consistently with this it is declared, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." So the righteousness of God is "towards all," but is only "upon *all who believe.*"

There is no ground whatever then for the idea that God will apply the fruit of the Cross to impenitent sinners; but there is solid ground for the assurance that, when the day of grace has run its course, He will act in the severity of righteous judgment on the ungodly, and in holy wrath against sin and sinners who are, in part at any rate, its living embodiment.

The Cross has not annihilated sin, as these men idly dream. Such a vindication of God's nature and sovereign character as it affords was rendered necessary by man's rebellion, and its consequences, even apart from the salvation of a single human soul. If *any* were to be saved it became doubly necessary, we may say.

But it is entirely of God's grace that it is constituted the basis of blessing to any from among sinful men, *all being declared by it to be lost,* and so that blessing cannot be theirs except on God's terms. It is also the basis of the cleansing of the present

system ("the heavens and the earth") from sin in the future dispensation, and so sin will be "put away" only as regards this system, and this will be carried out partly by judgment on the ungodly. Sin is not annihilated, however, even then; and Philippians ii. 9-11 cannot be confounded (as Mr. Macrae has attempted) with Eph. i. 10 and Col. i. 20, for these in speaking of the sphere which is to be "reconciled" and "headed up in Christ," expressly *omit* the infernal things ("things under the earth") of Phil. ii., which will still exist apart, and will be compelled to "bow" to Him, and "own that He is Lord," even though His authority is known there only in righteous retribution.

This is confirmed by the Scriptures, which speak of the time and scene where "God will be all in all," evil being practically excluded. For (1 Cor. xv. 23-28) this comes after the reign of Christ, who "must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet;" and then, as Rev. xxi. 1-8 teaches, there will be a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness will "dwell" (2 Pet. iii.), but existing apart from these will be "the lake of fire," the abode *then* (*i.e.* at the very time of which it is said "God is all in all") of "the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars."

The idea that men as men are His erring *children*, and that He is therefore in the relationship of "Heavenly Father" to such as Rev. xxi. 8 (for instance) speaks of, is a monstrous defamation of His character, and a clear contradiction of what Scripture says in describing the nature of those who are His children. See 1 John iii. 2, 6, 9, 10; v. 18.

The New Testament makes it abundantly plain that those only are His children who are begotten again by the word of God, and who are the "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" and the frequently-quoted passage in the Old Testament (Ps. ciii. 13), which applies the *similitude* of a father to Him, maintains the distinction between those in that relationship

and the rest of mankind. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth *them that fear Him.*" But what about those who do not fear Him, but die hardened rebels against Him? Would these teachers have us believe that there is no difference between them?

2. It becomes plain, from an examination of the current view, that such a thought as the foregoing is really the conclusion to which it tends, and that it is founded also upon a thoroughly false idea of sin. The thought here is, that if sinners are supposed to exist for ever as sinners, this is equivalent to our believing that God will uphold, as Himself the *energy* of it, eternal activity in sin. That "God will sustain in existence to all eternity creatures the sole end of whose existence has become active, implacable, and unchangeable hostility to Himself;" and that there must thus be "an eternity of sinning." Or as again put, "if sin's punishment is to be eternal, it only means that sin is to be eternal—that it is to be possible for a human soul so to harden itself against the love of God as never to be softened, never to be won over from enmity to love, from estrangement to reconciliation."

This is mixed up in the system (as developed by these teachers) with much that shows that immortality is confounded with eternal life (which thus to them means only eternal existence), and that the idea which it attaches to death is self-destructive when we see what Scripture teaches, viz., that it is the wicked who are already "dead" who undergo "the second death." That which the first change of condition, which is called "death," involves (see Luke xvi.), may therefore be taken in their case as an illustration of the meaning of the "second death" which they are to undergo.

In the view of sin which is referred to, it is looked at as if it were something apart from man, a force acting on him from without, and urging him gradually into a state of hostility to God when he becomes a lost sinner and his case is hopeless. So

we are told that "sin is the devil's work," besides hearing about "the sole *end* of the existence" of some creatures *becoming* active hostility to God, and also about the "human soul *hardening itself* against God so as never to be softened."

Now this is fundamentally false. Sin may be said to be the devil's work only as regards its introduction into this world in which he was the active agent. But this was by *presenting temptation* to man. He did not make man a sinner, or compel him to sin. Man made himself such. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." God chose to create him a being of a certain order, under moral obligation, and with powers and capacities capable of enduring results, whether of good or ill.

It is in the breach of his obligation and the consequent corruption of the moral springs of his being, with the addition of a new and ineradicable capacity, viz. the knowledge of good and evil, that man's constitution as a sinner is found. So that it is now and here, not after an indefinite period of sinning, that sinners are declared to be God's enemies, "alienated, and enemies in their minds, by wicked works," as being possessors of and characterised by "the mind of the flesh," which "is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

It is, moreover, only now and here in this world that man has liberty to do these acts which manifest his enmity. But suppose that liberty taken away, does this effect any change in the man's condition morally? Does being shut up in prison even here make a man any less a criminal, or eradicate his desire to do evil? Does the lack of power to do evil affect the will? Clearly not. So, although "an eternity of sinning," in the proper sense of the word is not possible, we are not therefore forced to conclude that there is nothing between that and pardon without repentance.

But besides the denial that the principle of sin as to man is found in man's will, really within man morally instead of outside him, or merely in his acts, what is denied by this system of non-

eternity of punishment is human moral responsibility. God is without doubt the sustainer of all things ; but the false application of this which is thrust upon us is really destructive of the truth that in creating man He ordained a being in moral responsibility before Him, and necessarily therefore in full view of the unending character of the results of such responsibility. The blow is struck at this responsibility, for man naturally never relishes the thought of it, and there are many devices by which it is attempted to be thrown over on God. God is never the energy of active sin, either in sinners now or after death—the thought that He is is blasphemous—but He is the sustainer of the life of responsible beings, whose rebellion is not an easy way to rid themselves of their moral relation to Him (morally responsible because of the way in which He is their source and sustainer of life, see Gen. ii., Acts xvii. 28-31), but who must continue for ever in that relation, whether in the blessedness which grace provides for the repentant or under the full consequences of their rebellion as such creatures.

Nothing establishes the unchangeable character of the issues of responsibility as does the salvation of God. This is proved by the fact that (as Rom. iii. 21-26 teaches) it is the *righteousness* of God (and not primarily His love or mercy) that is manifested for sinners in the Cross, and He is thereby declared "*just* (not good or merciful merely), and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." For men are not saved by merely being acted upon from without by goodness, which changes by softening them into loving God and hating sin, simply thus changing the *direction* of their tendencies and the effort of their wills, but by grace ascribing to them the fruit of the work of the Cross, having first wrought in them the sense of their need as lost sinners, and, on the ground of its judgment being reckoned to them, replacing their old life and its nature by a new one of a different character which is communicated to them. The sentence on sin is not set aside in their case, but borne for them by the One who becomes their substitute.

One consideration alone serves to write confusion on the spurious view of sin which is put forward, and this is that God is holy. But what He is, He is eternally; and holiness is separateness from evil which is known and abhorred. The idea, therefore, that He can have no eternal relation to evil in the way of punishment, which is the expression as well as the consequence of His eternal hatred of it, is simple ignorance or forgetfulness of what He is. Evil has necessarily always such a relation to Him as being that which He hates and is apart from; all that is contrary to Him is evil, and evil cannot be made good. So, when there are beings of an immortal spiritual order created ("the offspring of God" as to their human life), and evil finds its expression in them, they necessarily share the eternal doom of all that is contrary to God.

If sin is the devil's work, *looking at its effects in this world*, and Christ was manifested to annul his works and himself as to his power to do evil (it is not to *save* him that He was manifested), yet the lake of fire is not the devil's work, or the means of his purification, but is his doom, with that of every form of evil, and it is never destroyed or even annulled for any who "go away" into it.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA.

With Introduction and Notes, by REV. JAMES MACGREGOR, D.D., Professor of
Systematic Theology in the New College, Edinburgh.



THE Epistle to the Galatians is essentially doctrinal in its teaching. The foundations of the faith were being undermined in Galatia by Judaizing teachers, who insisted upon circumcision, and the keeping of the law by converts from heathénism, as necessary for justification. Very strongly then did the Apostle warn the Galatian Christians against such teaching. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 4). The matter was a serious, a vital one in his eyes, who travailed in birth again till Christ was formed in them (iv. 19). Those teachers were not merely mistaken, they were leading souls really off Christian ground altogether. To Paul this was intolerable, so he writes, "He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be" (v. 10) ; and "though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (i. 8). So any study of this Epistle cannot be conducted aright unless the doctrines insisted upon therein are understood, and accepted by the student. And no exposition of it will be a fitting *Handbook for Bible Classes* if the doctrinal teaching contained in it is not clearly enunciated.

Now of doctrines specially treated of in this apostolic and inspired letter are those which concern righteousness, faith, law, and the Spirit. To some of these we must refer. The doctrine of righteousness divides itself into two parts, according as we

look at it in relation to God or to the ungodly. If we think of God in connection with righteousness, we know that He is righteous, and will by and by "judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). But if this were all that we knew of God's righteousness, who could be saved? For, if God enters into judgment with us, we know what the end of that must be (Ps. cxliii. 2). Thank God, His righteousness is also manifested in justifying the ungodly, and this is one of Paul's special subjects of instruction. The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel (Rom. i. 17). It is manifested now apart from law, though "witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 21, 22). To this people are to submit themselves if they would be saved (Rom. x. 3); and all who do that become God's righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21).

Viewing righteousness in relation to the sinner, we learn that God can impute to him righteousness without (or apart from *χωρίς*) works (Rom. iv. 6). The principle on which God can do this is faith; hence it is called the righteousness which is of faith (Rom. x. 6); and we are reminded of the Old Testament Scripture which declared, "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17). An illustration of God justifying a man on this principle is given us in Abraham (Rom. iv. 1-3); the moral class who can share in it is exemplified in David, after he had sinned so frightfully in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (verses 6-8); whilst the special testimony now put before souls for them to be justified by faith, when they believe it, is set forth in verses 23-25 of that same chapter; and the effect on the man of this way of justification is this, he has peace with God, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. v. 1, 2); for the whole question of his standing before the throne of God is settled by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, writes the Apostle, "was delivered for our offences, and was raised

again for our justification." Hence justification is more than forgiveness, for it witnesses to the soul of its unchallengeable standing before the throne of God. Forgiveness of sins the *sinner* needs to be assured of. Justification forms part of the gospel for God's *saints*, as the Epistle to the Romans makes clear, in which forgiveness, only twice mentioned (iv. 7; xi. 27), is assumed as known, and enjoyed by those to whom Paul wrote to unfold the manner and result of their justification by faith.

Turning now to Professor Macgregor's book on the Epistle to the Galatians, and testing its statements on this question of righteousness by the divine word, what is the result? Justification, he tells us (p. 34), is sometimes found "describing only pardon without express reference to what is further meant by acceptance, *e.g.* 'justified from all things from which,' etc. (Acts xiii. 39)." But the passage cited does not bear out the assertion that justification sometimes describes only pardon. It is more than pardon, since it has to do with the standing of one before the throne of God who has sinned, and the one justified by faith has peace with God. This is more than pardon, and differs too from acceptance in this, that if we think of justification, we think of our standing before the throne of God; if we think of acceptance, we remember in whom it is we stand in the presence of God. Again, looking at Acts xiii. 39, if we follow the reading of BC³DELP, the passage clearly distinguishes between forgiveness and justification, as we read, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, *and* by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." If, on the other hand, we agree to omit the conjunction *and*, in accordance with the reading of AC¹ and the Sinaitic MS., the difference between the two is still apparent, "Through (*διὰ*) Him is preached forgiveness. By (*ἐν*) Him all that believe are justified." We must demur therefore to the Professor's statement, whilst we turn to another passage.

At p. 35 we read—"At the present point we shall only dwell on the one expression about Abraham (iii. 6). 'It was

accounted (imputed, reckoned) to him for righteousness.' We need not now inquire *what* was imputed, whether, for instance, it was his faith, or whether it was his work, or whether it was God's righteousness received by faith." Again, in p. 66, in a note at Gal. ii. 21, we read—Righteousness here "means either the *result* of the justifying process in placing a man on the footing of a servant entitled to reward, or the ground on which God proceeds in justifying; the legal *reason why* of the process—most probably the latter." It is clear that the distinctive teaching of Rom. iii. and iv. has not been apprehended. The righteousness of God is never imputed to the sinner. God imputes righteousness to the one who believes His testimony about His Son, that is, He reckons that person righteous; but He is never said to impute *His* righteousness. Rom. iii. shows us how God can be righteous in justifying the ungodly; there, then, His righteousness is treated of. Rom. iv. teaches us on what principle a person can be justified: hence the term righteousness of God is dropped throughout that chapter, and righteousness alone is therein treated of. For the righteousness of God means that God is righteous, and acts consistently with what He is. The moment, then, that we seize the meaning of the term "righteousness of God," we understand why Scripture never speaks of God imputing *His* righteousness to the sinner, and the phraseology is seen to be clear and precise. Had this point been understood, we should not have read the sentence quoted from p. 35, nor would the simple meaning of Gal. ii. 21, "If righteousness come by law then Christ is dead in vain," have been obscured by the note on p. 66. "If righteousness come by law," means simply, if a man is righteous by works of law, conformably with what the apostle has written in v. 16 of the same chapter.

Now this statement is a simple and withal an important one, because it cuts at the root of the teaching about the active and passive obedience of Christ, which Professor Macgregor evidently endorses on p. 37, writing of the "Pauline testimony regarding the way and manner in which the righteousness has been achieved

by Christ, namely, through His vicarious obedience unto death—His ‘passive obedience’ for the expiation of our guilt, and ‘His active obedience’ for the purchase to us of sonship and inheritance.” Now what says the Scripture—“If righteousness come by law Christ is dead in vain,” not simply, as the Professor would paraphrase it, “Christ is superfluous” (p. 66, note), but Christ *is dead* in vain. If the active obedience of Christ purchased for His people sonship and the inheritance, then they had that procured for them before He died. Now such teaching really, though unintentionally, undermines the atonement. How did those under law get sonship and the promise of inheritance? “Christ,” says the apostle, “has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (iii. 13, 14). Again, “God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (iv. 4, 5). Again, “For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect” (Rom. iv. 13-14). In a word, the teaching of Scripture directly condemns the theory of the active, vicarious obedience of Christ. The Word knows nothing of vicarious keeping of the law. If righteousness come by law, by the sinner, or by anybody keeping it for him,—Christ is dead in vain.

But what about the law? It was not given till more than four centuries after the promise to Abraham (Gal. iii. 17). Abraham then was never under it, nor did God ever put Gentiles under it (Rom. ii. 14; Gal. iv. 3-5), as the council at Jerusalem distinctly owned (Acts xv. 14-21). Wherefore then serveth it? “It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal. iii. 19). It “entered that the offence might abound” (Rom. v. 20). It has not its application to righteous people, but to lawless, etc. (1

Tim. i. 9, 10). It could not give life, so righteousness could not come by it (Gal. iii. 21), and "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (Gal. iii. 10), and the righteousness which is of the law is clean contrary to that which is of faith (Rom. x. 5-10). Further, it has dominion over a man only as long as he liveth, and those once under it as Jews, were, if Christians, dead to it by the body of Christ, to be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead to bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4). Now, what says the Professor? "Of its use as a rule of life to the justified man (v. 14) this is not the place to speak" (p. 77). But how can it be his rule of life if he has died to it, as Rom. vii. 6 distinctly teaches? "Now we are delivered from the law, having died to that wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Our rule of life is Christ (1 John ii. 6 ; iii. 16 ; Ephes. v. 2 ; Rom. xiii. 14). Again, p. 91, "*under the law*, instead of *under law*, not only is unwarranted by the Greek, but is fitted to countenance the mistaken impression that Christ was, so to speak, merely a *born Jew* ; that His subjection to law by birth had reference only to the law under which the Jews were placed by positive revelation, not to the law under which all men are by nature. . . . At or by His birth He was under the whole burden of law which has to be borne for man's redemption and adoption, of which law the Old Testament revelation had made a full declaration." Now all this is a mere figment of man's (we do not mean of Professor Macgregor's) invention, clean contrary to Scripture and to the decision of the council at Jerusalem. Scripture distinctly speaks of a class who were under law, but only a class, to redeem them that were under the law. Is "them that were under law" a periphrasis for man? Christ was made a curse, says the apostle, "for us, *i.e.* Jews, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles ; that we might receive (both Jews and Gentiles) the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. iii. 13-14). "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, that we (*i.e.* Jews) might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye (*i.e.* Gentiles) are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your (better 'our') hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 4-6). How clearly the apostle guards the doctrine that Gentiles were never put under law by God. Why the "for us" and "Gentiles" in iii. 13, 14, and the "we" of iv. 5, contrasted with the "ye" of iv. 6, if the Professor's teaching is correct? The fact is, the purport of the law, and the position of the believer in Christ is not apprehended where such doctrines are held; for he is looked at as in the flesh (Rom. viii. 9), instead of being alive in Christ risen from the dead (Rom. vi. 11).

A third doctrine, referred to in the Epistle, is that of the Spirit whom the Galatians had received. Born of the Spirit (John iii. 5), the believer bowing to God's testimony concerning the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ and its results, has forgiveness of sins through His blood, and receives the Holy Ghost (Eph. i. 13; Acts ii. 38; x. 43-45, 47); and His body thereby becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19). What the believer receives is the Holy Ghost, called the gift of God (Acts xi. 17). This is a gift quite distinct from any miraculous power, which last is an endowment by the Holy Ghost Himself, who divides His gifts, whether of miraculous powers or not, as He pleases (1 Cor. xii. 7-11). The gift, *δωρεά*, then of the Holy Ghost means, according to Scripture, the Holy Ghost given by God to dwell in the believer. The gifts of the Spirit, *χάρισμα*, are from the Holy Ghost. Often in apostolic times the two went together, as at Cæsarea (Acts x. 44-47), and at Ephesus (Acts xix. 6), the display of miraculous power being the attestation of the reception of the Holy Ghost by the person so energised. Yet the two are not confounded. Speaking with tongues was a witness that the person had received the Holy Ghost. All who heard him would know that he was energised by the Holy Ghost; but more, they would understand that he

had received the Holy Ghost. Now we have no reason to conclude that every believer in apostolic days was endowed with miraculous powers. 1 Cor. xii. 29-30, would lead us to believe the contrary; and there is no hint that all the Galatian Christians were endowed with such powers. Yet they had all received the Holy Ghost, and they knew it well; and as such were partakers of full Christian blessing, having the earnest of the inheritance, for the Holy Ghost is the earnest (Ephes. i. 14), and the Spirit of adoption too, for He also is that (Rom. viii. 15), by which they could cry, Abba, Father. Now having received the Spirit, what did they lack of Christian blessing, the fruit of divine grace? Nothing. But how did they receive the Spirit? By works of law or by the hearing of faith? They knew. Hence the folly of their turning to be justified by the law, and to be circumcised in order to become of the seed of Abraham. They were that already. For, writes the apostle, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (iii. 29).

Now how does the professor treat of this truth? "The gift of the Spirit," he writes (p. 68), "had, from the beginning, been recognised as divinely attesting the receiver's Christianity, and consequently settling the disputed question about Mosaic ceremonial (Acts x. 44-48; xi. 15-18; xv. 6-17). The gift which then was so recognised appears to have been, and in some cases certainly was, properly miraculous (Acts x. 46; xii. 8-11). The distinctively miraculous 'gifts' were, from the first, intended to be superseded by the abiding 'graces' of Christian character (1 Cor. xiii. 8-13), which, also supernatural in their origin, are really evidential (Ephes. ii. 17; 1 John iii. 14), though not so as to supersede the abiding evidence of miracles done in the first age." Now this statement confounds the gift of the Spirit with the gifts from the Spirit. The Apostle referred to the former in Gal. iii. 2. Professor Macgregor confounds it here with the latter, and asserts what has no foundation in the Word, that the miraculous gifts were from the first intended to be superseded by the abiding graces

of Christian character. The truth is, miraculous powers might cease, but the abiding graces of Christian character would continue. They would not supersede the others, for they existed from the first, even when miraculous powers were in the fullest exercise (1 Cor. xiii. 13). But abiding Christian graces are not what Scripture calls the gift of the Holy Ghost, nor are they classed with the manifestations of the Spirit, but are contrasted with them (1 Cor. xii. 31; xiv. 1). Nor are all gifts of the Spirit miraculous in their character. The word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, have these ceased to exist? Has faith, of which 1 Cor. xii. 9 treats, wholly ceased to be manifested? Has prophecy, as explained in 1 Cor. xiv. 3, died out? With the exception of the first sentence the paragraph quoted above evidences a want of understanding of the Scripture teaching about the Holy Ghost.

Again, we read, p. 91, "What we get back is sonship. Adoption we do not get back, we simply receive it." Indeed! With the last clause we can agree. But when did we lose sonship? Adoption is sonship, *υιοθεσια*. When did Gentiles, as such, formerly enjoy it? How do we become sons? "Ye are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). How did those under law get it? "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the sonship" (iv. 5). That "we might receive" it is the language of Scripture, not that any might get it back, of which Scripture says not one word. Here, again, is confusion. Sonship is not spoken of as the privilege of a creature unfallen, but of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ. We read not of angels that they participate in sonship, *υιοθεσια*, though they all owe their existence to God the Father of all. Servants they are, but they share not in sonship.

On points, then, of important Christian doctrine, this book is unsound and defective. The Scripture teaching concerning the righteousness of God, the law, and the Spirit, does not agree with that set forth in its pages. Other points might be noticed, but these fundamental ones may suffice.

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

By JAMES S. CANDLISH, D.D., Professor of Systematic Theology in the
Free Church College, Glasgow.

CREEDS and confessions of faith are helpful in gathering up into a short compass important articles of the Christian faith, but they become real hindrances to truth when made standards by which doctrinal teaching is to be measured and verified. In so far as they correctly summarise certain truths they are of use. But no creed that men have ever drawn up, no confession of faith ever yet issued, however comprehensive in teaching, or scriptural in statement, is fitted to be the standard by which the teaching of professing Christians can be fully tried. A confession of faith may meet the burning questions of the day in which it is compiled, but experience proves that it cannot wholly provide all that may be needed by another generation. The creeds of Christendom, called the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian, drawn up one after the other, witness to this; and the various confessions of faith, under whatever name they may be called, that at different times have been framed and published, plainly prove the dissatisfaction of their authors with those already in existence. Teaching, too, may be in harmony with a recognised confession of faith which is directly contradicted by the Word of God. Thus whilst the Scriptures tell us that Christians have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. v. ; Coloss. i.), the second article of the Church of England asserts that the Lord Jesus died to reconcile His Father to us. To be orthodox, then, in teaching, if bound by a confession of faith, one may have to assert and contend for as

truth that which the written Word of God either has not declared to be such, or flatly, it may be, contradicts. A few examples from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* will illustrate this. And we turn now to that confession because the book under review appeals to it, and seems to uphold it as Scripturally correct. We give a few statements taken at random.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* tells us in Chapter IV. that God created, or made of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days. Scripture has nowhere said this, and carefully, it would appear, draws a distinction between the creating the heavens and the earth in the beginning, and the making of the earth and the heavens in six days (Gen. i. 2 ; Exod. xx.) And certain it is that God did not *make* the heavens and earth out of nothing. Again it tells us (Chapter VI.) that every sin, both original and actual, is a transgression of the righteous law of God. Scripture, on the other hand, states that death reigned, from Adam to Moses, over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's "transgression" (Rom. v. 14). It tells us, too, that the Gentiles had not the law (Rom. ii. 14), that it entered that the offence might abound (Rom. v. 20), and that was not till 430 years after the promise to Abraham (Gal. iii. 17). Again, we read of the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world (Chap. VIII.), a manifest mistake from not understanding the words of Rev. xiii. 8, as may be seen by comparing them with Rev. xvii. 8. The names were written in the Lamb's book from that date, not that the Lamb was slain from that time. Once more, in Chap. XIX., we are told that "God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him, and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience ; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it." God did warn Adam of death if he disobeyed His command, but did not promise him life, nor announce that He would bind his posterity either. A similar statement as

“to the promise of life to Adam, and in him to his posterity,” is met with in Chap. VII., but found in no chapter of either the Old or New Testament. Now, if men are to teach by this confession, they must teach things which God’s Word does not, and things which it directly controverts. Are standards of human authority, we may ask, to override the paramount authority of the Word? If loyal to the confession of faith it is clear that such a composition must override the divine Word; and anything which it has omitted to notice, however important it may be in the Word of God, no one bound by the confession could be dealt with for denying. Hence appeals as to orthodoxy are not made to the Word of God, but to the confession and standards, as they are called; and so man, not God, is made the judge to determine what is needful to be held as an article of faith or maintained as a portion of revealed truth.

But our business now is not with the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, but with the book noticed at the head of this article. Enough has been quoted from that confession to demonstrate that its statements cannot be accepted as Scripturally true, unless established by proofs from the written Word. As a summary of certain doctrines it may be useful, but even then its statements may need correction. As a standard it cannot be taken, unless the Westminster divines are more worthy of being listened to than God the Holy Ghost. Nor can it be accepted as a compendium of all the important doctrines which should be believed, to accredit a person as sound and instructed in the faith. We should look in vain for any recognition of the proper hope of the Church, the coming of the Lord Jesus into the air for His saints, of which the Lord spoke, and the Epistles of Paul treat; or for any teaching regarding the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, the theme of prophecy in the Old Testament, the expectation of His saints also in the New. Teaching, too, about the Church of God, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, cardinal truths of Christianity, were but little apprehended by the divines assembled at Westminster, and certainly

but poorly set forth. And when we read the chapter on baptism, which states that it is to the baptized person "a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, and of his engrafting into Christ," one wonders, if that statement be correct, how they could add, towards the close of that chapter (sect. v.), that all baptized are not undoubtedly regenerated. The truth is, that amidst much that is true and valuable, the Scripture doctrine of baptism they had not fully laid hold of, so those good men unintentionally taught about it what is foreign to the Word, and landed themselves in contradictions fraught with the gravest peril to truth.

What, then, it may be asked, is the teaching of Scripture on baptism? Let us turn to the divine Word for an answer to that question. In the New Testament we meet with three different baptisms—that of John, that instituted by the Lord, and that of the Holy Ghost. The two first were effected by water; the last by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Now, these are never confounded, though the two former are always termed *βάπτισμα*, *baptisma*, never *βαπτισμὸς*, *baptismos*, which latter term is confined, in its use in the New Testament, to the Jewish rite of washing cups, pots, brazen vessels, or tables (Mark vii.; Heb. vi. 2; ix. 10). The baptism of John was only for a time, *i.e.* during the ministry of the Baptist. The baptism instituted by the Lord Jesus was for all His disciples, from Pentecost until He returns to reign, as the commission in Matthew (xxviii. 19, 20) would seem to intimate. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, baptizing all believers into one body, is limited to Christian times, which, commencing with Pentecost, will terminate with the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. iv. 15-18).

The baptism of John was appointed for all whose consciences were stirred by his preaching of repentance. The person who heard him, and was convicted, and repented, owned, by submitting to that rite at his hands, that he had failed utterly and hopelessly under the law, but, confessing his sins and repenting of them, awaited the mercy of God to be manifested in forgiveness of his sins. For though John preached the baptism of

repentance for *αἰς*, remission of sins (Mark i. 4),—the forgiveness desired by the one baptized—John could not confer. But every one who truly repented, and owned it by being thus baptized, could know that he was on the way to enjoy it. The announcement of forgiveness of sins was reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ first to declare (Luke vii. 49). Thus John's baptism marked a transitional state of things between the law and the enjoyment of grace. All baptized by him expressed thereby that they had failed under the law, and that nothing was left for them but to rest on the sovereign mercy of God. The rite was a telling one, and a humbling one. Righteousness by works of law, each baptized one confessed by that rite that it was impossible for him to obtain. Hence reality was desired by John in all who went out to him to Jordan; so he challenged those who, following in the general movement, came to be baptized without truly repenting of their sins, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. iii. 7). Grace, life, or salvation, it is clear then John's baptism could not confer; else why warn souls of the necessity of a work in the heart if they would escape the wrath to come.

To this ordinance the Lord Jesus submitted that He might enter in by the door into the sheepfold, for, conforming to all Jehovah's appointed ordinances, He thereby fulfilled all righteousness. But subsequently, after His resurrection, He instituted the rite of Christian baptism, which, like that of John, is a baptism of water. But differing from John, the Lord Jesus Himself never baptized with water, though it was reported, but the Evangelist corrects the report, that He did. "Though," writes John, "Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples" (John iv. 2). Was that spoken of in John iv. Christian baptism? Clearly not, Christian baptism is burial with Christ unto death, as Rom. vi. 4 states. Hence Christian baptism could not be, and we know was not, instituted till after the Lord's resurrection. Is John's baptism and Christian baptism the same? If so, why

did the Lord institute the latter? In truth these have nothing to do with each other. And Paul makes that plain in Acts xix. 3-5, where certain disciples, believers, who had been baptized unto John's baptism, were baptized with Christian baptism when the apostle taught them the essential difference between them. John baptized in view of One that was to come. Christian baptism is the acknowledgment that He has come, has died, and is risen. Hence baptism at the hand of John did not stand in the place of Christian baptism. The differences between them are essential. To confound them would indicate ignorance of Scripture teaching respecting them.

Does Christian baptism confer life or salvation? It should be remarked that, when the Lord instituted it, He commanded His disciples to baptize, but made no provision for those whom He addressed to be baptized; nor is there a hint that they ever were baptized with Christian baptism, though they properly insisted on all who believed on and after Pentecost submitting to that rite. "He that believeth and is baptized," we read, "shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). No one who was not willing, after the death and resurrection of the Lord, to confess Him openly by being baptized unto His name could reckon on salvation. The rite does not confer it. But the one who believes and is baptized has it. Paul, then, was baptized with Christian baptism, whereas Peter was not, and their writings agree as to this. Paul, writing of it to the Romans, owns that he and they had submitted to it (vi. 4). Peter, addressing those believers from among the Jews who had never seen the Lord, writes that baptism now saves *you*, not *us*, as the *Textus Receptus* reads. Life then, and salvation do not flow from it, else all Christians must have passed through it; nor, if that were the case, could any have received the gift of the Holy Ghost without it, whereas Cornelius and his friends received that gift previous to their being baptized (Acts x. 47), and the one hundred and twenty in the upper room at Pentecost received the same gift without any provision

having been made for their baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

In truth, these last did not need it, as we can understand when we ask of the same Scriptures what Christian baptism really is. The answer to this question is given us in the writings of Paul. The practical teaching about it is furnished by the epistles of both Peter and Paul. Addressing the Galatians iii. 27. Paul says, "as many of you as have been baptized *eis* unto Christ have put on Christ." By baptism, then, we put on Christ. It is profession of discipleship. It speaks of what we put on. It does not impart anything to us within. The putting on Christ is not the same as having Christ in us. Of old all who passed through the Red Sea were baptized unto *eis* Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. x. 2). All believers since Pentecost have been baptized unto *eis* Christ, thereby openly entering the ranks of His disciples, to be known as such before all the world. When He was upon earth His disciples were seen and known to be such, as they journeyed about with Him, or owned Him to be their Teacher, and obeyed what He said to them. Such had no need to be baptized after His resurrection to be ranked as disciples of Christ. They had taken their place as disciples already. But since He has actually died, passing off this scene by death, how can people now be put into His company? If they actually died, they would be no longer on earth. That would not do. So they are buried with Him by baptism unto death, for burial is the open declaration that any one has passed off this scene; as Abraham, addressing the sons of Heth, asked for a possession of a burying-place that he might bury his dead out of his sight (Gen. xxiii. 4). Would any desire, from fear of man, to be a disciple of Christ in secret, and so decline to confess Him openly by baptism? Scripture would not own such a one as a disciple, nor could that person be rightly credited with the name of a Christian. So Peter, addressing those Jews who were pricked to their heart on the day of Pentecost, told them (Acts ii.) to repent and be baptized every

one of them in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. They had outwardly to separate from Judaism, and openly to be enrolled as disciples of Christ. And so really was this rite understood to be the confession of discipleship, that Paul at Corinth baptized himself but few, lest any should say that he baptized unto *eîs* his own name (1 Cor. i. 15). Burial, then, by baptism with Christ can alone now put a person openly and professedly in His company.

Hence the careful reader may remark that Christian baptism is defined as burial, not death, though it is "unto death." "We are buried with Christ by baptism unto death" (Rom. vi. 4). "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). Burial with Christ, and resurrection with Him, are what that rite sets forth. It is profession, for we have thereby put on Christ. It is burial with Him unto death, so should not be mere empty profession. But no one, now on earth, can be put into the company of Christ, except as he is baptized unto Him. And since it is as the One who died that we know Him, we are baptized unto His death. By this rite then, as Colossians teaches, we get a position we could not otherwise procure. Three points we may now see come out with distinctness. *Firstly*, We understand why those who were disciples before the cross were commissioned to baptize others, but were never commanded to be baptized themselves. They were disciples already, and were openly recognised as such, so needed not to conform to that rite. But all who professed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ after His death could only by baptism be enrolled as disciples of Christ. *Secondly*, We see from Acts xix. that John's baptism was in no sense a substitute for Christian baptism. And *Thirdly*, since the rite speaks of burial unto death, it neither imparts life nor salvation. Of this Simon Magus is a proof, who, though baptized, had neither the one nor the other; and the Apostle, in Colossians ii. 13, makes

that plain. There quickening with Christ and forgiveness are viewed as distinct from baptism. The latter has to do with position on earth before God and man. The former have to do with the Christian's standing before God. References, therefore, to such portions as John iii., Ephes. v. 26, Titus iii. 5, are quite out of place when treating of baptism. The bath or laver of regeneration has not to do with that rite. Titus iii. 5 speaks of what takes place in the soul ; baptism of the position on earth into which a person is thereby brought. The water, of John iii., Ephes. v. 26, is the Word of God, by which, as well as by the Spirit, the believer is begotten of God, and is cleansed from his old ways when he gives heed to what it says. Ephes. v. 26, explains that water is the divine Word ; and James i. 18, and 1 Peter i. 23, tell us we are begotten by the Word, which, we elsewhere learn, acts on the soul as water does on the body (Ps. cxix. 9 ; John xv. 3). Baptism, then, is not the new birth, nor regeneration, nor the means by which it is brought about. It is not the beginning of the new life, though it is the starting-point of Christian profession. How much confusion and wrong doctrine has been introduced by mixing up profession and standing, and by attributing to all those who are in the House of God the spiritual blessings of those who are members of the Body of Christ.

We have spoken, in some measure, of what baptism is. We would remind our readers of the connection in which it is doctrinally introduced. Where Christian standing is the subject baptism is not named. Where Christian profession, and the proper practice of a Christian are treated of, there it has its place. In Rom. iii.-v. we should look in vain for a trace of it. In chap. vi., where the Christian's walk is the subject, baptism is introduced. In Galatians iii. the apostle refers to it as a witness of the folly of their new doctrines. Would they Judaize ? What had they professed by their baptism ? They had put on Christ. Now in Him there was neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. Nationalities, social

position, sexual distinctions, all disappear in Christ. Why then Judaize? The ground they were taking up was diametrically opposed to all that they had professed by their baptism. In Ephesians iv. 5 it is plainly connected with profession—one Lord, one faith, one baptism. In Colossians it reminds us of the position that we have with Christ, and in 1 Peter iii. we learn how in connection with it we can have a good conscience before God. For as those saved at the flood never left earth, but were landed by its waters in a new scene, so baptism puts us in a new position without our leaving earth, and by the resurrection of Christ we have what is desired, *ἐπερώτημα*, a good conscience before God. In this way it saves. The salvation of those in the ark determined nothing really about their soul's everlasting condition before God. Baptism in saving us determines nothing about our soul's everlasting condition either, but, acting up to what is professed by baptism, the individual will have what he desires, a good conscience before God; "buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also he is risen with Him through faith of the operation of God who raised Him from the dead." In this way it saves; and as in the Epistles of Paul, so in that of Peter, it is introduced where walk is insisted on, not where the Christian standing is the subject in hand (1 Peter iii. 17—iv. 6). Of the soul's salvation Peter had previously written (1 Peter i. 9). One other passage there is which we have not yet noticed. Paul in recounting before the Jews at Jerusalem the history of his conversion, gives them, what we read not of elsewhere, the word of Ananias telling him what he should do: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). Life in his soul Saul already possessed, but as yet he had not openly taken Christian ground. That he was to do, entering by baptism into a new position on earth, and clearing himself from all association with the past, calling upon the name of the Lord, *i.e.* openly professing to own Him whom God hath made Lord and Christ. Here, as elsewhere, baptism has to do with profession and position. It

did not, it does not, confer grace. Life it cannot communicate. The soul's salvation it cannot secure. Forgiveness of sins before God it cannot procure. No external rite can affect the soul's standing before its Maker, though this rite changes the person's position on earth before God and his fellow-creatures.

To the baptism of the Holy Ghost we must now turn. This concerns only true believers in Christ. None can receive the Holy Ghost, and thereby share in the results of this baptism, except such as have received the gospel of their salvation by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephes. i. 13). That it differs from John's baptism the Baptist himself declared. He baptized with water. The Lord Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost, which He did, when, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost (for the Holy Ghost is what was promised), He shed forth that, which on the day of Pentecost was both seen and heard. Then it was the true disciples of Christ, who had been baptized of John in Judæa, were baptized with the Holy Ghost. Clearly, therefore, these two are quite distinct—and not less distinct is the baptism of the Spirit, from baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Cornelius, and those in his house who shared in the results of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, were, nevertheless, obliged to be baptized with water. Those in Samaria who had been baptized with water, had need, nevertheless, to receive by the apostles' hands the gift of the Holy Ghost, by whose indwelling presence in each of them they were made partakers of the results of this baptism. What, then, does the baptism of the Holy Ghost do for us? By one Spirit all believers are baptized into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13). Christian baptism by water enrolls all who submit to it as disciples of Christ; making them Christians by profession, if that profession even be only in name. In the power of one Spirit all true believers are baptized into one body. The House of God, in its wide aspect called also the Church or Assembly of God, embraces all those who have been baptized with water in the name of the Trinity.

The body of Christ, coterminous only with the House of God in its restricted aspect, is formed of those who share in the blessing of the baptism of the Spirit. John's baptism was administered only by himself. Christian baptism, though instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, was never administered by Him. But He and He alone baptized with the Holy Ghost.

With the Scriptures fresh in our remembrance which treat of these important subjects, we may now turn to see whether or not the book, at the head of this article, is in accordance with their teaching on Christian baptism.

The answer must be in the negative, for the writer confounds the baptism of John with that instituted by the Lord Jesus, and this latter with that of the Holy Ghost. Confusion on these points cannot consist with clear Scriptural teaching on any one of them.

“There was no difference in the outward rite between the baptism of John, that of Jesus' disciples during His life on earth, and that which He commanded His disciples to administer after His resurrection; nor does there seem to have been any difference in the meaning and purpose of the ordinance in each case; although with the successive stages in which the ordinance is found, there was an advance in the fulness and clearness with which the spiritual things signified by it were understood and appropriated” (p. 48). What a sentence for a professor of *Systematic theology* to pen! Both, it is true, were effected by water. But granting that, was there no difference in the outward rite? Christian baptism is in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The revelation of the Father was only made by Christ; John never could, and never did baptize in the name of the Trinity. No difference in the meaning and purpose of the ordinance! John baptized with water unto repentance. We are baptized unto the death of Christ. Nothing could be more marked than the differences between them. In the teaching of Professor Candlish all is confusion. In the teaching of the divine Word there is clearness and precision.

Again the Professor writes "In the New Testament we are more distinctly told that it is Christ who baptizes, who sanctifies the Church by the washing of water, and that it is by the Holy Spirit that He does so. Christ is the immediate agent, and the Holy Ghost is the cleansing element in the washing that baptism represents. Hence we see that it is not only forgiveness, or deliverance from the guilt of sin, but a thorough purging of the soul from the pollution of evil desires, evil imaginations, evil thoughts, that is meant by the baptism of the Spirit" (p. 55). "Baptism teaches, fourth, that by this process of death with Christ and new birth, we become His as our Lord and God." "The real unity is effected by the inward baptism of the Spirit. . . . But of this real spiritual unity the rite of baptism is a type and sign. . . . Baptism is the great symbol of the unity of the Church of Christ, under Him her one Head" (pp. 56, 57). "Thus we find Paul frequently appealing to baptism as teaching truths that those whom he addressed seemed not to know, or to have forgotten, *e.g.*, the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts xix. 3-6); the unity of the Church (1 Cor. i. 13); the necessity of holiness Rom. vi. 3, 4" (p. 79).

Here the baptism of the Spirit is confounded with baptism by water. But neither the baptism by water, nor that of the Spirit, nor any baptism of which sinful men are the subjects, deliver from the guilt of sin. That is effected by blood, not by water, as we are taught that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Further, water baptism never did, and never can make us Christ's. Rom. viii. 9 is clear on that point. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is not of him." No one belongs to Christ who has not received the Holy Ghost. But baptism by water does not confer that gift. The history of the Acts to which we have already referred puts that beyond doubt or controversy. Nor is it even the sign of it. Baptism by water is an act on behalf of an individual. The baptism of the Spirit had for its subject the whole assembled company. Nor does Paul ever appeal to water baptism to teach saints

about the unity of the Church ; 1 Cor. i. 13, reproves them for the parties allowed in the assembly at Corinth, but does not teach how the unity of the Church is effected. How strange, too, that if Christian baptism teaches truth concerning the unity of the Church, Paul, who was the chosen vessel to reveal and insist on that truth, was sent, he tells us in that very chapter (1 Cor. i. 17), by Christ *not* to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.

Starting with confused thoughts about water baptism and that of the Spirit, we cannot wonder if the teaching about the former turns out to be anything but Scriptural. A few quotations will show the reader what it is. "The new life begins with union to Christ in the Spirit's work of effectual calling, in which faith begins. . . . Thus by the sacraments, as really as by the Word, God truly presents Christ to us that we may receive Him by faith, and that receiving Him we may have life, and have it more abundantly" (p. 35). Life and union are here confounded. Union, we learn in the Word, is for those who have life, for such only receive the Holy Ghost, by whose indwelling presence in them union with Christ is effected. No one but a believer receives the Holy Ghost. To have life souls are born of water and of the Spirit. To be united to Christ life must previously exist in the soul. Again we read, page 37—"When a believer is baptized, he receives Christ for the washing away of his sins ;" on page 39, "that the sacraments become effectual means of salvation ;" and on page 41, that "the sacraments are means of grace in the same sense and way as the Word is, both being alike presentations of God's truths and promises in Christ, and of Christ Himself in them, to the minds and hearts of men, made effectual by the Holy Ghost, through faith on our part. But there are also certain differences between them, from which it appears to whom the sacraments ought to be administered. The sacraments being appendages to the Word, like illustrations to a book, and tokens to a promise, are of no avail without the Word ; whereas it, even without the sacraments, would present to our faith Jesus Christ with all His benefits." If the Word can thus

act without the sacraments to present to our faith Christ with all His benefits, of what use are the sacraments, we might reasonably ask? Bewilderment and astonishment must take possession of the student of such a book as that to which we are calling attention, for we read on page 42, "The Word naturally comes before the sacraments, and they cannot profit those who have not first heard and believed the Word." Again, "Who ought to seek or come forward to the sacraments? The answer that must be given is, Only those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." And yet the sacraments are effectual means of salvation, and by them Christ is received, for the recipient to have life and that more abundantly. Surely such writing is darkening counsel by words without knowledge. Are souls born of God by the sacraments? They are by the Word. Do souls receive everlasting life by the sacraments? They do by coming to Christ, and that is by believing on Him. Life is received now by hearing the voice of the Son of God (John v. 25; vi. 40, 47). How clear is Scripture, but how misleading is this book. At one moment we are told that the sacraments—mark not baptism only, but the Lord's Supper as well—are means of salvation, by which, receiving Christ, we have life. Hence both sacraments, of course, must be received for a soul to possess everlasting life; yet Cornelius and his company received the Holy Ghost, the plainest token that they had life without partaking of either. At another time we are taught that those only who have life, and believed to have it, should partake of them. All this may be systematic theology, but it is not true Christian teaching, though it may be in harmony with the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and with the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechism*.

But in truth there is great confusion. What is done by the Word, and what is done by the sacrament, are quite distinct. What is done by the sacrament the Word could not do. What is done by the Word the sacrament could not accomplish. By the Word comes life and cleansing. By baptism we are buried with Christ unto death. By partaking of the Supper we show

both the Lord's death, and that all who partake are members one of another. And little need we wonder at any amount of confusion and doctrinal error, when we read the following startling statement in page 21 :—"When we see the sacraments administered, we look upon rites that have been observed continually for the last 1800 years, and that are undoubtedly the same that Jesus directed His disciples to observe, and Himself *observed along with them.*" The italics are ours. Indeed! Was the Lord Jesus Christ buried with Himself by baptism unto death? Did He eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Himself? Was His body given for Himself? Was His blood shed for the remission of His sins?! Does the professor understand the purport of such a sentence? Surely if any one was to characterise such language as it deserves, it would be in terms anything but complimentary to the author. The Lord did direct His disciples to baptize, as Matthew relates. He did tell His disciples to remember Him by partaking of the Lord's Supper. But He never was, nor could have been, baptized with Christian baptism; nor did He eat of the Lord's Supper with them, as Luke shows, who alone of the Evangelists distinguishes between the Paschal Feast and the Lord's Supper. Chap. xxii. 15-18 refers to the former; vv. 19, 20, tell us of the latter.

Thus far we have briefly looked at the writer's teaching about the sacraments in general, and that of baptism in particular. Want of adherence to that which Scripture says, as well as contradictory teaching, characterises also what is written about the Supper of the Lord. At page 92 we are told that at the Supper "there must always be present at the observance one qualified to teach the people, and it is natural and fitting that he should preside in the feast, not however as one of a superior order, but as one of the brethren, who not only gives the symbolical elements to the others but also in turn receives them from them." What may be the meaning of this last clause we have not explained to us. But where, within the two covers of the sacred volume, do we read of the necessity of one being present at the

Supper qualified to teach the people? Where do we read in the institution of the Supper, either in the Gospels or in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, of the need of a teacher at such a time? There is room for teaching if the Lord provides for it, but the Word says nothing about the necessity of it. For the purpose for which the saints are there gathered is to show the Lord's death, and to give thanks at the remembrance of it. The characteristic service at the table is not that of teaching, but that of thanksgiving. When teaching goes on the company are receiving instruction. When thanksgiving flows out they are giving to God. What the Lord did at the institution of the Supper was to give thanks. After the Supper He spoke at length (John xiv.-xvi.) These services are quite distinct. And who would think of presiding at the Lord's Table if conscious that He Himself is present? The table is His, and all His people are there as guests.

At page 95 we have another most erroneous statement: "In the very words of the Supper He declares that His blood is shed in order to remission of sins, and as that of the new covenant between God and man." The same mistake about the new covenant occurs on page 101. Now this is simply a question of What saith the Scriptures? With whom is the new covenant to be made, for it is not yet made? With the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jer. xxxi. 31; Heb. viii. 8). The new covenant between God and *man* is all a mistake. The blood of the new covenant has been shed. The new covenant will not be made whilst the Body of Christ is still on earth, though, as the blood on which it will rest has been shed, Christians do share in the blessings which Israel will enjoy under it, viz. the knowledge of God and forgiveness of sins. A new covenant then between God and man is a wholly unscriptural thought.

Again we read, page 95, "As the bread and wine are not only held up for our contemplation, but held forth for our reception, we are taught that the Saviour is not only presented as an

object of historical belief and admiration, but offered to us for personal appropriation . . . The giving of the elements thus represents the free offering of Christ in the gospel, and the receiving of them represents the acceptance of that offer by faith, and indicates that saving faith implies a real vital appropriation of Christ . . . We are to close with Christ on the cross, bearing the chastisement of our peace, and dying for us." Again, on page 104, in a paragraph stating that the Supper was designed for disciples, we are told "This is an action which would have no meaning as done by one who does not believe in Christ, and is not willing to receive Him as offered in the gospel." Thus it would follow from this teaching that the table is open, not only for those who have received Christ, but also for those who are willing to do so, in other words, for souls still unsaved. But on page 105 we are told that "those only who are truly united to Christ by saving faith ought to come forward to partake of it." Such uncertainty in teaching is, however, little to be wondered at when human statements are the standards to which appeal is made rather than the divine Word. How can one be clear if the standards, in accordance with which he would teach, are cloudy in their statements? How can one teach Scripturally if those standards are unscriptural in their statements?

Enough has been quoted to show the unsatisfactoriness of Professor Candlish's teaching on the sacraments. As a guide to such subjects it is untrustworthy and uncertain, as any one conversant with the teaching of Scripture may readily perceive. But his book may serve a useful purpose, if it demonstrates the grave mistake of making the teaching of the present day conform to the standards of the Church of Scotland drawn up two hundred years ago. Grateful as we all ought to be for the stand made by our forefathers for the truth, we should nevertheless remember that each movement in the Church of God for the truth's sake has but resulted in a partial recovery of the whole teaching of Scripture known in apostolic times. To insist on

conformity to the standards as drawn up two centuries back, is virtually to declare that Scripture has nothing more of moment to teach than what was then apprehended. Thus, what were designed as bulwarks against the special errors of their day become hindrances to the full opening up of the Word of God, and the doctrinal statements of uninspired though good men are in danger of blinding the eyes and prejudicing the heart against fuller teaching from the divine Word. To the written Word we should all go, and by its teaching be guided, advocating the fullest inquiry into the truth of Scripture with the most perfect subjection to the teaching of the divine Word. This will keep us from upholding on the one hand creeds or confessions of faith where they are not doctrinally correct ; and will preserve us, on the other hand, from that spirit of insubjection which leads man to sit in judgment on the revelation of the divine mind, graciously vouchsafed us by our God.

BIBLICAL ANNOTATIONS.

NOTE ON DAN. IX. 24-27.

THE seventy years' captivity were nearly ended. They began with Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of the land of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel and others were carried captive by him, previous to Nabopolassar's death, which took place about two years afterwards. Hence it is that whilst the Jews looked on him as king when he invaded their land (Jer. xxv. 1), the Babylonians only reckoned his regnal years from the death of his father. At the time of the battle of Carchemish, where Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho, and changed thereby the aspect of affairs in Asia and Syria, Nabopolassar, his father, was still alive. Following up that victory, Nebuchadnezzar entered Palestine and received the submission of Jehoiakim in the third year, as Daniel states, of the Jewish monarch's reign, or the fourth year, as Jeremiah describes it. From this the captivity dated, for they were to serve the king of Babylon seventy years (Jer. xxv. 11, 12).

Daniel, understanding by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem, set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes (ix. 1-3). The chief minister of Darius, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, was before his God in self-abasement and dependance, asking for Jerusalem and for his people, but reminding God that it was His city and His people. An answer comes by means of Gabriel, which reveals the whole

of God's purpose about the city and the people called by His name.

The seventy years of captivity were well nigh ended. Seventy weeks, or heptads of years were still determined upon Daniel's people and his city ere the transgression would be shut up, not to be sought for any more, sins would be sealed up (or finished, according to the K'ri), iniquity atoned for, vision and prophecy sealed up, and the holy of holies anointed. The whole period thus designated as seventy heptads or weeks, Gabriel next proceeded to explain that they would be broken up into three distinct portions—viz., seven heptads, or 49 years; sixty-two heptads, or 434 years; and one heptad, or 7 years,—for years they must be, as is clear from the time which elapsed between their commencement and the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Seventy years had the Jews to undergo captivity at Babylon; seventy heptads of years would run by from the going forth of the command to rebuild the city to the bringing in of everlasting righteousness.

But from whence was this period to date? Daniel had been praying about the city and his people. The revelation concerned both these; and from the commandment going forth to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, there would elapse seven heptads, and sixty-two heptads, or sixty-nine in all. From whence then does the period here indicated start? Now, we have four different decrees of Persian monarchs in Scripture. Cyrus issued one, Darius one, and Artaxerxes issued two—one in his seventh year (Ezra vii. 11-26), and another in the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. ii. 1-8). Now, of these decrees the first was to build the house at Jerusalem (Ezra i. 3), the second was to finish it (Ezra vi. 1-12, 14), the third was to beautify it (Ezra vii. 27), and the fourth was to build the city of Nehemiah's father's sepulchre (Neh. ii. 5). Hence we must date the commencement of the weeks from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and the commission entrusted to Nehemiah.

But what year was that in the world's history? Profane historians generally agree in placing the twentieth year of Artaxerxes at 445 B.C. ; adding to that the years of the Lord's life to His death, which would be 29, we find the period of 483 years or sixty-nine weeks runs on beyond the date of the cross. That cannot really be ; and however difficult it may be as yet to harmonise the dates in profane history with the years as numbered by Daniel, we may be sure that God's word is right, and research may yet verify its accuracy ; and if Hengstenberg, quoted in a little work called *The Dates and Chronology of Scripture*, be correct,¹ the solution has been already discovered. The year of Xerxes' death was, he states, 474 B.C., and not 464 B.C. If this can be relied on, the chronological difficulty is solved. From 455 B.C. to A.D. 29 would be exactly 483 years. For it must be remembered that Daniel explicitly states that the cutting off of Messiah was not to be till after the seven heptads and the sixty and two heptads—that is, after sixty-nine of the weeks had run out, and not, as has been so often but erroneously concluded, that the whole period of 490 years was to elapse before the crucifixion. Daniel's statement clearly negatives that : "After threescore and two heptads shall Messiah be cut off and have nothing." At this point, it should be remarked, the enumeration of the heptads of years is dropped, and the angel proceeds, "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be in the flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Caiphas had prophesied that "it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi. 50), the mouthpiece, as High Priest, of God the Holy Ghost, without being aware of it, or even understanding the true meaning of the words. He and those with him thought by the Lord's death to preserve their

¹ *The Dates and Chronology of Scripture*. London, G. Morrish. See also *Tregelles on Daniel*, p. 107. Bagster, London.

national existence and country. Daniel's prophecy foretold a very opposite result, and that which came true. Instead of preserving their place and nation, the Romans—the people of the prince that shall come—destroyed the city and the sanctuary. This carries us down to the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. But the prophecy looks on to the end of all the troubles at Jerusalem, which can only cease in the flood (פְּטוּף),—the incursion of the northern power of Daniel, the Assyrian of Isaiah. See for the term “flood,” Dan. xi. 22, 26, “his army shall overflow,” writing here of what is past; and xi. 40; Isa. x. 22, xxviii. 2, 15, 17, 18, predicting what is still future. An invading host from the north, either the Assyrian of old (Isa. viii. 8), or the Babylonian (Jer. xlvi. 2), or Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. xi. 26), are so termed by the sacred writers, for it must be an invading host, to carry out the simile. And the invader of the last days who will capture Jerusalem will be the Assyrian, or northern power of that time. No end, then, can come to Jerusalem's troubles till that flood has swept over the land; and till it does, desolations are determined. The troubles to the Jewish polity and country, which commenced with the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans, the people of the prince that shall come, will not end till after the invasion of the future king of the north.

Having thus sketched out the condition of the city and sanctuary till then, some details are now given in v. 27 relative to the last heptad of years. “And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one heptad, or week of years.” Who will do this? Two princes or leaders have been mentioned, Messiah the prince (מָשִׁיחַ), and the prince (נְגִיד) that shall come. Who this one is v. 26 has made plain. He is the prince of the Roman Empire, for the people of the prince that shall come, *i.e.* the Romans, were to destroy, and have destroyed Jerusalem. This prince, then, the last one named, will confirm a covenant with the mass of the Jews, the many, for one week. The political reasons for this Isa. xxviii. has foretold. They will be under

the protection of the Roman imperial power to shield them from the threatened incursion of the northern Assyrian power of that day. The head of the Roman Empire entering into a covenant with the Jews restored in unbelief, to keep a hold, by means of friendship with them and protection of them, of the land of Canaan, is the Eastern Question coming up in its last phase.

In the middle of this, the last week of years, the political head of the Roman Empire will discover his true character, and break the covenant; displacing by the instrumentality of Antichrist the worship of God, and substituting that of his image in its stead, the abomination of desolation (Dan. xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14); so-called because idolatry being hateful to God will bring down a desolator on the then apostate Jews. So Gabriel proceeds: "For the overspreading"—rather because of the protection—"of abominations (*i.e.* idolatry) there shall be a desolator (מְשׂוֹמֵם) until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (שׂוֹמֵם). Idolatry set up by Antichrist in the temple of God, a desolator will be used of God to scourge the idolatrous people till the divine will has been carried out on Jerusalem.

Now there are two participles derived from the same root, מְשׂוֹמֵם and שׂוֹמֵם, both from שָׂמַם, made use of by Gabriel in this last verse, translated in the A. V. "he shall make it desolate" מְשׂוֹמֵם, and "the desolate" שׂוֹמֵם. By comparison with other passages light is thrown on them, and whilst the A. V. is in the main right, the more exact meaning of the first of these participles will be made apparent. For instead of translating "he shall make it desolate," which might refer to the prince already mentioned, the better translation would be "there shall be a desolator," one distinct from the prince of the Roman Empire, and who comes up in this character because of the idolatry established at Jerusalem. Thus the definite use of the term מְשׂוֹמֵם is preserved, and its application to the northern power is made clear; for it occurs again only in xi. 31 of this prophet, where the northern power of the past, Antiochus Epiphanes, is

described, who introduced idolatry into the temple, and was himself a desolator of the Jews, combining in his own person the action of the beast of the future, who will set up idolatry in the temple, and the action of the northern power of that day, which will be the desolator, God's scourge, in consequence. So when in this respect the active agent in the desolation is described (xi. 31 ; ix. 27) מְשׁוֹחֵיִם is used ; where the sin which calls down the desolation is mentioned, שׁוֹמֵם is the word employed (see viii. 13 ; xii. 11). "The transgression of desolation" (viii. 13) is the idolatry which brings on the Jews desolation. "The abomination of desolation" (xii. 11) is the very image of the beast, which will justify God in allowing the northern power to sweep over the land. Thus these terms are used in Daniel with precision, and are not really interchangeable, and the reason of the language in xi. 31, הַשְּׂקִירִין מִשׁוֹחֵיִם, the reader will readily apprehend. Had we there simply, שְׂקִירִין שׁוֹמֵם, as in xii. 11, the reason of the desolation, *i.e.* idolatry, would have been mentioned, but we should not have understood thereby that Antiochus Epiphanes not only introduced it, but was himself the desolator.

In ix. 24, 25, then, we have history to the date of Messiah the prince, who was to be cut off, and have nothing. In v. 26 we have the present interval between His crucifixion and the reappearance in power, and that in connection with the Jews of the revived Roman Empire. In v. 27 we have the last week described, and the incursion of the northern power accounted for.

The passage may be thus translated :—

"Seventy heptads (*i.e.* weeks of years) are determined on thy people, and upon thy holy city to shut up פְּלִסָּה (*i.e.* not to seek for it any more) the transgression, and to seal up הָתָם (or, according to the *K'ri* הִתָּם, to finish) sins, and to atone for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies (*i.e.* the temple). And thou shalt know and understand from the going forth of a word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah (the)

prince (or leader) seven heptads (there shall be), and sixty-two heptads; the street shall be built again, and the wall (or foss) even in troublous times. And after the sixty and two heptads Messiah shall be cut off and have nothing (לֹא יִהְיֶה), and the city and the sanctuary the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy, and its end¹ shall be in the flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm a covenant with the many (for) one heptad, and at the middle of the heptad he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease, and because of the protection of abominations (there shall be) a desolator מְשׁוּמֵם and until that which is determined² shall be poured upon the desolate one שׁוּמֵם.

PSALM LXXXIV.

To the director on the Gittith, for the sons of Korah. A Psalm.

1. How lovely are thy dwelling places, Jehovah of Hosts !
2. My soul has earnestly desired, and has also wasted away for the courts of Jehovah ;
My heart and my flesh cry aloud to the living God.
3. Yea, a sparrow has found an house,
And a swallow a nest for herself,
Where she has placed her brood,
Thine altars, Jehovah of Hosts,
My King, and my God.
4. Blessed are (*lit.* happinesses of) the dwellers in Thy house :
They shall still praise Thee. Pause.
5. Blessed is (*lit.* happinesses of) a man whose strength is in Thee ;
High ways in their heart.
6. Those passing through a valley of weeping,
A fountain they make it ;
Moreover, the rain covers it with blessings.
7. They go from strength to strength,
He (*i.e.* each one) appeareth unto God in Zion.
8. Jehovah, God of Hosts, hear my prayer :
Give ear, God of Jacob. Pause.

¹ Its end קֵצוֹ. This might, without any violence to grammar, be referred to the prince, as some do ; but the teaching of Scripture elsewhere about the prince would lead one to refer the pronoun to the city, as in A. V.

² כִּלְהָ וְנִחְרָצָה. The reader of the Hebrew Bible may remember those significant words of Isaiah x. 23, xxviii. 22. See also Dan. xi. 36.

9. Our shield see, O God,
And look on the face of Thy Messiah (*lit.* anointed).
10. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.
I have chosen to remain at the threshold in the house of my God,
Rather than to dwell in tents of wickedness.
11. For a sun and shield is Jehovah God :
Grace and glory will Jehovah give :
He will not withhold good to those walking in integrity.
12. Jehovah of hosts,
Blessed is (*lit.* happinesses of) a man who trusteth in Thee.

The above forms part of the third book of Psalms, which, commencing with Ps. lxxiii. and ending with Ps. lxxxix., treats of the desolation of the sanctuary (lxxiv.), the city (lxxix.), and the throne (lxxxix.) ; and therefore concerns Israel at large, and not merely the godly remnant of the Jews. In keeping, then, with the character of this book, Ps. lxxxiv. describes God's altar as neglected, worship no longer ascending to Him as it had done after the return of the Jews, and before the development of the plans of antichrist. Both the brazen altar and the golden altar are left uncared for, and unused ; so the birds can, unmolested, find about them suitable places whereon to place their broods.

Reading Ps. lxxix. we are introduced to Jerusalem in the lowest condition in which she will be found after the last successful siege yet to be undertaken against her by her enemies is a *fait accompli*. To this Isa. xxix. 1-4, and Zech. xiv. 1, 2, refer. Following on to Ps. lxxx., we read of the vineyard wasted, and the vine trampled down, hence God is therein supplicated to raise up the vine, and to restore prosperity to the nation, their hopes resting on Messiah, the man of God's right hand (vv. 14-19) for full deliverance. So the Psalm closes in prayer, recalling to mind part of the formula of the blessing of Israel in Numb. vi. Ps. lxxxi, carrying on the subject, sets forth the principles on which earthly blessings can be enjoyed by Israel (vv. 8-10), in answer to the cry of the preceding one. With this before them, they are exhorted at the outset of the Psalm to sing to God, and to count on the restoration of festivals, that of the new moon being typical of renovation in store for the people. Ps.

lxxxii. celebrates God again among them, judging among the judges. For evil must be dealt with ere full blessing can be known. But taking His place as Judge in Israel, He will judge the earth and inherit all nations. Hence, as a needful prelude to this last thought, the confederacy against Israel is described, and God's interference is implored to overthrow it definitely and for ever, as He did the Canaanites and Midianites of old. This is the subject of Ps. lxxxiii. How the cry is answered, Isaiah (x. 25-26 ; xxix. 6-8), Joel (ii. 20), and Zechariah (xii. 1-9) prophetically describe. That destruction accomplished, the way to God's house will be opened for His people, whither the desire of their heart is to go, as Psalm lxxxiv. beautifully describes.

In vv. 1-4 the writer expresses the longing desire of his heart to be there. In vv. 5-8 he describes the way thither. And in vv. 9-12 he sets forth that all must be accomplished for them by the Messiah, God's anointed one. The pause, *Selah*, here as elsewhere marks the divisions of the Psalm. In each portion the writer speaks of blessedness. It will be blessed to dwell in God's house. It is blessed for the man whose strength is in God. It is blessed, too, for Him who trusteth in Jehovah, God of Hosts.

“AGAIN.”

HEBREWS i. 6.

ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ. You ask if the text or the marginal reading in the A. V. of this clause gives the sense of the original. If we examine into the habit of the writer of this epistle when adducing quotations from the Old Testament, we shall be at no loss in determining that πάλιν here is the mark of a new quotation, and not a note of time; for out of the ten occasions in this epistle on which the writer introduces this adverb (i. 5, 6 ; ii. 13, bis ; iv. 5, 7 ; v. 12 ; vi. 1, 6 ; x. 30) only three of them (v. 12 ; vi. 1, 6) can be said to express notations of time. Observe how this adverb comes in to mark a new quotation (Heb. i. 5 ; ii.

13, bis ; iv. 5, 7 ; x. 30). The text of the A. V. is correct. The objection made against it on exegetical grounds, that *πάλι* before a verb denotes a second time the thing is done, is a statement which will not always be found correct (see Matt. v. 33 ; Rom. xv. 10, 11). The fact is that *πάλι* is frequently used to introduce a fresh quotation from the Old Testament (Matt. iv. 7 ; v. 33 ; John xix. 37 ; Rom. xv. 10, 11, 12 ; 1 Cor. iii. 20 ; Heb. i. 5 ; ii. 13, bis. ; iv. 5, 7 ; x. 30). With this array of examples before us we can have no real difficulty, whether we examine simply the habit of the writer or the practice of those guided by the Holy Ghost, in determining that Heb. i. 6 really means, "And again, when he brings the first begotten into the habitable world."

The reference is to Psalm xcvii., quoted not with verbal correctness but for the sense of the passage, the point being that as angels are to worship Him when He comes into the universe as the firstborn, He must be superior to them, though he has appeared in the ranks of the human race. So whether the sacred writer had quoted verbally correctly, or only as he has done, the point of the quotation would remain the same. And the writer of the epistle does not always quote verbatim from the LXX. or from the Hebrew. Compare Heb. i. 7 with Ps. ciii. 4 in the LXX. ; ii. 12 with Ps. xxi. 23 in the LXX. ; iii. 10 with Ps. xciv. 10 in the LXX. and XCV. 10 in the Hebrew ; vi. 14 with Gen. xxii. 17 in LXX. and Heb. ; viii. 11 with Jer. xxxi. 34 in Heb. and XXXVIII. 34 in LXX. ; x. 7 with Ps. xl. 8 in Hebrew and XXXIX. 3 in LXX.

It is true that the words in Heb. i. are found verbatim in the Vatican LXX. in Deut. xxxii., though in the Alexandrine LXX. we read, *καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ*. But as neither the Hebrew, the Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch, nor the Chaldee Targums, know anything of such words in Deut. xxxii. 43, nor the Vulgate or Syriac versions, we could not regard the Vatican LXX. as having preserved in that passage the words of the lawgiver

THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.



GOD has spoken. As a fact, this is easily stated. As a truth, it is one of immense importance, and we learn from it that He willed not to abide in the solitude of His being without creatures to whom He might communicate of His thoughts, for all intelligent creatures, as well as all created things, owe their existence to His word. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. xxxiii. 6-9). A graphic description of the power of that word—"He spake, and it was done." For who hath resisted His will? All, then, that we see around us was called into existence and order by His word, and we learn, as we survey the heavens above and the earth beneath, something of what were the conceptions in the mind of Jehovah, which in obedience to His mighty word took shape and form. But when did He first speak, and call creation into being? Who can tell us but Himself; and to Him are we indebted for all that we know, or can know about it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. i. 1), is the simple statement of the Almighty One, made thousands of years ago for the instruction of His earthly people, called out from the nations to own and to maintain the truth of the unity of God (Deut. vi. 4).

"He spake, and it was done." We look around, and see some of the results of that speaking in the heavenly bodies, created before the earth, and the atmosphere which surrounds us, were made for man, whom the Lord God intended to bring on the scene when the time should arrive in accordance with His purpose for the display of His glory, greatness, goodness,

and love. This earth having, however, been reduced to chaos (for He formed it not empty, as Isaiah xlv. 18 really wrote ; that is, not in the condition in which it was as described in Gen. i. 2), God spake again, and brought it into order, ready for His counsels to begin their accomplishment by the bringing in of man upon the scene. When God spake at the beginning no angel had been created. When He spake to bring this earth out of its chaotic state, the angelic hosts, eye-witnesses of what He did, shouted for joy (Job xxxviii. 7). The power of His word was displayed as created things assumed their form, created beings appeared in all the activity of life, and at last the head of this creation, formed out of the dust of the ground, with the breath of life breathed into him by God, and so becoming a living soul, was seen in the garden of Eden, with his helpmeet by his side. Thus created things, animate and inanimate, brought into existence by God's word, the earth prepared for man, with man himself and his partner on the scene, the invisible things of God were clearly seen, being understood by the things that were made, even His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20). By His word of power God had so far revealed Himself. A Being at once absolute in power and excellent in working willed not to abide for ever alone, but surrounded Himself with creatures animate and inanimate, with orders and ranks of intelligent creatures who could take delight in what He had done, finding their proper object of worship in Him, the Creator and the Holy One, and whose command it should be their freedom and their delight to obey.

But rebellion wrought its dire work among the angelic hosts, and disobedience displayed itself in man, who was made in the image and likeness of God. Ere man was created the devil had fallen (Ezek. xxviii. 13-15), and ere the flood took place, apostasy had developed itself among the angels of God (Gen. vi. 2 ; Jude 6). Divine power to deal with evil was therefore of necessity called forth, and men and angels experienced it. The apostate angels were cast into dens *σπιρῶν* (not chains *σειρῶν*) of

darkness (2 Pet. ii. 4) ; and the ungodly amongst men were cut off by the flood, and imprisoned in the other world (1 Pet. iii. 19) to await their righteous doom.

Was this, then, all that was to be known of God? A Being almighty, beneficent, gracious, merciful, and yet just, and dealing in unsparing judgment with those who rebelled against Him? No. He was minded to make Himself known in another way, so in due time He sent His only-begotten Son, who is the Word of God (John i. 1), by whom He is declared to us (John i. 18), and seeing whom, men saw the Father ; and knowing whom, they could know the Father (John xiv. 7-9). He is the Word of God, for by Him God has been declared to us.

But there is a third way in which God has spoken to us, viz. by the written word, placing on record not only what He has done, and declaring to us what He is, as revealed by the Son, —the Word ; but acquainting us also with that which He desires, and will do, for the instruction of all that shall hearken to Him. God's works tell us something of what He is, but they cannot make known to us His purposes in the future. In the person of the Lord Jesus Christ God's heart was opened up to us, and in His words the Father's thoughts were expressed. None of us, however, have seen God, or heard Him. Hence, for the abiding instruction of souls, God is pleased to communicate His thoughts in words which men may understand, and in such a way that they may trust implicitly to that which has been written. For the Scriptures are inspired, *θεόπνευστος*, i.e. God-breathed. By revelation God's mind is communicated to them to whom the revelation is made. By inspiration the person selected by God is enabled to express the truth in words chosen of the Holy Ghost, God thus providing for His truth to be transmitted without error or misconception on the part of the one chosen to communicate it ; for the words in which it is expressed are the words selected by God. This David in the Old Testament, and Paul in the New Testament, have taught us.

David tells us (2 Sam. xxiii. 2), "The Spirit of the Lord spake

by me, and His word was in, or on, my tongue;" and His tongue, he elsewhere states, was the pen of a ready writer (Ps. xlv. 1). What the Psalmist affirmed, Paul endorsed, and explained more at length (1 Cor. ii. 10-13). The truth, the Apostle tells us, was revealed to the writers by the Holy Ghost, and they understood it by the same Spirit given to them, and were guided to communicate it in words chosen of the Holy Ghost, "communicating," as we should probably better translate the Apostle's statement, "spiritual things by spiritual means." That done, it was for the hearer or the reader to receive the truth. The Apostle then distinguishes between revelation, inspiration, and the inspired word being received by the hearer, and tells us that, differing from God's servants of old (1 Pet. i. 11, 12), who had not always full understanding of that which they set forth, the person in Christian times was the intelligent communicator of that which he had received, and authoritatively set forth. How all this witnesses of God's real desire for His intelligent creature man to become acquainted with the Divine communications! God has taken great pains, we may say it with reverence, that His mind should be correctly made known; but His mind cannot be apprehended by mere human intellect. "The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually 'discerned'" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

Hence, with such a statement from God before us, we need not be surprised to learn that man steps in, and challenges the word of the Divine Being by His servants in denying the inspiration claimed for the Scriptures. Now, it should be remembered that it is from such as were guided of God to set forth the truth that we learn anything at all about inspiration. And the two witnesses whom we have adduced both assert that they expressed what they did in words chosen of God. But if such be the case, says an objector, why have we different accounts of the inscription on the Cross? If the words of the sacred writers were taught them by the Holy Ghost, why do they not

verbally agree in their statement of that which was placed by Pilate over the head of the Lord Jesus Christ? An answer to this objection is furnished by the Evangelists themselves. It was a trilingual inscription, and therefore probably not meant to be word for word the same in each language. What it actually was Luke and John profess to give us, whereas Matthew only professes to furnish his readers with the accusation made against the Lord. And they "set up over His head this accusation (*ἀτιμία*), written, This is Jesus, the king of the Jews;" so wrote the son of Alphæus (Matt. xxvii. 37). Luke writes, "A superscription (*ἐπιγραφὴ*) also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, This is the King of the Jews" (xxiii. 38). By John we are told that "Pilate wrote a title (*τίτλος*), and put it on the cross, and the writing was, Jesus the Nazoræan, the King of the Jews. This title then read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh unto the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin" (xix. 19-20), or, according to some of the best uncial MSS. "in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek." Of this trilingual inscription Luke probably gives his readers the Greek one and John the Hebrew, since he mentions that first. For a Greek it would be enough to know that the crucified one laid claim to the throne of David. But to a Jew, and that a Palestinian one, the addition of Nazoræan would have a marked significance. The derision of a Greek would be excited as he thought of the king of the Jews ending His life on the cross (1 Cor. i. 23). The contempt of the Jew would be stimulated as he was reminded of the connection of the crucified one with Nazareth. For the words of Nathaniel, recorded by John, tell us in what light that Galilean city was generally viewed (i. 43). This explanation, as it affects Luke and John, would be further strengthened could we build unhesitatingly on the clause in the former Gospel, "in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew" (xxiii. 38), which is omitted by the uncial MSS. BC¹L with some versions, and was struck out from the Codex Sinaiticus

by a late corrector of that ancient copy. If we agree to omit the clause, we are of course deprived of its support to the view just expressed, but its omission in no way controverts it.

There remains, then, only the Gospel of Mark, to which we have not referred. He tells us, "The superscription of his accusation (*ἡ ἐπιγραφὴ τῆς αἰτίας αὐτοῦ*) was written over, The King of the Jews" (xv. 26). Does Mark profess to give us the full inscription like Luke and John, or only the statement of the accusation like his brother Evangelist Matthew? If the former supposition be correct, it may well be the Latin one which he has recorded, and that would be quite in harmony with his habit of using so many Latin terms in his narrative. But without pronouncing definitely about Mark, since Matthew clearly does not profess to give us more than the charge against the Lord, there is nothing in what any of the Evangelists state to militate against the truth of inspiration as taught us by the Apostle of the Gentiles. Mark may well have given us the Latin inscription, Luke that which was in Greek, and John the Hebrew one.

Another objection to the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is based on the different accounts of Peter's denial of the Lord Jesus. Here, again, attention to details and patient investigation helps to the unravelling of that which, to some, is a real difficulty. The history of the Apostle's denial is given us by all four Evangelists (Matt. xxvi. 34, 69-75; Mark xiv. 30, 66-72; Luke xxii. 34, 54-60; John xiii. 38, xviii. 18-27). Now Matthew, Luke, and John wrote of one cockerowing; Mark, on the other hand, tells us the Lord spoke of the cock crowing twice, which really did take place. Are these different statements irreconcilable? We think not. It may very possibly be that the three Evangelists above named give us the Lord's rejoinder to Peter in a general way, whereas Mark, with his usual accuracy, has doubtless given us the exact answer made by the Master on this occasion; and if there be any truth in the tradition that Mark learnt many things which he recounts from Peter, it would be

only in keeping with it that he should have given us the exact words of Christ on this occasion, words which we may well believe were ever after indelibly fixed in Peter's mind. Besides this, Mark gives us a clue to the meaning of the Lord's answer as stated by the three Evangelists, in that he acquaints his readers with the special time of night called cockcrowing, a period between midnight and the early dawn (xiii. 35). The three Evangelists then turn our attention to that period of the night known as the cockcrowing, before which Peter would thrice deny the Lord, which really came true; but Mark, with his attention to details, gives us the full text of the Lord's answer to Peter, and points out how accurately (xiv. 68, 72) all was fulfilled. And we learn from Luke that between the second and third denial nearly one hour elapsed. Hence the first crowing must have taken place some time before that period of the night called cockcrowing.

Turning now to the actual denials of the Lord by Peter, is there anything in the different accounts to militate against the truth of the full inspiration of the Scriptures? From Matthew we learn that a damsel in the palace-court first addressed him, and he denied that he understood what she said. Another damsel subsequently addressed the bystanders, not Peter, and he denied, but Matthew does not say to whom, that he knew the Lord. Then the bystanders challenged him, and he denied again that he knew Christ. In Mark we read a damsel of the high priest's house first challenged Peter in the court, when he assured her that he knew not what she said, but, evidently afraid of recognition, he went out into the vestibule, and the cock crew. Then a damsel addressed the bystanders, not Peter, and he denied that he was one of the disciples of Christ. At length, challenged by the bystanders, he denied again. Luke's account is very different, but perfectly consistent. Sitting with the servants, round the fire, by the light of it a damsel recognised him as a disciple of the Lord, but he denied it. Again challenged personally, but this time by a man, he denied his association with Christ. A

third time challenged, and again by a man, he affirmed that he knew not what he said. According to John, the damsel door-keeper first affirmed that he was of Christ's disciples. Next those standing by repeated the question, but he would not acknowledge it. At last a kinsman of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off, averred that he had seen him in the garden with the Lord, but he stoutly again denied any association with Him.

According, then, to Luke's account and John's, Peter was personally addressed *three* times, whereas from those of Matthew and Mark, we should only have known that he was directly spoken to *twice*. Do the Evangelists contradict each other? We think not. All agree that a woman first spoke to Peter. Then, whilst Matthew and Mark tell us of a woman addressing the bystanders, which elicited a second denial, Luke says that one of the men directly challenged him, and John states that the general company did. Doubtless the whole company, when told by the damsel, did accuse him; but Luke gives us only the direct charge of one of them. Then as to the third denial, Matthew and Mark tell us the general accusations of the company. Luke makes us acquainted with the fact that one man in particular challenged him, and John tells us who it was. All this seems natural, and the accounts do not really contradict one another. We can understand the general company receiving the damsel's affirmation, and one of their number being prominent in taxing Peter with it, on which all joined in it. Luke never asserts that only one man accosted him, nor do the other Evangelists affirm that it was merely a chorus of voices to which the Apostle replied.

How helpful, too, the different accounts are for the full understanding of all that took place. Peter's change of place between the first and second challenge Matthew and Mark have noticed, but Luke it is who gives us the explanation of it, in that the firelight had evidently betrayed him to the damsel, and he was aware of it. They had lit a fire in the court. And a certain maid having seen him sitting by the light, πρὸς τὸ φῶς,

as the Evangelist mentions, and having earnestly looked at him, said, "This man was also with Him." How naturally all is related! No apparent attempt is made to harmonise the accounts, yet they can, we believe, be harmonised. Then John, the only disciple who was present as a looker-on, tells us who was the damsel who first spoke to Peter, viz. the porteress, and who was the man who personally elicited the third denial from the failing Apostle. And as Luke acquaints us with the lapse of nearly an hour between the second and third denial, John in his narrative interposes several verses (xviii. 19-24) between them, recounting all that he gives us of the Lord's examination before Caiaphas. We submit then that there is nothing really in the four different accounts of Peter's denial to show that the words of Paul, already referred to, are not applicable to the writings of the Evangelists.

Another class of objections against the true doctrine of inspiration is grounded on what are called the needless and unmeaning repetitions met with in the Scriptures, and we are pointed to Levit. xix. 9, 10, compared with chapter xxiii. 22, for an illustration in point. Why, it is asked, if the writer was guided in his words by the Holy Ghost, did he repeat himself, and on this occasion in such close proximity to the previous command? Such an objection betrays the ignorance of the objector as to the teaching of that twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, which may be called the sacred calendar of the people of Israel. The lawgiver has, it is true, repeated himself, but why? In Levit. xix. 9, 10, consideration for the poor and the needy in the time of harvest and vintage is pressed on all the children of Israel. In chapter xxiii. we have the outline of Israel's history from Exodus to millennial rest, the chief features of which may be thus summed up:—Sheltered by blood from divine judgment, and redeemed out of Egypt, of which the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread reminded them; the wave sheaf was next to be offered, and the feast of weeks was to be kept. Thus far, the festivals of that sacred calendar

have had their accomplishment in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true paschal Lamb ; in His resurrection on the first day of the week, the morrow after the Sabbath ; and in the coming of the Holy Ghost in Pentecostal blessing. By and by, after the Church has been caught up (1 Thess. iv. 15-17), but ere the Lord returns to reign, there will be found on earth souls converted by the testimony of God. To this Rev. vi. 9 and vii. refer ; and of this Levit. xxiii. 22 typically treats. Then, Israel brought back to their land, the Feast of Trumpets will have received its accomplishment, and, atonement known by them, they will keep the real Feast of Tabernacles by enjoying millennial rest. We have thus sketched out, as we have said, the nation's history from its commencement at the Exodus to its entrance into full and final blessing under the reign of their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if the lawgiver merely repeated what he had previously written, apart from divine guidance in the matter, why did he recapitulate the command in Levit. xix. 9 with the concluding clause of the following verse, and omit all notice here of the vintage ? The omission of that points to method in his writing, and a sketching out of Israel's history, which by no possibility could he have known by mere intuition. For the mention of the unreaped corners in the field teaches us that God was referring to that work of blessing on earth, which will take place after the Church's departure, when souls will be in great numbers converted and owned as saints. Had the lawgiver brought in of his own accord the mention of the vintage there would have been confusion. Saints of God are likened to wheat, the produce of the harvest (Matt. iii. 12 ; xiii. 38), but the vintage is only used as an emblem of unsparing judgment on the ungodly (Isa. lxiii. 3 ; Rev. xiv. 18, 19). There was method and meaning in this repetition. And as none but God then knew the future, the lawgiver was really guided by the Spirit as to how much of what he had previously written in Levit. xix. should be incorporated in chapter xxiii. Had there been no mention of

the harvest field in the connection in which it appears, an important part of God's ways with Israel, and Gentiles would have been, we can see, wholly passed over, causing thereby a real gap in the history of God's ways on earth. That verse, however, just fills in what is wanted to complete the sketch, and surely tends to confirm the intelligent student of Scripture in the conviction that the lawgiver was guided of God in that which he wrote.

But why should not God be at liberty to repeat Himself when and where He pleases? Are men to be allowed a freedom which is to be denied to the Almighty? He does repeat Himself in His Word, but for purposes which, when understood, only deepen the sense in the heart that the Scriptures are from God. Compare for instance Ps. xiv. with Ps. liii. ; Ps. xl. 13-17 with Ps. lxx. ; Ps. lvii. 7-11 and lx. 5-12 with Ps. cviii. Patient study of the word may be required to understand the reason of any repetition in the sacred pages ; but where the soul reverently waits on God, light in due time, if it be His will, is accorded.

But there are some true-hearted souls who may ask with a real desire to learn, How may we be assured that the Scriptures are the word of God? To this let us now turn. It would be strange, certainly, if God had spoken in language man could understand, and for man's everlasting blessing, and yet had left him in real doubt as to whether or not he did possess a revelation from his Creator. God does not thus mock His creatures. He desires too that His children should have fellowship with Himself. But how can that be if we know not, cannot know for certain, what is His mind? "No man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no one, οὐδείς (not merely, no man), but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11). A revelation, therefore, is requisite, if any creature is to know them. Now God has chosen man, His people, amongst men, to have understanding of His mind. Wonderful privilege! Immense bless-

ing! The thoughts and purposes of God hidden from ages and generations (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10 ; Col. i. 26) are now made manifest. But are those so deeply concerned in them to remain in uncertainty regarding God's revelation of them? Oh no. How then, some may ask, shall we be sure about this? If we turn to Deut. xviii. 21, 22, we shall find a principle there enunciated of use to us. "If thou shalt 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." Thus God guarded His people of old from being led away by pretended revelation. They were to judge of the word by the results. Now we can judge of it in a similar way. But for Israel it was the prophetic word of which they were thus to judge. With us it is the revelation God has given for our instruction and encouragement which we can test by this principle.

For the word of God professes to act on souls in ways which are characteristic either of what God is, or of what He does, and these characteristic actings of the word are proofs that it is God's word. First, God is the source of life. If we speak of the Father, He is called the living Father (John vi. 57), having life in Himself (John v. 26), deriving His being from no one. If we think of the Son of God, we read, "In Him was life" (John i. 4), and He is the life of all who believe on Him. For "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 12). In keeping with this the word of God quickens. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth," wrote James (i. 18). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," writes Peter (1 Peter i. 23). Now these two, themselves subjects of the quickening power of the word, have placed on record how it acts; and the Master Himself, who came from heaven, also declared this when He told Nicodemus that "Except a man be born of water and of

the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5); for water here is the emblem of the word of God.

But this leads us to another acting of the word. It not only quickens, but it cleanses, acting on the soul as water does on the body. Hence we read, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word" (Ps. cxix. 9). God is holy, and the man who is subject to the word is thereby cleansed from his old evil ways. And this the Lord Jesus fully corroborated, when he said to the eleven, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John xv. 3). Thus the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament affirmed how the word could act, and the Lord Jesus, speaking of the eleven after Judas had gone out, declared that it had really acted in this way on them. They were examples of the cleansing action of the divine word. But, thank God, they stand not alone in this, for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of His body, the Church, has cleansed (or cleanses) *καθαρίσας* it by the washing of water by the word (Ephes. v. 26). With this passage then before us we can understand the meaning of the figure used in John iii. 5, where water is a symbol for the divine word. For the word showing the person what he ought to be, and in consequence manifesting to him what in himself and in his ways is contrary to God, he, if subject to its teaching, separates himself from that which by the word he learns is inconsistent with Christian life and practice. Thus the word cleanses. How it could act the Psalmist, as we have seen, long ago declared. How it acted on the eleven the Lord affirmed. And that it can effectually cleanse every soul which is subject to it, the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, described in Ephes. v., plainly intimates.

Further, the divine word enlightens, as the Psalmist also found, who has placed on record what it was to him. "Thy word," he wrote, "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path:" and again, "The entrance, or opening up, of thy words gives light: it gives understanding to the simple" (Ps. cxix.

105, 130). "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John i. 5). To that which He is the written word corresponds, and by its entrance into man's heart enlightens him, and dwelling in the saint of God sheds light on his way. Nor is this all, for it can do what no word of man ever did, being "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). No instrument is like it, no weapon so sharp, no edge so fine, detecting as it does, for the instruction of him who is subject to it, that which comes from the soul, the emotional part of man, in contradistinction to that which comes from his spirit, and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nothing then is there in man's innermost being which the word cannot search out and lay bare. And this is its action on the heart of a saint, who needs this application of it, as he pursues his path across the scene of this world. It is part of God's provision for His people in the wilderness. What care on the part of God for His people! It is God's prerogative to search the heart and try the reins. "Deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," as man's heart is, who can know it? Man knows it not. How often has that been illustrated, as crimes, which at one time would have been abhorred as too bad to be committed, have afterwards been registered against the memory on earth of such as have been left to carry out the desires of their nature (2 Kings viii. 13). What, however, man does not know, God does; for it is His prerogative to search the heart (Jerem. xvii. 9, 10). So His word acts in accordance with what He is and does, and thus proves whose word it really is.

One other of its characteristics must be noticed ere we pass on. Born of the word, it is also the means by which the soul is instructed, and by which the believer grows unto salvation, as Peter most probably wrote (1 Pet. ii. 2). And to this Paul bore witness, as writing to Timothy he reminded him of the

value of that inspired word, which was able to make souls wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Thus the word of God acts. It quickens, it cleanses, it enlightens, it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, and by it the saint, the child of God, becomes wise unto salvation. Its characteristic actings show whose word it is, for it acts in accordance with the nature and ways of God towards sinners and towards saints. Hence, each one who hears the gospel of the grace of God, and receives it, has proof in himself whose word it really is. The question then for the soul is not one for argument or intellectual apprehension, for the man himself who receives the truth is a living witness that the revelation is from God. And by and by those who now reject it will learn whose word they slighted on earth, when the prophetic announcement of the Saviour is fulfilled, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: for the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48). But, thank God, the person who learns that the word is of God through being quickened, cleansed, enlightened, and instructed by it, will never know that it is from God in the manner the Lord has described in His last appeal to the world in the Gospel by John. For it is from His last appeal, as given us in that Gospel that we have quoted, when, in the urgency of desire that souls should hear Him and live, He "cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" (John xii. 44-46). But what a solemn thought, that in the other world there will be no difference of opinion as to whether or not the written word is from God. The saints will know it, and be for ever the proofs of it. The lost, who have heard it, will then know it, and will suffer for ever because they rejected it.

There is no real difficulty, then, for any one who desires now to know whether or not the word is of God. Its action on the

heart which believes it, evidences from whom it comes. And since it is part of God's provision for our wilderness journey, we may further inquire how we should make use of it? What answer can the Scriptures give us as to this? What principles are there that we should keep in mind when we study it? Now there is an incident related by Luke (x. 25) of a certain lawyer (his name is unknown to us), who, tempting the Lord Jesus, asked Him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Lord's answer is instructive, and illustrates one important principle needed to be remembered in the study of the divine word. "What is written in the law—How readest thou?" was His reply. Had God spoken on that subject? Then there was no room for opinion. God had spoken, as the lawyer proved by quoting what the law had said, and the Lord intimated that it was enough. It answered his question. Impossible, morally impossible was it, that God had given a revelation to man, and for man, and omitted that which it was of the first importance for him to know. Now God had spoken, and what was wanted for that time the word of God contained. But more. If the Word has spoken, man has only to hear. Opinions of men can have no place where God's mind for the creature has been declared. How much surely the Lord could have revealed, for He came from heaven. But He would not. And He made the lawyer own two important things, first, that if God gives a revelation, He does not omit what man has need to know for his real blessing; and secondly—and this is the reason that we especially turn to it—that when God has spoken, man cannot be allowed to have opinions or thoughts which are divergent from that which the Almighty has declared. The authority of the word is to be paramount.

Another thing we must also bear in mind, and in that too the Lord instructs us. Dispensational teaching cannot be ignored, if we would rightly apprehend the bearing of the divine word. Judaism and Christianity are very different. Principles and practices in harmony with the one are not of necessity in har-

mony with the other. Law and grace must not be confounded. Kingdom truth, too, and Church truth must be kept distinct. For illustrations of dispensational differences we would point to the Lord's instruction about divorces (Matt. xix. 8), and to His teaching at the well of Sychar about acceptable worship (John iv. 21-24). Dispensational differences then there are, and the teaching for those under law will not always do for those under grace. The want of seeing this has caused widespread confusion in Christendom, and the loss really to souls of what is proper Christian truth. Hence all that Judaising, so rife in apostolic times, and so rife still, and which is based on the assumption that what God once revealed must be His mind for His people at all times and in all ages. One great evil of it the Epistle to the Galatians exposed. Turning to the observance of days, months, times, and years, the Galatian Christians were in principle going back to the idolatry out of which they had been brought, for they were turning again to weak and beggarly elements to which they desired again to be in bondage (Gal. iv. 9); and if Judaising was right, Christ, said the Apostle, is become the minister of sin (ii. 17). In language clear, decided, but startling, does He expose it. For teaching then against Judaising we may turn to the Galatians. For that which guards against Ritualism we would point to the Hebrews. God's mind therefore for His people in their own day is what souls have to seek after, and those Epistles just named, in common with the New Testament revelation, will furnish us with all that is wanted.

The paramount authority of the word of God accepted, and the importance of dispensational teaching being admitted, another thing must be carefully borne in mind, viz. that the teaching of the word is that for which we are to search, and not merely to hunt for a text. Where God has definitely pronounced what is His mind in any text, of course every one should bow to it at once. But there are important points for which we may not be able to find a text, though we may, as taught of God,

discern what is the truth about them from the teaching of a passage of the word. An instance in point we are furnished with in the Lord's answer to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels and spirits. Coming to Him with a case, to their minds conclusive against it, He told them that they erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. Fools they were in limiting God's power to the illustrations of it with which they were acquainted; arguing that man's condition could never differ from that of which they had experience. But, further, they knew not the Scriptures. Often, doubtless, had its pages been searched by them and their opponents for proofs in support of their doctrine or against it. Had they overlooked a text which openly declared it? A text about it the law did not contain; but teaching about it was really to be found in a section of it, and the Lord drew it forth. "Now that the dead are raised even Moses showed at the bush (or perhaps in the section on the bush), when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead but of the living; for all live unto Him" (Luke xx. 37, 38). The effect of this answer on His questioners Matthew has related, for he tells us the Pharisees heard that the Lord Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence. In truth what could they say in answer? The Scriptures taught unhesitatingly the doctrine of the resurrection, though Moses had not formulated that truth in a text. What results beyond silencing them at the moment arose from the Lord's answer we have no means of ascertaining, but the record of that incident will not be destitute of real results if we gather from it this principle, that to the teaching of Scripture we have to bow, though the doctrine in question may not be expressly stated in plain words in any one passage. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could not have ceased to exist, for the Lord declared He was, not He had been, their God, two centuries almost after Jacob had been laid in the patriarchal burying-place at Hebron.

These three leading principles kept in view, we would now call our reader's attention to the way God's saints of old made use of His written word. The Old Testament saints studied it as well as those who lived in Christian times. Of this Jeremiah and Daniel are examples. Jeremiah evidently studied what had been written before him, and fed on the inspired word. Compare Jer. iv. 2 with Ps. lxxii. 17; iv. 3 with Hos. x. 12; vii. 23 with Levit. xxvi. 12; x. 25 with Ps. lxxix. 6, 7; xi. 5 with Exod. iii. 8, Levit. xx. 24; xii. 4 with Ps. cvii. 34; xv. 14 with Deut. xxxii. 22; xvii. 8 with Ps. i. 3; xx. 10 with Ps. xxxi. 13; xlvi. 34 with Isa. xv. 6; xlvi. 44 with Isa. xxiv. 17, 18; xlvi. 45, 46, with Numb. xxi. 28, 29; xlix. 3 with Amos i. 15; xlix. 27 with Amos i. 4; li. 58 with Hab. ii. 13; Lament. ii. 15 with Ps. l. 2; iii. 6 with Ps. cxliii. 3; v. 19 with Ps. cii. 12. How he delighted too in God's word we gather from the manner in which he expressed himself to God when suffering for the truth, and feeling keenly his isolation in consequence. "O Lord, Thou knowest, remember me and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in Thy longsuffering; know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of Thy hand: for Thou hast filled me with indignation" (Jer. xv. 15-17). What the divine word was in the Psalmist's eyes he too tells the Lord. "Thy word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loveth it. I am small and greatly despised, yet do I not forget Thy precepts" (Ps. cxix. 140, 141).

These holy men were in the land of Israel's possession, yet found support in their trials from what God had declared to them. So too Daniel, an exile, a captive, the witness by his condition of the nation's sin, studied the Scriptures, and put implicit confidence in the divine statements. The authority of the written word he fully accepted, and awaited in the

province of Babylon the fulfilment of God's announcement by Jeremiah (Jer. xxv. 11 ; xxvii. 6, 7 ; xxix. 10) of the duration and termination of the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. His condition in Babylon was a proof that the word by that prophet was of God ; and understanding by books that the termination of the captivity was at hand, he prayed to God about the people, the city, and the sanctuary. Evidently the predictions by Jeremiah had been a light and comfort to him, and he reckoned on Jehovah's faithfulness to that which had been declared. What grace on the part of God to give that word before the captivity began ! What comfort and hope it must have afforded Daniel as he knew that which had been predicted ! So he turned to speak to God about it, assured by the prophetic word of the favour for his people which then was close at hand. What had the people done to deserve such goodness ?—nothing. But God had promised it, so Daniel expected it, and counted on it ; and became in his turn the channel of divine communications for his people at a future day, who will learn, as he proved, the help the Scriptures can give when suffering righteously for their fathers' sins (Dan. ix. 24-27 ; xii. 10).

Turning to New Testament times, we are favoured in Acts xv. with instruction most helpful to us of the way the apostles and elders assembled in council at Jerusalem received the written word, and got the required guidance from it. A question had been raised which really struck at the root of dispensational teaching. Converts from among the Gentiles were now numerous, for the Lord had blessed amazingly the preaching of His word among them. Those ignorant of dispensational changes, and of the essential difference between Christianity and Judaism, were urging on those converts circumcision and the keeping of the law for salvation. To settle this question Paul and Barnabas went up, at the request, it would seem, of those gathered out at Antioch (Acts xv. 2) ; though Paul's visit to Jerusalem on this occasion and for this purpose was in consequence of a divine revelation (Gal. ii. 2). The question

was debated by the apostles and elders. It was a new one, an important one, and, as we learn from the Epistle to the Galatians, a vital one. A new revelation from God at that moment when gathered in council would of course have determined the controversy. But none was vouchsafed. No prophet on that occasion, speaking by the Spirit, communicated the mind of the Lord. But they had the written word, and that was to be sufficient, and that was found to be enough. To it James turned, quoting the prophet (Amos ix. 11, 12), who had already foretold that Gentiles would be converted, as he wrote, "And all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called" (Acts xv. 17). Their conversion then was no afterthought of the divine mind, for the words of Amos were the words of the Lord, who "doeth these things known from the beginning," as James most likely really said.¹ But as to circumcising them, or putting them under the law of Moses, the written word was silent, though it was plain God intended that some from among Gentiles should be converted, and stand out as His people, His name being called on them. Then they accepted the silence of the word on the question raised as a settlement of it. What it did not enjoin, that they would not impose on the converts from the nations. Dispensational teaching therefore they quite accepted, and though no text could be quoted which treated of the matter on hand dogmatically, the tenor of the word they gathered from that to which James referred. So if Daniel rested on the faithfulness of God to His word, the apostles and elders owned its paramount authority, acknowledged dispensational teaching, and correctly discerned what it taught, though no formal text could be quoted to settle the controversy. The three principles, then, to which we have called attention above, the acts of the council at Jerusalem fully illustrate and endorse.

But a further point comes out, and it is one to which all do well to take heed. Dispensational differences may necessitate changes in practice, and even call forth fresh revelations. God

¹ This is the reading of BC. and of the Codex Sinaiticus.

may alter His word, or it may for a time fall into abeyance should He be pleased to introduce any changes on earth ; but unless He does cancel it, or announce such changes, that which He has once declared never becomes obsolete. He cancelled His word to Adam in the garden with reference to the food of which he was to eat, when he had sinned and was driven out of Paradise (compare Gen. i. 29 with iii. 18). Again God changed His ordinance about man's food after the sweet savour of Noah's burnt-offering had ascended up heavenward (Gen. ix. 3, 4). But the injunction against eating blood, given then to Noah and his sons, and through them really to all mankind, God has never cancelled, nor modified. Hence that is binding on all men, and to be obeyed by those who are God's children. To that the council at Jerusalem directed the attention of the Christians gathered out from amongst the nations. God's word does not become obsolete by age, nor from lack of observance.

But we can turn from examples furnished us by saints in the Old Testament and by saints in the New, to one of whom it was written, "Thy law is within my heart" (Ps. xl. 8), and whose ear God wakened morning by morning to hear as the learned, *i.e.* taught ones (Isa. l. 4). Maintaining the paramount authority of God's word by his answer to the lawyer, He wielded it as the sword of the Spirit in His conflict with Satan in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 1-17). There hungry, His wants as yet unsupplied, the enemy suggested to Him to use His power, if the Son of God, to turn the stones into bread. Should the Son of God want for food in the wilderness? If He was the Son, why not minister to His own need. This was in principle the same snare as that by which the arch tempter had caught our first parents—viz. that God had not furnished those dependent on Him with all that they needed, and therefore they would be justified in caring for themselves. The Lord's answer to this temptation was drawn from the armoury of God's word. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." God had not spoken

to Him to turn stones into bread, therefore He would not do it. When God was silent, He would not act. How fully was the Lord vindicated in this; for when the temptation was ended, and the devil had departed, foiled in all his efforts, angels came and ministered unto Him. God had not forgotten Him, nor was He left to care for Himself. Dependent, obedient, in due time His wants were supplied.

But a second time the tempter assailed Him. The Lord had quoted Scripture (Deut. viii. 3), the devil would quote it also (Ps. xci. 11, 12). But one Scripture is not to be used to overturn another. What the devil had quoted was God's word, but there was another Scripture with which the Lord would have come in conflict had he done that in support of which the Psalm was quoted. So the Lord replied to the enemy's suggestion by the simple but forcible words, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut. vi. 16). The command addressed to Israel by Moses was binding still. A third time the devil tempted Him by the promise of all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, if only He would worship him. Again the Lord answered him from the word (Deut. vi. 13). A positive command from God was not to be disobeyed. "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." So where God had not spoken He would not act. One Scripture, He teaches us, is not to override another, unless God has distinctly intimated that the former one is no longer to be observed. And lastly, where God has spoken definitely there is an end of all controversy. How fully were those words of the Psalmist exemplified in the Lord Jesus in the wilderness, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Ps. xvii. 4). By that same word are saints to keep themselves still.

Of this we are reminded in the valedictory address of Paul to the elders of Ephesus, in the writings of John and Jude, and in the Lord's own address to the angel of the church in Sardis. At Ephesus Paul had laboured, God had wrought by him in a

marked way ; but after his departure grievous wolves would come in, not sparing the flock, and from among themselves would men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. What ravages would be committed in the flock ! Wolves from without, men speaking perverted things from within. What were the elders to do under such circumstances ? What was their resource ? The Apostle tells them : " I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified " (Acts xx. 32). Paul was leaving them, but God would not pass away. Apostolic counsel and labours they might enjoy and witness no more ; but the word of God remained the same. To that and to God he commended them, as all that was needed to build up their souls. Of God he had taught them, and that fully (xx. 21, 24, 25, 27, 28) ; of repentance towards God he had witnessed both in public and private ; to the gospel of God's grace he had borne a full and clear testimony. Further, he had preached among them the kingdom, declared to them all the counsel of God, and taught them about His church purchased by the blood of Christ. Now no more to be with them as once he had been, he commends them to God, and the word of His grace, as all-sufficient under all circumstances. Development of truth he does not hint at. To God's word he commended them. In the same spirit John, addressing the babes in Christ, conscious that it is the last hour, and with many antichrists around, exhorts them to let that abide in them that they had heard from the beginning (1 John ii. 24) ; for it was enough, and it was that which he, writing by the Spirit of God, was authorised to press on them ; and, in truth, as he tells them, those who did not hear the apostles were not of God, whatever pretensions they might put forth to be teachers and leaders among the saints. " Hereby," he writes, " know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error " (1 John iv. 6). Similarly Jude, in view of the apostasy, the elements of which he could discern already at work, warns Christians of it,

and exhorts them to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). What had been delivered, that they were to contend for, and to build themselves up in it. The apostasy was coming on. God's word, God's truth, would be sufficient for them all. The apostates would turn from the truth. They were to keep by it ; for the Divine word was a faithful one, and would surely be fulfilled ; and of this he gives a striking and unique illustration, by quoting the prophecy of Enoch. Those who had heard that prophecy, and to whom it was primarily addressed, had all passed away. The flood had come on the world of the ungodly ; but Enoch's prophecy, hitherto unrecorded in the word, God had not forgotten, and from henceforth it would have a place in the sacred volume. For, as Jehovah was not now dealing in goodness with one nation to the exclusion of other nations from the enjoyment of the privileges and favours which He deigned to bestow, but was dealing in grace with man, and would come to judge the ungodly, the terms of Enoch's prophecy were in harmony with the present ways and warnings of God. So that which Moses had not been commissioned to record, Jude was chosen to write down for the instruction of saints and for the warning of the ungodly.

And now, for a moment, we would once more direct the reader's attention to the instruction furnished us by the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen how He used the word, and turned to it when he sojourned amongst men. We learn from His address to the angel of the church in Sardis what He thinks of it now that He is in glory. Deadness had come over that assembly, but He would minister to it to arouse it if possible. Had God failed in providing all that they required, that a state of deadness characterised them ? Could they blame God for that condition for which the Lord rebuked them ? No ; all that was requisite they already possessed, but they had forgotten to make use of it. Hence His word to the angel, "Remember how thou hast received, and heard ; and hold fast, and repent." That was all. He adds nothing to that which they

already possessed, save His commendation of the faithful amongst them, His promise to the overcomer, and His word of warning for the impenitent. How persistently does God keep before His people the sufficiency of the written word, and the value of it! In it there is already provided all that individuals or assemblies need to walk by, and to be fruitful for God through the power of the Holy Ghost. We cannot do without it, but in it we can find all that we need to know of God's mind for us, as Peter writes, "that we may grow thereby unto salvation" (1 Pet. ii. 2). If false teachers arise, we are to test them by the word. Since the apostasy is fast approaching, our resource is to keep close to the word. If a state of deadness characterises those who profess to be Christians, minister to them the simple word of God. These are the lessons the apostles and the Lord Jesus Himself would impress on each one of us.

In the spirit of this teaching Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, his son in the faith, who, filling a position such as none but Titus, that we read of, ever occupied, viz. that of apostolic delegate, was, nevertheless, placed in circumstances very similar to those in which all God's servants since his day have found themselves. He was not a channel made use of by the Spirit for the revelation of truth, but he heard what had been communicated through others; he received it, and was to keep it. Paul was shortly to leave earth, but Timothy would survive him. Thus the canon of Scripture comes down to that time when servants of Christ would be on earth, who had been taught indeed by apostles and prophets, but who were not themselves prophets in that sense of the word, and it views such as continuing on earth, and in service, when the apostles should have passed away. God's wisdom is thus seen in not closing the canon till such should be called out, and put into their respective spheres of service, and authoritatively addressed by one competent to do it, to tell them how they were to work, and from what sources they were to draw the instructions of which they had need. Of all this Timothy is an illustration for

God's saints as long as the church shall continue upon earth ; for what was sufficient for him will also be sufficient for us.

The freshness, devotedness, and life, depicted in the Acts as characterising the early converts to Christianity, had begun to decline ere the apostles were removed (Rev. ii. 4 ; Phil. ii. 21). Peter, John, Jude, and Paul, all warn believers of that which was coming on the professing church, the seeds of which had already begun to germinate. Defection, desertion, declension, both John and Paul witnessed, and experienced from some who had been reckoned amongst the saints (3 John 9 ; 2 Tim. i. 15, iv. 10). The brightest, the unclouded days of the Church's earthly history were already past, to be seen no longer. Faithful souls there still were, but amongst a mass of profession in which there were many who had life, but who lacked Christian firmness, faithfulness, and devotedness. Was Timothy then, when deprived of the Apostle's counsel and presence, to sink down to the level of the declension which was rife around him? That would not become a true servant of Christ. So he was exhorted in Paul's second letter to him, and the latest in the sacred canon that came from the aged Apostle, to stand his ground, and if need be even alone, though, thank God, he never could be, nor can any one of us ever be the only faithful soul upon earth. There will always be some who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. ii. 22).

What thoughts must have crowded into his mind if he looked on to the future. Weak in body, probably timid in character, and surely a man of warm affections (1 Tim. v. 23 ; 2 Tim. i. 4), the departure of the Apostle to be with Christ must have been to him a prospect, as far as he was concerned, anything but cheering. To him, then, the Apostle writes exhorting him to maintain his ground, and to keep hold of the revealed mind of God. And how pointed are the exhortations! Evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Tim. iii. 13). A prospect that was anything but cheering, and one not calculated to encourage a person of Timothy's disposition. Men,

too, would turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables (2 Tim. iv. 4). From the outward aspect of things in the Church of God, what comfort indeed could he get? Should he become faint hearted and despairing? That would not befit the servant of Christ. Whatever others might do, "continue *thou*," writes the Apostle, "in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. iii. 14). And again, "But watch *thou* in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 5). Nothing was to shake him, or seduce him from the path of obedience. But who goeth to warfare at his own charges? or who enlists a soldier without providing him also with arms and ammunition? The weapon of Timothy's warfare was the word of God. Of this he is reminded, and the importance of the divine revelation comes out in every chapter of this epistle.

Paul was looking forward to his death, so he turns to Timothy to maintain the testimony (2 Tim. iv. 1-6). "Have" or "hold fast," he writes "a form (or outline) of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. i. 13). Taught by Paul, he was to keep hold of that which he had been taught. Sound words he had heard of Paul. An outline of them he was to keep in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Apostolic teaching he was to remember, having a form, or outline, of the sound words which he had heard from Paul. The wisdom of such an injunction we can all understand, and the value of such a summary Christians in all ages have endorsed in principle. Creeds, articles of faith, confessions, are all admissions of the wisdom of the apostolic word, though all fall short of that full teaching of which Timothy was to have an outline. For it was not to be limited in scope or extent to that which man had apprehended. The outline was to be of sound words, which Timothy had heard from Paul—a real full summary of apostolic teaching. Such an outline we may boldly assert the church has not held from Timothy's time to our own. The re-

covery of truths at different epochs in her history, and especially those brought out afresh from the word in our own time respecting the Holy Ghost, the Church of God, and even the full preaching of the gospel, warrant us fully in making that statement. But besides having an outline of apostolic teaching, the good deposit of the faith entrusted to him he was to keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelt in him. His responsibility is here pressed on him. The faith once delivered is to be kept. What we have is to be held fast (Rev. iii. 11). Thus saints are held responsible to maintain the truth which they have received. So Timothy was to prove that he profited by intercourse with Paul. He was to keep the deposit entrusted to him.

Thus far we have what concerned himself. But what about others? Provision is next made for the transmission of sound teaching to them. "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus; and the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 1, 2). Again, we may remark, there is no hint of development, or of further revelation. The things which he had heard of Paul among many witnesses, those he was to commit to faithful men, who in their turn would be able to teach others also. Thus God provided for the work to spread, but also for the preservation intact, if men continued faithful, of that teaching which had produced such marked effects. What Timothy had heard, and that among many witnesses, he was to hand on. So, if development is excluded, tradition also is shut out. What Timothy had heard from Paul he was to hand on, being attested as apostolic teaching by many witnesses. What care for the correct transmission of the truth have we here, coupled, however, with his responsibility and that of the attesting witnesses. Timothy was a recipient and a transmitter of true doctrine. He was not the originator of it, nor was it revealed to him. As such, then, he was to be careful. But the doctrine had not been hidden in a corner, nor under a bushel. Many witnesses could

attest it. It had been openly, fully, and doubtless frequently set forth. When the Lord was going away, He told His disciples that the Holy Ghost would bring to their remembrance all that He had said unto them (John xiv. 26). To Timothy no such promise was made. Then God intended to provide for the infallible setting forth of true Christian teaching. Having been once thus set forth, God's servants are to keep it and hand it on.

As a transmitter of truth care was to be exercised and pains taken, committing it to faithful men, who, in their turn, were to teach others also. For it is not authority but truth which Timothy was commissioned to hand on: what he had heard. One hears truth, one receives authority. Further, as a teacher of the truth he was to cut it in a straight line, *ὀρθοτομεῖν* (2 Tim. ii. 15), a much needed and wise admonition. Quirks and fancies were to have no place where the truth was concerned. And surely he cut the word in a straight line when he took it simply as he found it, got from it what really was in it, and refrained from importing man's ideas into the exposition of God's truth. In so doing he would be a workman that needed not to be ashamed. How important is this injunction as to the right way of dealing with the word! It is the word of truth, and we can only learn the truth as we bow to the word in which it is expressed to us in words taught the sacred writer by the Holy Ghost. Hence there is no other source to which we can turn for the unfolding of the mind of God. But more: we have in the Scriptures all that is requisite to make us wise unto salvation, and that the man of God should be perfect, thoroughly furnished, or fitted, unto all good works (2 Tim. iii. 15, 17). Hence Timothy is told to preach it: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine" (iv. 1, 2). The door was then open. It would not always remain open.

Keeping the truth, handing it on, remembering the sufficiency of the written word, and preaching it, such were the Apostle's exhortations to his child in the faith. Development the word knows nothing of. When God gave the law, He gave it all ere Moses died. When God revealed Christian truth, He revealed it all whilst the Apostles continued on earth. Going forward, as John wrote to the elect lady, and abiding not in the doctrine of Christ, is not advancing in revelation, but pursuing the road which ends in perdition. It is apostasy (2 John 9). The doctrine of Christ has been fully revealed, though one may have much to learn about it from the word in which it has been unfolded. And we shall miss full instruction, and the full profit for our souls, if we study one part only of the Scriptures and neglect the rest. The Old Testament, Peter reminds us, is profitable, and should be kept hold of as much as the New. In the Old we read of the coming kingdom and glory. In the New we have in addition the Church's hope (2 Pet. i. 19). The one must not displace the other in our minds. Both are to be held fast. And when scoffers rise up in their scoffing to deny the promise of the Lord, their very reasoning, he tells us, evidences their willing ignorance of Scripture, the Old Testament part of which refutes their arguments, and opens up to us the future of this earth beyond the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the eternal state shall have begun (2 Pet. iii.) Man's history from first to last, God's counsels about His Son in connection with man, this earth, the universe, and above all for the display of His own glory, and of His ways in grace, with the triumph of His Son, and the final and abiding condition of men, both of the righteous and of the impenitent; these are subjects of divine revelation. So with man's final destiny unfolded, and God's supremacy re-established for ever, the volume of inspiration brings to a close the history of time in relation to man, as far as God has opened it up to us. All then that man has need to know of his origin, his future, and his salvation, this book can tell him, and in this alone is it

revealed to him. We have, therefore, attempted in this article to make it speak for itself, calling attention to the claim it puts forth as the inspired word of God, the proofs it affords that it is the Divine word, the way to use it as illustrated from its pages, and its all-sufficiency to guide the soul that will submit to it in the days of declension and of the denial of truth in which our lot is cast.

THE MULTIFORMITY OF SECTARIANISM AND THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I see what you say about the difference of our views about the gathering of the Saints of God for worship and the Lord's Supper. I did not know that you professed to gather as saints at all in Sweden, as entirely separate from the religious world ; for, when you gather for the breaking of bread, is it not as members of the "*Lutheran Christian Mission*," and not, simply, as "*members of Christ*" ? My inability to acknowledge such a gathering of God's people is, that it is, obviously, *unscriptural*. I do not need to prove this ; for your connexion with the world, in its religion, shows it. Give up Lutheranism *as a system* ; and, by so doing, you will be (*negatively*, at least) in circumstances to assemble with *all saints*, on the scriptural basis of being members of Christ's body : for Scripture says, "cease to do evil," "from such turn away," "depart from iniquity," etc. But, in order to take true scriptural ground, we must have the requisite spiritual *state*, by the spiritual working of the Holy Ghost ; for, unless there be *good ground*, there cannot be a good crop. If the people you are associated with had in their souls a full knowledge of Christianity in power, then they would leave the "Mission" and take up Christian ground ; which, you know, numbers of them are doing as they have their Lutheranism supplanted by Christian truth. Who are responsible for this division of the saints ? Not those who *make* the division, under the necessity of obeying God rather than man : but those who *cause* it, by taking up a position, and

holding to a system of doctrine and church order which are short of *the truth*. There being no warrant in Scripture either for your position or action, it is imperative on you to give up both. I know that, in a great movement in the souls of men, such as that which has taken place in Sweden, there is need of patience and forbearance: for instruction alone can give them the true doctrine of Scripture for their practical and ecclesiastical guidance. I can also well understand how you, and others who are leaders, should wish to go to work cautiously in introducing the teaching of the Word on subjects hitherto unknown, as the believers are able to bear it; but I grieve to think that you should unwittingly promote division among the saints, by taking up, and advocating as right, a principle of gathering and a place of gathering, which necessarily make those so gathered a divisive body, and thus prevent those whose minds are formed and whose conduct is guided by Holy Scripture, from assembling with you. The Holy Ghost is the sole guide in His Word. He has given there what is right, and this decides the matter for us all, so that we are not dependent upon the views and thoughts of men. There is such a thing as *the truth*, and this is what we read in God's Word and are guided by, without any reasoning of our own. And, if we can act for God, on the warrant of God's truth, and thereby take up an unassailable position, why should we vex ourselves and our fellow-Christians, and grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by acting independently of Scripture and according to the dictation of our own wills? No well-taught conscientious child of God can have either spiritual or ecclesiastical rest unless he does the whole known will of God as to individual or corporate position. As a matter of individual godliness, one would never think of its being left to our personal option whether we should obey the injunction, "Let him that stole, steal no more," yet people think they may do as they please as to obeying the ecclesiastical precept, to "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called . . . using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one

body and one Spirit ;” not taking note of the fact that both exhortations are found in the same chapter and under the same warrant of the Spirit, and that the first part of the chapter is occupied with ecclesiastical godliness, and the second part with personal and social godliness ; and that the one is just as binding on all saints as the other.

Were we all possessed of nothing but the truth of God, and subject to the will of God, we should be all together keeping the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. You, as well as we, have had to give up many hereditary and traditionary ideas because we found no warrant for them in God’s Word ; and all our hereditary church views, being totally wrong, must also be abandoned. For, as to their doctrines and ecclesiastical systems, there are no churches, in any country in Christendom, scriptural ; therefore, wise men, and men of dependent, lowly, and obedient minds, will forsake them, and accept God’s way of gathering to the name of Jesus Christ alone. There has been for nearly half a century a growing dissatisfaction among Christians with the disorganised and divided state of the Christian profession, and various efforts have been made to obtain, at least, some show of the real unity of the body of Christ.

Before we give the true unity which God made and we have been told to keep, let us look a little at the various substitutes for it which men have adopted in ancient and modern times.

1. That which, if anything, represents historical Christianity—the Western Church, with Rome for its centre, is gathered into its external unity around the Pope as Christ’s alleged vicegerent on earth. This even in outward form goes no farther than the unity of its own religious profession, as all churches err by doing. It is not based on the first set of unities, one body and one Spirit and one hope of our calling ; but upon “One Lord, one faith, and one baptism.”

2. The Greek Church, which embraces not only the population of Greece proper but of Russia and a considerable part of Turkey, holding about a hundred millions of souls in its circle,

is gathered around a Patriarch and governed by the world, and has been already judged by the Mohammedan power, and is held in bondage by the Russian Emperor, who is ostensibly its head and ruler. It is not likely that the fallen Eastern Church will ever emerge from its present identification with the world, and act on its own responsibility, as is done by the Church of Rome.

3. Established churches have been formed in many Protestant countries by the State assuming the power of the church which was taken from the Pope; and the principle on which they proceed is, that the nation and the church are co-extensive, and hence the clergy are the state-appointed officials for supplying the whole population with ordinances, and there is no gathering together of the saints: indeed, this would be utterly incompatible with the idea of a state church. This is a return in principle to the system of ordinances, out of which the church sprang on the descent of the Holy Ghost and the formation of the church of God. In such circumstances the keeping of the unity of the Spirit is an absolute impossibility.

4. Episcopal churches are formed on the assumption that there are three orders of church officers—bishops, priests, and deacons; and their system is hierarchical. But there is nothing plainer than that there is no trace of this system in the Holy Scriptures; for there elders and bishops are identical; and there is no diocesan bishop such as they now have. The apostles knew no such thing as a prelate in the church—neither instituted them nor recognised them: nor do the Scriptures refer to any such functionary as a diocesan bishop. No one denies that at the end of the second century the episcopal system, not the diocesan, but one superior president of the principal local churches, was generally established. But it was not established in apostolic times by God, when the government of the Church was settled. There is no warrant for it in Scripture. But had it been otherwise, Scripture assures us that the ground, centre, and principle of assembling, are other than in connection with an episcopal hierarchy.

5. The Presbyterian system adheres to the scriptural order of only two classes of ecclesiastical officers—elders and deacons : but they have neither, as the apostolic church had them. They overlook the fact that elders were never established save by the apostles or their envoys ; and the presbytery never appointed them. But not heeding this fatal bar to their proceedings that they have neither warrant nor power to establish elders, they do so, and make the work of their own hands the foundation for their gathering as a church. Even if they had been in the days of the apostles when the Presbyterian care-taking of the church was in full force by divine warrant and apostolic appointment, they would have learned, as all saints may now do, that church union was not secured by external government, but by a power entirely outside of church government. It might expose their false ground of unity to ask where was the unity of the church in assemblies where no elders were established ? The assemblies were owned by Paul and Barnabas to be true churches without elders ; and they, and not the churches, “established elders in every church.” But the church being there before the elders shows clearly that the church must have assembled on some other basis than that of having elders. This principle of gathering of theirs seems to have been very little successful in the past ; and feeling this, they are now holding Pan-Presbyterian councils at stated intervals, to try to re-unite the scattered fragments of their body ; and as many as forty-four differing churches sent up representatives to the council to demonstrate their ecclesiastical unity ! This shows total disorganisation.

6. Congregationalists or Independents meet on the ground of the absolute independence of the local assembly. This is the complete negation of the unity of the body. They make life in Christ their professed ground of gathering, but they appoint ministers and deacons, and there is neither liberty of ministry nor of worship. Independency means that each church judges for itself independently of another. In every respect this system is wholly unscriptural. The church is not a voluntary system.

It is not formed (or rather unformed) of a number of independent bodies or assemblies, each acting for itself. There is not a trace of such independency and disorder in the Word of God.

7. *The Baptists* make adult baptism by immersion their principle of separation from other Christians, and of assembling themselves together. This principle is, on the face of it, unscriptural, for (though none should eat the Lord's supper who are not baptized) Christ is the centre of Christian gathering and not an ordinance, and the only ground of gathering is the unity of the body of Christ; not the merely mechanical thing of assembling around an ordinance, although the participation in the Lord's supper is that by which the oneness of the Church is expressed. "For we, the many, are one bread, one body" (1 Cor. x. 17), for we are all partakers of that one bread.

8. *The Methodists* make no pretensions to being on a church ground at all, only "a society of penitent sinners fleeing from the wrath to come," and their creed is very much the Arminian doctrines of John Wesley, which are generally a reflection of the doctrines of Lutheranism. They are characterised by intense earnestness and zeal for the conversion of souls; but, as a rule, their converts know neither redemption nor peace with God; and to them the knowledge of the Church of God is simply an impossibility; and, as already remarked, they do not profess to be on church ground. They are like the Lutherans of the mission-houses in Sweden, who do not give up a nominal connection with the established church, yet, for their own convenience, have the Lord's supper by themselves. The Methodists of to-day are just what the mission-house believers will become, unless they embrace and act upon the truth that "there is one body and one Spirit."

9. Besides the above-mentioned, there is a multitude of sects assembling on bits of truth or falsehood, or ranged under different leaders' names, such as Irvingites, Campbellites, Swedenborgians, Menmonites, Mormonites, etc. All this is simply the will of man and not the Word of God.

10. *Temporary unions* are also formed by Christians for

special purposes, on the principle of sinking their differences, and enjoying each other's society for some days. They have their Bible and missionary societies, their Christian conferences, and the Evangelical Alliance. This last was formed nearly forty years ago. It is a great international society of the heavier portion of the evangelical world, who yet have a notion that some manifestation should be given that all Christians are one in Christ. The more spiritual and evangelistic part of the Evangelicals have their *Christian Conferences*, where they meet together for a few days on the ground of sinking their differences, and have preaching, prayer, and sometimes the Lord's supper. But, even in both, the clergy never relax their grasp; and indeed, the owning of a clergy and ordinances is the real ground of their assembling, for those who own neither are excluded. The clergy always assert their place of usurpation as dispensers of the supper at such gatherings; and in all the church-making of the age they have the place of pre-eminence and supreme control. They are the cause of the ruin; and they perpetuate it (Acts xx. 30).

13. But the *divine unity* is different from all these unions of men by which Christendom has been disfigured and ruined, and lies before the eyes of mankind as a wreck, to the dishonour of Christ and the disgrace of all the saints who sanction it. All man's churches are distinctly opposed to God's church, and in defiance of the plain word of God—"there is *one* body." This does not mean *many* bodies. Man's error lies in making churches instead of owning the church God has made. He has a unity of the Spirit He enjoins us to keep. He has united Christians in one body in Christ by His sovereign grace, and in virtue of the power of the Holy Ghost, without consulting with them and without availing Himself of their co-operation. He has baptized all saints into one body, and exhorted them, not to make unions, but, to act so as to maintain "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT in the bond of peace." And that there may be no mistake he points it out in the words which follow—"There is ONE BODY and ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE of your calling." And

when saints assemble on this divine ground, they have only to worship God the Father and show their oneness in Christ by breaking bread together in remembrance of Him at His table ; “for we, the many, are one bread, one body ; for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor. x. 17). This is the Spirit’s way of giving an outward expression of our unity ; and He will admit of none other. The scriptural principles of gathering for worship and the breaking of bread require only faith, a mind subject to the Spirit, and a heart for Christ, to own them and act upon them in maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

(1.) On account of the holiness of God, the necessary *principle* of gathering to Christ is separation from evil. Christ’s redemption takes the saints out of the ruin of themselves as well as of their sins, having delivered them from this present evil world. God sets them in the Spirit as those who are Christ’s in the midst of evil, but separated from it as He was. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” “Cease to do evil.” “Let him that nameth the name of the *Lord* depart from iniquity.” God’s essential character demands separation from evil, for “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth” (1 John, i. 5, 8). To think of this were to belie the character of God. If there is to be fellowship with God, and, if connected with the Holy One of God, the heavenly Christ, there must be separation from evil. This principle working in men’s consciences at Pentecost, the Holy Ghost formed a Christian unity in the midst of evil. The Reformation from Popery, if not some of the sects of Christendom, owe their existence in measure to this principle. But although they came out of gross evil they came far short of the unity of the Spirit. Not one church ever contemplated “the body of Christ.”

(2.) The only scriptural *basis* of gathering to Christ is that “*there is one body and one Spirit.*” Although all the constituent members of this body do not assemble, the Spirit remains, and as many as see the truth, and have faith to act upon it, may

scripturally meet to eat the Lord's Supper and worship. All Christians being already members of this "one body" are all one thing, and do not require to wait until something be formed. The body is there ; and if there is faith to own it, and dependence on the Spirit, they may manifest their oneness by eating together the Lord's Supper at His table, and worshipping His God and Father. This is the privilege and duty of every saint on earth : and it is sin against Christ not to do this.

(3.) The *power* of gathering, as well as of unity, is grace as revealed in Christ and His cross, which manifested God in His nature, and "God is love ;" and in His character, for "God is light." Love, as grace in God revealed in Christ, alone gathers ; Christ lifted up draws all men to Him. And He gave Himself to gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad. The Holy Ghost works in souls through the grace of God revealed in His nature in Christ, and thus brings them into oneness with Him. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

(4.) The divine *centre* of gathering is Christ Himself. God was in Christ ; God in His nature was revealed in Christ ; Christ in His person has revealed Him ; in His Cross glorified Him ; and vindicated Him in His character. Having died to clear God's name and for our sins, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. God has wrought from His own nature according to His counsel in Christ ; and it is by the revelation of perfect love—Himself acting in grace towards us, clearing us for God's presence, giving us a new nature too, and relationship as children of God ; we cleave to Christ, our deliverer, where He is. Christ by His death has died to sin, and now liveth to God : and we are attached to Him by the Spirit in the heavenly places where He is—the world and sin left out—that we too might live together with Him. The sphere where we are gathered, in spirit, is the Father's presence in love and light. We have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The glorious Man, the Son of God, in the Father's presence, is

the One to whom we are gathered, and the One in whom we are blessed with every blessing in that heavenly sphere of light and love.

As this point is of importance, we press it a little more precisely as Scripture teaches it. There must be an intrinsic power of union holding the body together to a centre, as well as a power separating from evil to form it; and this centre found, it denies all others. The centre of unity must be a sole and unrivalled centre. The Christian has not long to inquire here. It is Christ. The object of the Divine counsel—the manifestation of God Himself—the one only vessel of mediatorial power, entitled to unite creation as He by whom and for whom all things were made; and the Church as its redeemer, its head, its glory, and its life. And there is this double headship, He is head *over* all things *to* the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. This will be accomplished in its day—for the present we take up the intermediate period, the unity of the Church itself, and its unity in the midst of evil. Now there can be no moral power which can unite away from evil but Christ. He alone, as perfect grace and truth, detects all the evil which separates from God, and from which God separates. He alone can, of God, be the attractive centre which draws together to Himself all on whom God so acts. God will own no other—there is no other to whom the testimony could be borne, who is morally adequate to concentrate every affection which is of God and towards God. Redemption itself, too, makes this necessary and evident; there can be but one Redeemer, one in whom a ransomed heart can be given, as well as where a divinely quickened heart can give all its affections, the centre and revelation of the Father's love. He, too, is the centre of power to do it. In Him all the fulness dwells. Love, and God is love, is known in Him. He is the wisdom of God and the power of God. And yet more than this, He is the separating power of attraction, because He is the manifestation of all this, and the fulfiller of it in the midst of evil; and that

is what we poor miserable ones want who are in it, and it is what, if we may so speak, God wants for His separating glory in the midst of evil. Christ sacrificed Himself to set up God in separating love in the midst of evil. There was more than this, a wider scope in this work, but I speak in reference to my present subject now. Thus Christ becomes not only the centre of unity to the universe in His glorious title of power, but, as the manifester of God, the one owned and set up of the Father, and attractor of man. He becomes a peculiar and special centre of divine affections in man, round which they are gathered as the sole divine centre of unity. For indeed, as the centre, necessarily the sole centre, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth." And such, as to this point, was the object even, and power of His death. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And more especially, He gave Himself not for that nation only, but that He might gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad. But here again we find this separation of a peculiar people. He gave Himself for us, that he might purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He was the very pattern of the divine life in man, separate from the evil by which it was universally surrounded. He was the friend of publicans and sinners, piping in grace to men by familiar and tender love ; but He was ever the separate man. And so He is as the centre and high-priest of the Church. "Such an high-priest *became us*, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate from sinners*"—and, it is added, "made higher than the heavens." Here, in passing, we may remark that the centre and subject of this unity then is heavenly. By His death He broke down the middle wall of partition, and made both one, and reconciled both in one body unto God—making peace. Hence it is as lifted up, and finally as made higher than the heavens, that He becomes the centre and sole object of unity.

From what we have seen, it is evident that the Lord Jesus Christ on high is the object round which the Church clusters

in unity. He is its head and centre. This is the character of their unity, and of their separation from evil, from sinners. Yet they were not to be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil, and sanctified through the truth; Jesus having set Himself thus apart to this end. Hence, as well as for the public display of the power and glory of the Son of man, the Holy Ghost was sent down to identify the called ones with their heavenly Head, and to separate them from the world in which they were to remain; and the Holy Spirit became thus the centre and power down here of the unity of the Church in Christ's name—Christ having broken down the middle wall of partition, reconciling both in one body by the cross. The saints, thus gathered in one, became the habitation of God through the Spirit. The Holy Ghost Himself became the power and centre of unity, but in the name of Jesus, of a people separated alike from Jew and Gentile, and delivered out of this present evil world into union with their glorious Head.

(5.) The divine *bond* of unity is the Holy Ghost. "For *by one Spirit* are we all baptized into one body." "There is one body and one Spirit." He is in all, binding all together in Christ; and, dwelling in the assembly, gathers efficiently in love and holiness to Christ; and by His blessed Word, revealing Christ in fullest grace, engages our souls and hearts so fully with Him, that being separated to Him in love and grace, the good in Christ to which we are attached is the great presence to our souls and hearts, and not the evil from which we are separated.

All saints are of the body of Christ, and, when it is practical, gathering in the unity of the Spirit, who dwells in the Church as His habitation, it will be in accordance with the Word of God; for light and darkness, Christ and Belial, cannot be linked together. For practical fellowship then, while the Spirit gathers by love He preserves from evil by holiness; yet He gives us such a hold on the good that it is uppermost in our minds and hearts, and evil, as by very necessity of our communion with God, is left. The Spirit who gathers in grace yet maintains in light.

In 1 John i. we have *the manifestation* of the eternal life in love and the fellowship of the Father and the Son enjoyed—our joy full ; but we have also *the message* “that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all,” and our walk is to be in accordance with this perfect revelation of God in Christ. But the *manifestation* of God in His nature comes before the *message* regarding God in His character. Love gathers us into this divine fellowship according to the *nature* of God : and light maintains us there according to the *character* of God. Such then are some of the principles of unity and gathering, according to the Scriptures. “*If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them.*”

THE CRISIS IN THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.¹



I SEE what you are about in regard to the case on which you are writing, and am pleased to observe, from a perusal of your article, that you are endeavouring to uphold the integrity, inspiration, and authority of the Holy Scriptures, against this modern "wind of doctrine," in connection with "the higher criticism."

Did it ever occur to you that this spread of rationalism among you, and the internecine war that threatens to blight and divide the Free Church, are the permitted if not inflicted judgment of the Lord, not only for her unfaithfulness to the truth and testimony to Christ and His grace and claims, but also for her being the most active and energetic agent in the rejection of the full "testimony of our Lord" as to Christ and the Church, and also the most virulent rejector of the personal presence and present action of the Holy Ghost, in gathering out the saints of God from all the confusions of man to own the unity of the body of Christ, as a witness to the Person and Word of Christ before He comes to take His people to Himself?

It is now forty years since we first met in the same class at

¹ [Expressions in this letter may be objected to as rather extravagant when applied to the movement referred to, but as the writer speaks in the opening paragraphs of it as one who had received blessing in the scenes he describes in such glowing language, he should be permitted to give utterance to the fulness of his soul as he has written it to his friend; and the reader may believe that though God did not own them as His Church, He owned them as His saints exalting His Son, and stamped their deed, however defective, with His blessing.—
ED.]

College, and I think I should be unfaithful to an old friend bestirring himself to do battle for the Word of God, if I did not ask him such a question as this at this solemn crisis. It is my settled conviction that this generation of Free Churchmen are suffering under the hand of God because of their unfaithfulness to what God had wrought for them, and also for refusing to accept the present testimony of God to His Son Jesus Christ, and to the presence, place, action, and object of the Holy Ghost on earth.

We own the grace and blessing of God on the movement which led to the Disruption, though not as sanctioning their position—and I will never forget those times of blessing when souls drank in with earnestness the living water, and rejoiced in Christ Jesus ; and when a divine enthusiasm pervaded the willing and devoted people, as it did the ministers, to have Christ exalted high above all the powers of earth, as God had given Him this place in glory at His own right hand. “God was in the midst of her.” The river of God seemed to flow there ; the Scriptures were to them the utterances of the living God, affording divine warrant, foundation, and authority for their action. The Spirit of God converted and established souls by means of the Gospel of Christ, preached by men of God, whose life was spent in unfolding the evangelical truths of Revelation, for the glory of Christ and the salvation and edification of their hearers. Their one aim was to exalt God’s Christ, and God owned them in their purpose and deed, though not very intelligent—and gave “showers of blessing” and divine establishing. “There were giants in those days,” no doubt, in the best sense of the word,—men like Chalmers, Cunningham, and Candlish, whose teaching inspired men with spiritual chivalry, and gave solid energy and glowing fervour, with which to go forth from their side, strong in the certainty of having the saving truth of God in an inspired and authoritative Divine Book, “every writing” of which was “God-breathed ;” and to give forth the word in the fullest faith, that, under the Spirit’s hand, it would be made

“mighty to the pulling down of strongholds,” and the upbuilding of the saints “in their most holy faith.” But it was remarkable that the great men of that day were not the only men who were largely blessed. They did their imperial service in the high places of the field, battling for Scripture truth and principle against all assailants; but whoever lisped out the great truths about the person, work, glory, and headship of the Christ of God, and gave the Spirit’s testimony in the Gospel of God, was honoured by the Spirit of God with more or less success in His service. The river of blessing flowed in full stream through the land. “*Christ is all*” was the battle-cry (for it was a time of warfare with the rulers of the darkness of this world), and onward went the conquering servants of God, in the spirit of a divine self-sacrifice, memorable in heaven, and He owned their sufferings and service with the stamp of unprecedented success. All true ministry is self-sacrifice. “They regarded not their lives” in their devotion to Christ, and their determination to preserve intact His rights and prerogatives to regulate all in His church, according to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures (as they saw it); and God owned it for the glory of Christ, and their own blessing, and that of thousands. As one who lived and moved in those blessed scenes I can say that those Disruption times were signalised not only by a witness to Christ’s Headship, but by a work of the Holy Ghost that ensured the deepest spiritual blessing, while it welded together the whole of the outcoming multitude in love and devotedness, and made them of one heart and of one soul for the honour of their exalted Head.

But not even divine blessing, in the power of the Spirit, lasts in its original energy beyond the lifetime of the generation on which it comes. Whether in innocence, under law or under grace, that which the goodness of God has committed to man’s responsibility has been ruined in his hands not far from its beginning. The present state of the Free Church is a sad illustration of the uniformity of man’s unfaithfulness when any testimony or blessing has been committed to his responsibility

on the part of God. A pre-Disruption minister said to me, above twenty years ago, "Don't you think there is always something wanting about the preachers who have not heard Chalmers?" This godly evangelical man, who still lives, complained of the coldness and want of spiritual energy and love for souls that so sadly characterised the young men who were then coming forward to fill the ranks thinned by the hand of death, among the Disruption ministers. And I believe he was right. It was about this time that decline had set in, and it has gone on with steady progress until the Church is well-nigh rent in twain by internal strife, and finds itself on the verge of splitting up over the malignant and interminable case of the alleged unsoundness in his teaching of one of its professors.

The cause of the ruin is seen in its bane, blight, and punishment. The Church made a fatal mistake in endeavouring to conserve and promote by natural means that which it had acquired of position, usefulness, and influence, as the fruit of God's Spirit working in men's consciences and hearts. They also showed great failure by trumpeting their own success over Christendom, and congratulating themselves as having achieved something notable from having their praises sounded in both hemispheres. They have stood before the world in the consciousness of a grand reputation for devotedness, and now they must endeavour by all means to keep it up and increase it more and more. In order to accomplish this object, the best talent of the Church must be sought out, and men of the highest acquirements must be placed in her professors' chairs; and the thought being now the maintenance of a great reputation, gifts were more in request than grace, and so men of reputation for great ability, irrespective of true piety, were placed in her colleges, and the teaching of her students went on. The men now chosen were, generally, young as well as talented, that they might give the best portion of their life to their professional work, and be all the more likely to act upon young men, and succeed in forming a ministry that would develop greater power

of learning in giving the Church a higher place in the world. This now appears to the more spiritual to have been a serious mistake.

Meantime, the union proposal between the Free Church and another was discussed and fought over for ten years, which served as a satanic diversion and cover, while the seed of the new teaching was sprouting and getting into leaf. A time of spent power ensued, and things grew worse and worse. A spirit of blindness to consequences seized even some of the aged and godly leaders, so as to make them instrumental in continuing to furnish the colleges with young professors who had given no particular proof either of their piety or ministry, and now those very men are moving heaven and earth to get rid of them, and undo, as far as possible, the disastrous consequences of this fatal mistake. It is the solemn conviction of nearly one-half of your body that those men have poisoned the meal at the mill and the water in the well, and the whole Free Church is suffering in consequence. The whole tendency of the teaching given has been they believe rationalistic not Christian, but it has no doubt been in perfect accord with the sceptical spirit of the age. But if it has brought the church into harmony with the spirit of the age, by so doing it has taken it out of harmony with the Bible and the Spirit of God. The literature of the day is essentially infidel, and the rising race read it, and under its baneful influence will not care to listen to the preaching of a minister who is not, himself, abreast of it, and in full sympathy with it. The literature of the period has now more influence for evil than all the gospel that is now preached has for good. Literature and not the Bible, produces and rules the thought of the day; and that thought, of whatever sort, is intensely sceptical. Men trained by professors of rationalistic proclivities will aim at preaching so as to catch the ear and ensure the good opinion of the thoughtful, and in order to arrest and retain them they must largely keep the gospel in the background (even when they know it). I venture to say, from knowledge acquired from the

most reliable source, without seeking it, that there is scarcely a student who leaves the colleges of the church to become a settled minister over a congregation, who will not naturally preach in an attempted literary style, and with a bias towards a modified rationalism, and will not give prominence to Christ crucified, as bearing our sins and delivering us from the world.

There was, no doubt, a great outward and ecclesiastical movement at the time of the Disruption, which drew in many who had no spiritual life, but who were under the providential power of the force that was leading on those who had life for the glory of Christ; and when the energy that led them out died down, the "mixed multitude" that were among the true people of God, like the "mixed multitude" that came out of Egypt with the Israelites, led on the lusting for the things that they had left, and this class has caused much of the evil that has overtaken the Free Church in its wilderness-march these thirty-eight years, the time the Israelites were caused to wander in the desert because of want of faith to go up and possess the land of promise. Now, as the time wore on, there came over Scotland, contemporaneously with the commencement of the period of their decline, a wave of blessing from the Lord, such as had not been known since the times of the Disruption, even if then,—but with fresh features, and a peculiar direction and outcome. The action of it was evidently most felt within the borders of the Free Church, and the voice of God in it was "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen (a heavy fall is the fall from 'first love'), and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." It seemed as if the church were a little aroused by this revival call, and individual ministers and people received fresh blessing, and were used mightily in the blessing of others over a wide range, and they carried a public testimony forward in the majesty of the Spirit, and tens of thousands assembled to listen, and a work of grace was accomplished of a deep and lasting kind. But it was a work of the Spirit inde-

pendent of churches, and its whole tendency was to go outside of them, and assert for itself an independent place as a free work of the Holy Ghost. The church at first seemed inclined to favour the work, and anxious to get the lead of it ; they tried to get all the agents under its power, and even owned one of its workers though belonging to another communion. But when it refused to be ecclesiastically controlled, this great open work was at first feared and at length opposed, and those who were in the forefront of the movement carried on their work for a time in the face of the most virulent opposition ; and at length it died away, and the workers went with it, some to be with their Lord, and others to the obscurity out of which God had called them. The church saw that this free work had an outward tendency ; and when at length it came to their ears that, as the fruit of it, God was gathering saints outside of all the sects on the ground of the one body of Christ, and with the distinct aim to maintain the unity of the Spirit, that ignored all the existing ecclesiastical institutions of men as in Scripture times, even the most evangelical joined with the merely ecclesiastical in order to resist the Holy Ghost's work, and stamp out the movement as earnestly and carefully as men do an epidemic. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye." When they saw that the movement did not stop short of gathering souls to Christ outside the churches, and exactly as they were gathered when the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit baptized the saints into one body in Christ, then they resisted it, for they would not allow it to subvert their system, but used every means to put it down by preaching and printing, and by stopping the circulation of the literature which the Spirit was using for the building up of the saints and their deliverance from their sins, and also from the ecclesiastical bondage of the day, into the liberty for worship, walk, and service, with which Christ makes His people free. God presented His testimony to the grace and glory of Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, and the answer to it was very much a repetition of what

happened when Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," presented the testimony to God's goodness in Israel, winding up with the exceeding grace of sending Jesus to bless them, as had been witnessed by the Holy Ghost,—when he charged them with resisting the Holy Ghost, and told of heaven opened and the rejected Jesus seen by him in the glory of God—centre of a new system of things, that necessitated the abolition of the old,—they stopped their ears, ran upon him, cast him out of the city, and stoned him. And what happened? God's new thing went on, and the old vanished away, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost, as those who were guilty dispensationally of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

It is a similar resisting of the Holy Ghost in His testimony to Christ and the Church that has so grieved the Spirit that He has left them to their own delusions, to reap the fruit of their own ways, and to know the misery of being delivered over to be filled with the thoughts of men, and be threatened with having their candlestick removed out of its place. At the beginning, "the wise," "the scribe," "the disputer of this world," had been all made foolish by God (in the form in which they presented themselves), and vanquished by the power of God, by which the people of the Disruption period were made to sacrifice themselves, and all they possessed, to the honour of Christ their Head and Lord; but now "the wise, the scribe, and the disputer of this world," not only assert a place of prominence, wisdom, and power, but they threaten to employ the old vessel of testimony, once so full of the power of God, as the very instrument of the malignant power of Satan to destroy the souls of the present generation, by sowing in them the seeds of infidelity by the agency of the very men who have been set for teaching and upholding intact the Spirit's testimony in the Written Word. They refused the Spirit's truth; and God may permit them to believe the devil's lie (2 Thess. ii.); and if there is not *swift repentance* when their cup is full, the judgment of God must come upon the unfaithful vessel of testimony, for He can-

not permit a people He has so graciously condescended to use in upholding the name of Christ (as they knew Him) to continue before men as if still owned of Him, if it should become the chief instrument of His dishonour in the land. When the vessel of testimony to Christ has become the instrument of Christ's dishonour and the corrupter of God's Word, we do not need any prophet to be sent to tell us that the end must be the judgment of God upon the vessel itself, breaking it in pieces. When the Jews crucified an incarnate Christ, there was still a reserve of grace for them in connexion with a glorified Christ; but after the Spirit had come, and they had sinned against the Holy Ghost in His witness to an exalted Prince and Saviour, wrath came upon them to the uttermost. God is my witness that I do not desire to see the woeful day; but, judging from the very character of God, and by the testimonies of His Word, and by His uniform practice in such cases, the coming of judgment upon an incorrigible corruption that has established itself in the place of God's testimony though long-delayed is inevitable.

In the time of a great religious stir, occasioned by the preaching of a transatlantic evangelist, seven years ago, when souls were quickened through the life-giving Word and Spirit, the greatest care was taken to exclude the anxious from coming in contact with the ministry of those who had the gospel in its fulness to communicate, and who could have given them the delivering truth of redemption, so that they might have rejoiced in Christ Jesus; and, in consequence, they were left to flounder in the mud of their own misery, and at length settle down into the worldly Christian profession of the period, the evil air of which effectually represses all spiritual growth. The chief actors to hinder the gospel from having free course were the clergy, who, in this, went against the expressed wish of the evangelist, who had to submit to his clerical superiors as the price paid for their co-operation and the free run of their churches; and the Free Church was the principal in this opposition to the gospel. Thus, that which began as a free work of God's grace, when its results

were seized upon and the movement got into the hands of the clergy and was forced into their moulds, became cramped, crushed, and very soon extinguished. Contemporaneous with this terrible and destructive action in ruining the evangelical work, and finally guiding it to gaol and private execution, came the reaction towards infidelity, which a light, forced, and sensational work, carried on at the level of current religious profession, uniformly produces. A "carnal" evangelism produces a scoffing worldliness, which refuses henceforth to listen to the solid gospel of the grace of God. To popularise the gospel is to take away from it every element of divine power which it possesses. Allow of human methods or ingredients, and immediately the flesh breathes freely and listens pleasantly; but bring in Christ crucified as doing away with man in the flesh altogether, and going on with the second Man, who is risen and gone into heaven, and the flesh is choked by the heaviness of the atmosphere, and makes its escape. This modern popularising of the gospel has given even evangelical society its itching ears, and has turned away the thoughtful from listening to the Word as a divine thing. Thus the evangelical conspired with the rationalistic to ruin the whole crop and reduce the field to barrenness. "The land was as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness." A rationalised college and a popularised gospel have made the name of Christ odious, and the Holy Scriptures a suspected and distrusted book. And is not God permitting your present troubles as a chastisement for rejecting the Spirit's work and the gospel of the glory of Christ leading on to the full knowledge of Him, and a going forth at the Spirit's call, "Behold, the Bridegroom! Go ye out to meet Him?"

A few of the saints of God, who have been treated "as the offscouring of all things unto this day," have sought and found God's grace to stand by the full testimony of God as to the present truth, and also by the new work of God's Spirit in recalling the saints from their confusion and disorder to Christ

and the unity of the Spirit. And though you have resisted all this (no doubt most of the rank and file in ignorance—not the *leaders*), who have come forward most distinctly in this work of standing up for the perfection and authority of God's Word as written, but those very people whom you have banded yourselves together to slay? This should speak with the very voice of God to your consciences and lay you down before His footstool in confession of your great sin in resisting the Holy Ghost in their testimony, and lead you to reconsider your duty towards this divine testimony and work of God for these closing days. One single pamphlet of this despised and persecuted people, entitled, "*Have we a revelation from God?*" despatched to the ministers of the church before the first great public trial of Professor Robertson-Smith's case, warned, instructed, and delivered the church for that year, when the subject of the contention was comparatively unknown; and ever since, the same witnesses for Christ and the scriptures have by a variety of writings shown themselves to be allies of those who are standing up for the truth against increasing and terrible opposition. They are the parties which the most evangelical among you have persecuted; and still they are forced, by holding on their way with God in personal fidelity, to be in the very path, so far as testimony to the Written Word is concerned, in which by force of circumstances you now meet them and find them—not your enemies—not taking advantage of your evil case to reproach you for the past, but, by the grace of God, "helpers in the war." They are one with you in resisting this fearful form of this "higher criticism" infidelity, that wrecks the Word as a revelation from God.

But this is not all. They believe that though God blesses a community, in however great a state of ignorance as to the full truth of Church unity when they are true to the Spirit-given desire to uphold the name of Christ according to their light, yet, seeing that the full truth of God has now been recovered and published openly, and the place of the saints in Christ

before God, and the place here in the Spirit where God would have all His children to be, God gathering out His saints to Christ in the unity of the Spirit as in the days of old, there is nothing short of this that God owns and will maintain in fulness of the blessing of the Christ, guide by the Spirit, and preserve from the destructive effects of the poisoned atmosphere of infidelity, and Laodiceanism, with which we are surrounded; so that it is labour lost for God's people to remain in connection with human institutions now going on to divine judgment and doomed to perish, though in providence used of God, when the Spirit's word by His holy Apostle is sounding in the hearing of every one that happens to hear, "*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*"

THE LORD'S DAY.

REMARKS ON A PAMPHLET BY DR. DONALD FRASER.

ON the first day of the week the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and was found in the midst of the disciples, when assembled together in a room at Jerusalem, with closed doors, for fear of the Jews. On the next first day of the week He appeared again to them, when Thomas, who was absent on the first occasion, had ocular proof of the verity of the Lord's resurrection, and confessed Him there as his Lord and his God. Six weeks after the Lord's resurrection the Holy Ghost was poured out on the first day of the week on the one hundred and twenty disciples gathered together in the upper room in Jerusalem. Thenceforth that day of the week, hitherto unconnected with any special historical association, had a place in the minds of Christians not inferior to that which the Sabbath, or seventh day, had on the minds of the Jews. We say historical association, because the only reference to the first day of the week in the Old Testament is that given in Leviticus xxiii., in the ordinances of the wave sheaf and the wave loaves, the former being waved on the morrow after the paschal Sabbath, the latter waved on the feast of weeks, which must always have been on the first day of the week. On the Sabbath the Jews met in their synagogues (Mark i. 21 ; Acts xiii. 14). On the first day of the week Christians met to break bread (Acts xx. 7). Christians from amongst the Jews evidently for a time observed the Sabbath (Rom. xiv. 6), as well as the Lord's day ; but for the converts from the Gentiles, the first day of the week, subse-

quently called the Lord's day (Rev. i. 10), was the only one with which, as part of God's people, they had any historical association. As the first day of the week, we learn which day of the week it was that they observed. From the term the Lord's day, we gather in what light it was viewed by Apostles and Christians in general.

The Sabbath was given by God to Israel, to observe in remembrance of His rest on the seventh day from all His work which He had created and made. *The* seventh day then, not a seventh day, could alone be the Sabbath for them, because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exod. xx. 11). He blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it; and that day was the seventh, or last day of the week, from which what we call the Lord's day is carefully distinguished in the New Testament, being called the first day of the week, *μία σαββάτου*, Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 2; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1, 19; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; or *πρώτη σαββάτου*, Mark xvi. 9. Blessed by God ere the fall of man took place, its observance was not, that we read of, enjoined on any of mankind till God called Israel out of Egypt, and gave them His Sabbaths, to be a sign between Him and them throughout their generations (Exod. xxxi. 13; Ezek. xx. 12), that they might know that He was the Lord who sanctified them. The measurement of time by weeks was known before the flood, it would seem (Gen. viii. 10-12); and Israel, for aught we know, may have heard of the Sabbath (Exod. xvi. 23), but certainly they did not observe it till after the manna came down. In the wilderness they were commanded to keep it (Exod. xvi. 28; xx. 8-11; xxxi. 13; xxxv. 3, etc.) By the prophets they were reprov'd for polluting it (Jer. xvii. 22, 27; Amos. viii. 5; Ezek. xx. 13; xxii. 8). By Nehemiah the returned remnant were exhorted to observe it (Neh. x. 31; xiii. 15). By and by they will again offer sacrifices upon it (Ezek. xlvi. 3-5), and duly hallow it. Israel, then, and Israel alone, were com-

manded to hallow it ; and their non-observance of it, as the Lord commanded them, formed part of the criminal charge brought by Jehovah against them. For fifteen hundred years, therefore, they were called upon to sanctify the seventh day, ere those who had been Gentiles were taught as Christians to regard one day as different from the rest. Then the first day of the week came into prominence, which we call the Lord's day.

As to the necessity of observing the Sabbath the Old Testament is clear and precise. As to any command for hallowing the Lord's day the New Testament is silent. We understand from Acts xx. 7 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 3, how Christians made use of it ; and from the Gospels we gather how it came to have a place in the estimation of Christians in early days, and from the earliest time of Christianity above any other day.

The observance of the Sabbath was legally binding on Israel. We could not say the same of the Lord's day with respect to Christians. No law, no injunction about it, that we read of, was ever promulgated, yet it was observed ; and for converts from the Gentiles it was the only day of the week which had any special significance. On it the Lord had risen, the token to all that God had accepted Him, "in that he raised him from the dead ;" and the witness, by His tomb being empty, that the surety was free, Death could not hold Him ; so those, on whose behalf He had died and had borne their sins, were free from all charge of guilt before the throne of God. He was raised again for our justification (Rom. iv. 25), and we are risen with Him, and are in Him who is risen, and is on high.

Now there are consequences in connection with this subject, which flow from the truth, of which the Lord's day reminds us, and from the very term in which, in accordance with Scripture, we speak of it.

It is the day of the week on which He rose, who was raised by God for our justification, with whom too we are risen if Christians in truth (Col. iii. 1), and in whom we are (Rom. vi. ; Ephes. i., ii.) Hence, by the very truth, of which the day

reminds us, we are really outside the number of those for whom days, and months, and times, and years, were appointed for commemoration by God. Christians are risen with Christ, and are seated in Him in the heavenlies. Times and seasons have to do with earth and the earthly people, not with heaven and the saints in Christ Jesus (Phil. iv. 21). The man who would intelligently urge on Christians rightly to observe the Lord's day would most strenuously impress on them the incongruity, nay, worse than that, of observing what are called the Christian festivals. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years," wrote Paul to the Galatians. "I am afraid of you," he added, "lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. iv. 10, 11). Perhaps some one will reply—But these were Jewish seasons of observance. Granted, but the Apostle does not tell them to keep Christian seasons instead. The observance of days, months, times, and years, indicated that they had lost in their hearts a characteristic feature of Christianity, which acknowledges a heavenly people, risen with Christ, and in Him also.

But how, some will ask, should we observe the day, since Scripture lays down no law about it? The very name by which we speak of it—the *Lord's day*, sufficiently indicates. Do we call it the Lord's day? Then use it for Him, and the advancement of His work and glory. Now, that simple thought will solve a hundred questions on the subject, which no casuistry could determine. The Christian, if really seeking to do God's will in the matter, will have no difficulty in settling what in his case would be a right use of that day. For the world we could lay down no rule about it. How make those who know not the Lord, and have no beneficial part for eternity in the results of His death and resurrection, observe the day made use of by Christians, because it speaks to them of all that? To a professing Christian one could of course appeal, and point out the inconsistency of his profession if he treats the day just as he would any other, and devote it, or any portion of it, to secular ends and temporal profit. In a country professedly

Christian, we are thankful for the relief from toil which, by statutory enactment, has been provided. But were there no such enactments the Christian would surely, if he remembered what day it was, and what he is, and in whom he is, seek to make use of the opportunity, as the saints in early days did, when no relief from secular toil was permitted them by those who knew not that Lord and Master who had redeemed them, and for whom they now lived. They assembled together on that day to break bread. Should one be less diligent in this than they were?

Now, if we own it to be the Lord's day, we see at once what becomes us on it. Who then could rightly encourage the Christian, whether poor or rich, to visit museums or picture galleries on that day? Could any one, really conscious of the privilege of bearing the "worthy name by which we are called" (James ii. 7), encourage such a practice in others, or allow it for himself? Granted we are not able to set the world right, nor are we called to do that; but are we not responsible, if we profess to be Christians, to act as such, and to remind each other that, professedly bearing the name of Christ, such practices are not to be encouraged, but discountenanced to the utmost of our power. We speak of course only with reference to those who profess to be Christians.

These remarks have been suggested by the perusal of a pamphlet on the *Lord's Day*, by Donald Fraser, D.D. In it the writer insists most strongly on the difference between the Sabbath and the Lord's day. So far he is right. But he evidently does not apprehend the consequences really involved in the observance of the latter; nor does he see the incongruity, to use no stronger term, of writing of it as the Lord's day, and yet advocating the opening of museums and galleries for the less spiritual part of the Christian community. A few extracts will illustrate what we have said: "However Christians vary in their view of Church festivals generally, and of the degree of strictness with which this day should be observed, they all concur in assigning

it to the first rank of Christian institutions. Now it is quite true that the present dispensation does not make so much of institutions as the previous dispensation did ; but it does not despise them or overlook their importance. Wisely so, for men need the moulding influence of venerable institutions, as well as the ever fresh inculcation of Divine truth, to hold them faithful to their religion" (p. 6). How, we might ask, has the moulding influence of venerable institutions held men faithful to their religion? It was just that which Paul had to combat throughout his apostolic career.

Again, "In like wise, only those Christians who are truly risen with Christ can keep the Lord's day aright; but all Christians must be supposed to know that the Lord is risen from the dead, and all ought to be quickened together with Him, and so to keep the First Day Festival. Moral and spiritual defect, want of knowledge, of faith, or feeling, cannot be accepted as a plea of excuse, cannot relieve any one of obligation to keep the ordinances of our religion. And non-observance of the Lord's day for its proper ends, which are sacred and spiritual, is not merely a loss to him who neglects the ordinance, but a sin against the Lord, and an unruliness in the Church" (p. 18). Again, "If a line can be firmly drawn against the opening of places of amusement, we see no valid objection to allow access to picture galleries and museums, at all events in crowded cities, on the day named after the Lord of all. But to open places of amusement would be quite derogatory to His sacred day, and therefore is rightly forbidden by civil law and national usage" (p. 22).

To one who has learned how Scripture speaks of Christians, such language as we have quoted will make plain that the writer does not draw his ideas from the pages of sacred writ. We need not wonder, therefore, if in other parts of the pamphlet confusion as to things which in the Word are kept distinct is plainly to be seen. Nor will it excite surprise if the author be shown to quote Scripture unintelligently, as he surely does when he applies

the rest of Hebrews (iv. 3) to rest of conscience which believers now have; and tells us that the civil as well as spiritual power is bound to render allegiance to the throne of God and of the Lamb (pp. 12, 19). The rest of Hebrews iv. is God's rest, into which believers are to enter by and by. Has God rest of conscience? He did rest from all His works, so will the saints in the future. Allegiance to the throne of God and of the Lamb! Perfectly right, when that throne is set up. At present it is not. John tells us, writing of the New Jerusalem, that the throne of God and of the Lamb *shall be* in it (Rev. xxii. 3). Till the church is on high, and the Lord reigns, that for which Dr. Donald Fraser now claims the allegiance of Church and State will not be set up.

With one remark we fully agree: "If Christians generally were more correctly guided as to the character and value of the day, perhaps they would do better in its observance" (p. 27). Perhaps they would. But amongst guides for this purpose, we say it with regret, we could not class the pamphlet by Dr. Donald Fraser.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.



WAS this Epistle sent by Paul to the Church of Ephesus? It was ; and the words "*in Ephesus*" are so decisively attested (the evidence of the *versions* is unanimous for *en Epheso*), that they cannot be deprived of their right to a place in the text being decidedly genuine. The conjecture that it was a circular letter with the place of designation left blank, to be filled up when sent to various churches, seems to lack proof. Besides, the Apostle wrote the Epistle, and inscribed it to the Christians in Ephesus as a whole ; not to a select body characterised by perseverance and fidelity. "*To the saints that are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus,*" is descriptive of the whole church of Ephesus. The Apostle uses the same method of address when writing to the church of Rome, "*to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints*" (Rom. i. 7). He does not write the word church, but we know he meant *the church of Rome* ; so we may say, although he does not write *the church in Ephesus*, he intended nothing else in what he wrote in the opening of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is a groundless notion that he could not address them as a church because "the church had been smashed to atoms." The church was there, and the churches, as established by the Apostles, were still there, and Ephesus was one of them ; for the Lord, in sending an epistle to them by John, caused them to be addressed "*the church in Ephesus.*" This tells us that the Lord could address them as a church if Paul could not ! But he, too, wrote distinctly to the church "in Ephesus" and not to Laodicea (as many would have

it); nor is his Epistle a letter meant for general circulation among the churches of the district, a blank being left to fill in the name as copied and sent. It may have been so used with its Ephesian designation; and, no doubt, was meant for the profit of God's Church everywhere, and in all ages. But the conclusion that this Epistle was written to and directed *to the Ephesians and no further church*, in keeping with the genuine *en Epheso*, is the only critical procedure which rests upon a historical basis, and is in agreement with the primitive and universal tradition of the church.

It is an unsafe thing to found a doctrine upon the absence of a word. If we affirmed that there was no *presbytery* in Ephesus because there is no mention of *elders* in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the cross light of Acts xx. would expose the unsatisfactory character of such reasoning; and to reason from the fact that the word *church* is not found in the inscription, that the Epistle was not addressed to the Church *in Ephesus* would be equally fallacious.

The church had not gone to pieces when Paul wrote to the Ephesians. Elements of evil—such as clerisy and sectism—that eventually ruined it were working, but were kept down by apostolic power as long as the Apostles lived. “After my decease,” etc., the Apostle told the elders of Ephesus the ruin would come. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Philippians with their “bishops and deacons” after he wrote to Ephesus, and also his First and Second Epistles to Timothy. In chapter iii. of the First Epistle he instructs him how to behave himself in *the church of God*; and, as we have said, thirty years after this he testified the whole of the Apocalypse “in *the churches*.” The churches being there, the church was too. They needed warning, but they were still acknowledged as churches by Christ. It is therefore a gross mistake to say that the church was all smashed to atoms when Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE JEWISH CHURCH.

TWELVE LECTURES BY W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

THERE is an order in the written revelation of God's truth very different often from that which men in their fancied wisdom would have suggested; for the Bible, though made up of the writings of different servants of God, penned, too, at varying epochs in the world's history, is really the product of one mind. Hence there is a plan throughout it, a moral order, which can be traced in the internal arrangement of its different books, as well as in the order in which the books appear in the sacred volume. The truth of these statements can be tested by a study of the books of Scripture, in detail, and, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, by comparing as well the order in the Hebrew Bible with that in the oldest known version, the Greek Septuagint.

A strictly chronological arrangement, we learn from both the Old and the New Testament, was not always that to which it pleased the Spirit of God to conform. Comparing the Gospels of Matthew and Luke with that by Mark, we see this clearly brought out. The events recorded in Matt. viii., ix., are not related in the order in which they severally occurred. So of the Gospel of Luke; if the chronological arrangement was to be always followed, how could we understand the introduction of a notice of the Lord's last journey to Jerusalem so early as in chap. ix. 51-56?

Turning back to the Old Testament, with which we are now to be directly occupied, we find, from a comparison between the Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint, a difference of order in the

internal arrangement of a book, as well as in the sequence in which certain books are placed in the volume. How the difference of order originated we may not be able to discover, but the existence of it is patent to every reader. It is well known that the arrangement of the prophecies of Jeremiah differs materially in the Greek version from that which we find in the Hebrew Scriptures, and the order in which the former version has preserved the twelve minor prophets differs from that in which the first six stand in the original. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, is the order in the Hebrew. Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, such is their order in the Septuagint. There is a moral order in their arrangement in the former which is lost if we accept as correct the arrangement of the latter. So of the Prophet Jeremiah; the order of his prophecies from xxv. 15–li. 64 is different in the Greek version from that which we meet with in the original Hebrew. Shall we accept the LXX. as our guide in this matter? We shall lose then the moral order in which the collection of his prophecies is presented to us in the Hebrew. By whom his predictions were arranged as we have received them in the language in which they were written, no one in our day, we presume, has authority to declare to us; but since each prophecy is but a portion of one great whole, the revelation in part of the Divine mind, we can readily understand how there may be an order in which predictions of old were committed to writing to be preserved for the benefit of posterity, and that the order was prescribed by Him whose mind was in part revealed by the different utterances of His servants, which form so large a part of the Old Testament Scriptures. Let us attempt to trace out the order in the book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

The book divides itself into four great parts, viz., chaps. i.–xxv.; chaps. xxvi.–xxxiii.; chaps. xxxiv.–xlvi.; xlvii.–end. In the first we have the prophet's indictment against the people set forth in ii.–xii., and summed up under three heads: general

corruption (ii.-vi.), empty profession coupled with idolatry (vii.-x.), and, what is also grievous in God's eyes, covenant breaking (xi., xii.) God has therefore forsaken His house, left His heritage (xii. 7). Prayer for them is now of no avail (xi. 14). Yet afterwards the Lord will be gracious, but in the meantime those who have provoked His anger must suffer for it. These three grand charges brought against them, the prophet is next shown, under different figures, the certainty of the Lord's rejection of His people. The girdle marred at the Euphrates (xiii.) is symbolical of the bringing down of their pride. By the occasion of a dearth the prophet learns, when desiring to intercede, that the Lord will not accept it now; and even if Moses and Samuel stood before Him, He would not hear them. The sword, the famine, death, captivity, will be their portion, and nothing now remains for the faithful but separation from the ungodly (xiv., xv.) The two next chapters (xvi., xvii.) bring out in full relief how far this separation is to be carried; not merely separation in heart, but also in act (xvi. 1-8). Trying indeed must such a path ever be, but the faithful are strengthened by the assurance of blessing to those who trust in the Lord, and of the curse that will follow such as trust in man (xvii. 5-8). Next God illustrates His right to act with men as He pleases by the potter's vessel marred in the potter's hand; and He demonstrates the certainty of His thus dealing with them unless they repent by the vessel broken by the prophet in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom (xviii.-xix.) But what prospect was there of the nation's repentance if Jeremiah was put in the stocks because he prophesied such things? (xx.) Hence in xxi.-xxiv. we have the judgment declared which must come on the immediate heirs of David's throne, yet coupled with a bright promise of the King, the righteous Branch, who shall reign and prosper (xxiii. 5, 6). But ere that time of blessing can arrive a judgment of the nations, as well as of Judah, must take place. The cup first drunk by Judah must be drunk by all, and by Babylon, the scourge then used of God to carry out His purpose (xxv.)

The second part of the book now commences. All hope of Judah's repentance was extinguished. Jeremiah was threatened with death for declaring the word of the Lord (xxvi.); hence the sovereignty departing from Judah is transferred to Gentile hands, and all must submit to Nebuchadnezzar, though only for a limited time. But submission to the Babylonish power on the part of Judah and that of the nations around her—Edom and Ammon, Moab, and Tyre and Sidon, did not imply of necessity deportation from their homes. If they submitted to God's will, and owned him and his throne whom Daniel describes as the head of gold, they would abide under his yoke and live (xxvii. 12); for certain was it that no deliverance from that yoke was now near at hand, whatever the false prophets might declare (xxvii. 16—xxviii. 17). So the prophet of Anathoth writes to those already captive, and exhorts them to dwell in quietness and in subjection where they are; for the term of seventy years, dating from the fourth year of Jehoiakim, must be fulfilled ere any return from captivity could be expected (xxix.) But a return of the ten tribes shall take place, as well as that of the captives from Judah, and final blessing be enjoyed. With this prospect the Lord would comfort His sinful and captive people (xxx.—xxxiii.) Beyond that, which is still future, the prophet does not go. He expects the return from captivity of both Israel and Judah, and the throne at Jerusalem to be tenanted by David's heir, the Branch of righteousness.

That, as we have said, is future; hence, in the third part of the book (xxxiv.—xl.), we have the contrast brought out between those who were obedient to that which they professed and those who were not, and God's then ways of government with the one and with the other. So we see contrasted the unfaithfulness of the king and people to the covenant they solemnly entered into with God (xxxiv.) with the obedience of the Rechabites to the commands of their ancestor Jonadab (xxxv.). Next, the impiety of Jehoiakim is recounted (xxxvi.) and the vacillation and fear of man which characterised Zede-

kiah (xxxvii., xxxviii.), and which ended, as the prophet foretold, in the capture of the city and the overthrow of the Jewish polity by the Babylonian power (xxxix.) Would those left in the land after the taking of Jerusalem learn the wisdom of subjection to God's will, and of obedience to God's word? The history of that company, related in xli.-xliv., is the answer to that question. Nothing would lead them to be wise and obedient, though they could see in the Babylonian general's treatment of Jeremiah (xl.) how the Lord can watch over those who are faithful to Him; and we see in the prophecy concerning Baruch another instance of God's governmental ways with those who are true in heart to Him (xlv.) His life was given him for a prey, whereas those who would go into Egypt were to die there. We now come to the last part of the book, by which Jeremiah's service was carried out as prophet to the nations (xlvi.-li.); for if God deals with His disobedient people, He will deal with the nations also. Judah had first to drink the cup (xxv.), then Egypt and the rest, who were to submit to the Babylonish conqueror. So now Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, Kedar, and the kingdoms of Hazer, with Elam and Babylon, get each their word. But, differing from the prophetic messages of Isaiah and Ezekiel to those nations around the land of Israel, Jeremiah's predictions against the Gentiles do not look on to their condition in the last days. As in the previous sections of the book, so in this; it is God's dealings with the nations in the prophet's own day that he was called on to predict.* With this his prophetic ministry ends. The book closes with chapter lii., a kind of historical appendix, almost identical in vers. 1-27 with the details in 2 Kings xxiv. 18-xxv. 21; but adding in vers. 28-30 what is not found in that history, the whole chapter describing

* The reader may observe, that though the return from captivity of Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Elam, in the latter days is predicted, God's final dealings with them is not in this book revealed to us.

the capture of the city and temple, with the different end of Zedekiah and of his nephew Jehoiachin.

Now we think it is patent that there is a plan in this outline of the book, a moral order which would be lost if we accepted the arrangement of chapters found in the LXX. in place of the order which we have in the Hebrew. By whom this book, as we have it, and the order we have attempted to trace out, was drawn up, it is impossible to say; but an examination of its contents, and the order in which they are given, does reveal the existence of a plan, the purpose of a mind, and whose mind no devout student of Scripture will be at a loss to determine.

We have been led into this train of thought by reading the book named at the head of this article. It is a saddening work, as it shows how the minds of men, teachers, and students, are being carried along by the infidel current of the day, which, under the guise of scholarship and critical study, would undermine the belief of men that we possess in the Scriptures a revelation from God. A few words from the close of the twelfth lecture will put the question in a clear light. "In India, when the Government brings a new water-supply into a village, the village authorities make rules for its use and distribution, but 'these rules do not purport to emanate from the personal authority of their author or authors; there is always a sort of fiction under which some customs as to the distribution of water are supposed to have existed from all antiquity, although, in fact, no artificial supply had even been so much as thought of.' In the same way the new laws of the Levitical code are presented as ordinances of Moses, though when they were first promulgated every one knew they were not so—though Ezra himself speaks of some of them as ordinances of the prophets" (pp. 386, 387). This is bold and outspoken, at all events, but it lacks the merit of being correct. Ezra ix. 10, 11, speaks of a particular transgression forbidden by God through the instrumentality of the prophets. Mr. Smith states that the new laws of

the Levitical code Ezra teaches were ordinances of the prophets. Are his readers aware that only in one verse in his book does Ezra mention the prophets? and then it is with reference to one sin of the people, that of intermarrying with the nations around them. And why should there be any question raised about the promulgation of Levitical laws, seeing that God forbade the sin of which Ezra was speaking by the prophet Moses? (Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16; Deut. vii. 3); and the injunction respecting them was reiterated by Joshua, in whose book (part of the writings of the former prophets) that reiteration is met with. Hence Ezra would be justified in writing of this law as the commandments of God's prophets. But there is a want of accuracy in stating that Ezra speaks of *some* of them as ordinances of the prophets. The reader would scarcely credit that the ready scribe was only speaking of one of the laws of God. But is Mr. Smith correct as to the time of its promulgation? Nehemiah, Ezra's cotemporary (Neh. xiii. 26), distinctly declares that Solomon had sinned in that very way. He must then have understood that the law in question was of older date than what Mr. Smith would mean by the times of the prophets. And in truth it was, for the historian of 1 Kings (xi. 1, 2) gives his readers to understand it was extant in the days of Solomon, and the angel at Bochim refers to it (Judges ii. 2), for the children of Israel had already begun to contravene it (Judges iii. 6).

The bold, outspoken statement which we have quoted is the end to which, by his volume of lectures, Mr. Smith would lead both his hearers and readers, and the evident purport of the volume is to educate them up to it. Of course, by the one who broaches such a theory the Scriptures are not owned as inspired. Belief in their being inspired cannot coexist with a belief that they are not, nor were meant to be, what they profess to be. And if Mr. Smith's statement is true, God has sanctioned in His Word imposture of the most flagrant kind. Over and over again we read, "Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel," &c. Was this true or not? Have we in the Levitical code what Jehovah said, and said to Moses, or not? (See for the date of some of them Lev. vii. 37, 38; xvi. 1; xxv. 1; xxvii. 34.) If not, men, prophets, whoever they were, were inspired by the Holy Ghost to write what He knew, and they knew, was untrue; and the testimony of the Prophet like unto Moses we must reject as untrue. "Did not Moses give you the law?" He asked the Jews (John vii. 19). Was He pandering to popular superstition, or was He saying what He knew was true? "The history does not profess," we read (p. 320), "to be written by Moses, but only notes from time to time that he wrote down certain special things (Exod. xvii. 14, xxiv. 4, xxxiv. 27; Num. xxxiii. 2; Deut. xxxi. 9, 22, 24)." "He wrote of Me," said the Lord Jesus Christ (John v. 46). Where shall we find what he wrote of the Lord? It was extant in the days of the Apostles. What, and where is it now? But we are met with an objection supposed to be of overwhelming force. "It is a strong thing to suppose that so artificial a way of writing (using of one's self the third person) is as old as Moses, and belongs to the earliest age of Hebrew authorship. One asks for proof that any Hebrew ever wrote of himself in the third person" (p. 321). Did the Professor never read Eccles. i. 1, 2, vii. 27, xii. 8, 10? Has he forgotten how John, a Hebrew, could write? (John xiii. 23-25, xix. 26, 27, 35).

We have called attention to the conclusion to which the hearers and readers of these lectures are sought to be conducted. We would look for a little at some of the steps by which that is attempted to be established. The position taken up is as follows:—It was after Ezra came from Babylon that we have the "establishment of the Pentateuch as the canonical and authoritative book of the Jews" (p. 158). "If we are shut up to choose between a Mosaic authorship of the whole five books and the sceptical opinion that the Pentateuch is a mere forgery, the sceptics must gain their case" (pp. 308, 309). "These facts . . . imply that the complete system of the Pentateuch

was not known in the period of the kings of Judah, even as the theoretical constitution of Israel" (p. 247). "We know as a matter of historical fact that the Pentateuch as a whole was put into operation as the rule of Israel's life at the reformation of Ezra, with a completeness which had never been aimed at from the days of the conquest of Canaan. From this time onwards the Pentateuch, in its ceremonial as well as its moral precepts, was the acknowledged standard of Israel's righteousness (Neh. xiii.; Mal. i. 7 *seq.*, iii. 8 *seq.*, iv. 4; Acts xv. 5)" (p. 208). From the days of Ezra "and forward the Pentateuch as we now have it . . . became the religious and municipal code of Israel" (p. 56).

On what are such statements based? Was it only from Ezra's day that the Pentateuch in its ceremonial and moral precepts was the acknowledged standard of Israel's righteousness? The contrary, as regards the ceremonial part, was really the fact; for in the Temple, with which Ezra was personally acquainted, there was not the ark, nor did sacred fire ever come down on its altar, nor was there a priest with Urim and Thummim (Ezra ii. 63). The ceremonial law in its completeness could not in his day be carried out. How could atonement have been made without the mercy-seat, which formed the lid of the ark? But Mr. Smith seeks to establish his position by reference to Nehemiah's confession (ix. 34), and his statement about the Feast of Tabernacles as it was observed in his day (viii. 17). A simple mind would have supposed that since Nehemiah confessed that their kings, princes, priests, and fathers had not kept God's law, they must have had it to keep. And as to the Feast of Tabernacles, we learn from his book that since Joshua's day the people had not dwelt in booths during its continuance. It is to that special point that he there draws the attention of his readers. Had they never kept the Feast of Tabernacles during all that time? we may ask. "Of course, never at all," (p. 56) is the ready answer of the exponent of critical results. But Scripture is precise about it. They did keep that

feast in the reign of Solomon (2 Chron. vii. 9, 10). They kept it also, "as it is written," in the days of Zerubbabel, between seventy and eighty years before Ezra appeared at Jerusalem (Ezra iii. 4), in truth, before he was born. But Mr. Smith may say it never was observed according to law, *i.e.*, dwelling in booths, till the occasion mentioned in Nehemiah viii. The words of Nehemiah do not even say that. He dates the omission of dwelling in booths from the days of Joshua, not from the entrance of Israel into their land. Was the Pentateuch, we ask again, in its ceremonial and its moral precepts, unknown till Ezra's day as the standard of Israel's righteousness? As regards the ceremonial laws, 2 Chron. viii. 12-14; Ezra iii. 2-6; Hag. ii. 11, are an answer to such a statement. As regards its moral precepts, 1 Kings ii. 3; 2 Chron. xvii. 9, are proof to the contrary.

The sacrifices in Solomon's day were regulated by the law of Moses. The courses of the priests and the service of song were regulated by the ordinances of David. What the law had enjoined, and what David instituted, were known, and owned as quite distinct. With the moral precepts of the law David was evidently acquainted, and he knew the law as a written law, the law of Moses, and charged his son to keep it, that he might prosper in all that he did. Jehoshaphat took away the high-places and groves out of Jerusalem, and sent Levites and priests to teach in Judah, and they had the book of the law of the Lord with them. Upon what an unsubstantial basis would Mr. Smith rear up his structure! The Scriptures to which he appeals do not support what he says, and other Scriptures make plain that he is building on a sandy foundation.

But we have said that he endeavours to educate his readers up to that point to which he himself has reached. He tells them about the canon of Scripture, and teaches them about the Greek Septuagint. Now, to establish his position, he must break down in their minds all confidence in the correctness of the Hebrew Scriptures as we have received them. An example

of this procedure we have in p. 113, where he proposes, on the authority of the LXX., a shorter recension of Jeremiah xxvii., which, amongst other things, would eliminate from the Bible this remarkable prediction concerning the Babylonish monarchy, which is given, we believe, nowhere else: "And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come; and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him" (xxvii. 7). The shorter recension would deprive us of this prophetic announcement. The duration of the years of the captivity we read of in Jer. xxv. 11, xxix. 10. The omission, then, of xxvii. 7 would not, of course, deprive us of that. But here alone is it that we learn, that the first of Daniel's four great empires would only survive to the third generation of the family of its head. How that was really fulfilled the deciphering of cuneiform inscriptions has established, and set at rest. Belshazzar's father was Nabonadius, who was not a descendant of the great king Nebuchadnezzar, but marrying his daughter Nitocris, her son, who was Belshazzar, and reigned conjointly with his father, though the fifth in order of the Babylonish monarchs, was really the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Thus what may have seemed at one time unlikely was actually fulfilled; that empire did not survive the life of the great conqueror's grandchild, Belshazzar. Now this prophecy, if we accepted the shorter recension offered us, we should lose, and there would be a void in the Scriptures; for we think it can be maintained without a doubt that 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20 refers to it. Where else does Jeremiah speak in such a way of Nebuchadnezzar and his sons that we can point to it as the prophecy to whose fulfilment the chronicler draws attention? With 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21, before us, we must decline to accept what Professor Smith would press on us. "Is it natural," he asks, "that the prophet should turn aside to introduce such a prediction here, in the very midst of a solemn admonition, on which it has no direct bearing?" Perfectly natural. For three times over does he

wish to impress on all the hopelessness of refusing the foreign yoke, but at the same time tells them of the limited period to which they would be called to submit to it. But Mr. Smith goes farther, and intimates his preference for the arrangement of Jeremiah's predictions as found in the LXX. (p. 121); but we suppose he did not tell his hearers that xxxiii. 14-26 must then be struck out of their Bibles, for it was wanting in the LXX., and is said to have been supplied by Origen.* And he does not tell his readers that at times the New Testament writers discard the translation of the LXX., because it does not agree with the Hebrew. See, for examples, Matt. ii. 15, viii. 17, xxvi. 31; John xix. 37; Rom. xi. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 54; 1 Peter ii. 7; though, on the other hand, there are instances in which the LXX. has preserved the true reading, and the Masoretic text is proved to be incorrect. See, for an example, Acts ii. 25-28. An examination, however, of the whole question of the Hebrew *versus* the LXX. will result, we are persuaded, in the rejection of the text and arrangement of that version as better than that of the Hebrew. And as regards the book of the Prophet Jeremiah, we prefer the arrangement of it as we have it in the Hebrew, throughout which, as we have attempted above to point out, a moral order can be traced.

* In the notes appended to the volume (p. 402) he refers to this passage in Jeremiah, and attempts to discredit its genuineness by affirming that the prophet predicts (ver. 18) that the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices shall be perpetual as the succession of day and night. He might with equal justice affirm that the prophet predicted the perpetual occupancy of David's throne. What is promised is, that neither the royal nor priestly lines should be cut off, that there should be no heir to the throne, nor priests or Levites to minister. Jeremiah does not say that there should be no intermission of sacrifices, but that God's covenant with David and with Phineas should be enduring as His covenant of the day and of the night. It is of the restoration of the Jewish polity and worship in the latter days that the prophet here writes (see vers. 15, 16), for that the royal and priestly lines must be preserved—not of an unbroken continuance of the kingdom and worship from the prophet's day. For he writes of that which had not existed since Solomon's day—a man of David's line sitting on the throne of the house of *Israel*, and not merely of the house of Judah.

From remarks on the canon of Scripture we are called by the lecturer to a review of the origin of individual books. He begins with the Psalms. The object he has in view is steadily maintained; the goal to be reached we have already pointed out. That Mr. Smith has not understood the purport of the Book of Psalms, nor caught its moral order, is not to be wondered at. Many a devout reader of the book has not perceived either the one or the other. We believe, however, there is a purpose in the arrangement of the book, and a moral order in the way each psalm is introduced, which, if seized, would deepen the impression that the Sacred Scriptures are indeed of God. The Psalter is divided into five books: Ps. i.-xli., xlii.-lxxii., lxxiii.-lxxxix., xc.-cvi., cvii.-cl. Now the subjects of the books are distinct, and the order in which they are arranged is prophetic, the different psalms providing suitable language, comfort, and instruction for God's saints who will be on earth when true Christians will be down here no longer. They are really the expression of the Spirit of God for saints on earth. As far, then, as the experience of saints is concerned, God's people in all ages can find language in the book suited for them. But Christian experience is not their subject, so there are statements and desires, right in their place, which a Christian instinctively feels would be unsuited for him to take up. The Psalter is a collection of the writings of various authors, yet all of it inspired Scripture, and ranges over a great length of time. Between David and the writer of Ps. cxxxvii. centuries, of course, rolled by; hence it is plain that the book as a whole was not known to God's earthly people before the Babylonish captivity, and the special circumstances of which, as a whole, it is the exponent did not, it is plain, exist till after the cross. The second psalm, as Acts iv. 25-29 shows, supposes the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ; and Ps. lxxiv. describes a condition of things in connection with the people of Israel which has never yet taken place, viz., the Temple burned, no prophet among them to say how long, yet God's turtledove, the congre-

gation of His poor, crying to Him about it. In the days of Nebuchadnezzar they had prophets, and they knew what was to be the duration of the captivity. When Titus besieged Jerusalem their house had been left to them desolate, and the Jews could not, in accordance with God's mind, have addressed Him in the language of this psalm. Hence the design of the book, as arranged, has reference to the future, when the remnant will be able thus to intercede with Him. By what human agency the book was arranged we know not. That there was a design in its formation, an examination of its contents makes manifest. But in the discovery of that design mere critical study will not aid us; we need to study the book in a different manner to get at the thread which runs through it, and to trace out its moral order.

A few remarks will elucidate what has been expressed. In Book I. we have the remnant of the Jews of the future day brought back to the land. In II. they are viewed as outside Jerusalem. In III. we have the condition of the last days described as it concerns the whole of God's earthly people Israel; the Temple destroyed (lxxiv.); Jerusalem captured (lxxix.); and the throne as yet not tenanted by its only rightful occupant (lxxxix.) In IV. the kingdom is viewed as being set up in power. In V. we have exercises of the saints till the reign of peace is fully established; the whole closing with praise to God Jehovah in the fullest way. The first book ends with Ps. xli., describing saints alive on earth at the Lord's return. The second book ends with the description of the Lord's millennial reign (lxxii.) The third ends with the cry to Him to fulfil His covenant to David about the throne (lxxxix.) The fourth ends with cv., the recital of God's ways in grace with Israel; and cvi., their ways of rebellion in the past, and the looking for the nation's full deliverance. Into a detailed account of each book it would be impossible within the limits of this article to enter. But just a few remarks on some psalms in Books I. and II. may give an idea which, if the reader is so minded, he may trace out for himself more at length.

Ps. i. gives us the godly and the ungodly in Israel, characteristic marks of the former, and the future of both, but only as regards earth. Ps. ii. gives the political character of things. God's counsel about the king rejected, but to be ultimately made good. The spiritual and political condition of things thus described, it is plain that the walk of the godly will be productive of trial to them, till the ungodly are dealt with by God. Hence Ps. iii.-vii. describe the different features of trial to which the saint will be exposed. Many rise up against him, but he will trust in Jehovah (iii.), and he cries to a known God, and appeals to the ungodly to act aright (iv.) This leads to a meditation in v. on the character of God and His ways with men (4-6), and the ways of the ungodly. In vi. he is further tried; God's hand is on him. In vii. we learn how he is exposed to the secret plots of the wicked, so he desires Jehovah's intervention in judgment. This is announced in Ps. viii., as we learn that all things are put under the Son of Man, the full effect of which the New Testament sets forth (1 Cor. xv. ; Eph. i. ; Heb. ii.) After that we have in Ps. ix. the looking for God to judge the earth, and to destroy the ungodly man, whose character is set forth more directly in Ps. x. After this statement (iii.-vii.) of the different trials of the righteous, and of God's intervention in judgment—which is still future—we learn in xi.-xv. the exercises of heart through which the saint passes whilst in trial, followed (xvi.-xxiv.) by an outline of the Lord's life, (xvi., xvii.) victory, (xviii.) humiliation and death, (xx.-xxii.) and return to earth, (xxiv.) an answer to the saint's desire, and an encouragement to hold still on his way.

Interesting as it would be to go through the psalms *seriatim*, the limits of this article forbid more than a brief notice of portions of the book; so we would now ask the reader to glance with us at some of the psalms in the order in which they are arranged in the second book, a further proof that there must be a design, a moral order, in their arrangement. The remnant driven out of Jerusalem, they look and cry to be brought back (xlii., xliii.)

How changed their circumstances from those of their fathers of old! This they express to God and supplicate for His intervention (xliv.), that He will answer their cry; and how fully Psalm xlv. teaches us, as the person of the King is described by whose power it will be effected. Then God will be in their midst (xlvi.), so the nations are next called to praise Him who is King over all the earth (xlvii.) But further, He is to be praised in the city of Jerusalem, which He has preserved from the last assault of the kings of the earth; "for this God," they add, "is our God; He will be our guide unto death" (xlviii.) After this comes a meditation on the future of the ungodly, and on that of the saints; the former pass into the grave, the latter are redeemed from it (xlix.) Closely connected with that meditation is the description of God's coming to the judgment of His earthly people (l.), approving of the saints, and then rejecting the wicked, this given in the spirit of prophecy to warn souls in time (l. 22, 23); and (li.) shows what becomes those who have sinned against God, and the grace which such, if they seek it, can find. The prophetic outline given, suited for the saints in their exile, we have next a series of psalms called *Maschils*, and another called *Michtams*, all by David, giving the feelings of the saints when driven out. Now, is it by accident or by design that in this book of the Psalter we have nearly all of those psalms of David whose titles, if correct, describe the exercises of his heart when driven out from house and home? We believe it is by design.

But turning to Professor Smith, we are told of an improved arrangement of the Psalter, as he thinks. The five books he would compress into three. The Davidic psalms are, we are informed, unnaturally arranged; they should all come together, instead of being separated, as far as Books I. and II. are concerned, by Psalm xlii.-l., which he would place between lxxii. and lxxiii. "We may fairly accept this," he writes, "as the original order, which possibly was changed by the final collector, in order that he might show by a distinct mark that the two

Davidic collections in his work were originally separate" (p. 188). For Professor Smith it is merely a collection of Davidic, Korahitic, and Asaphic compositions, which should be arranged as specimens in a cabinet, each class by itself. But where is the Spirit of God in all this? May we not say, in the language of the Psalms, that on such a subject "God is not in all his thoughts?" (Ps. x. 4). Unfortunately, however, for the theory of what ought to be, we have Ps. i., ii., which are not said in the book to be by David, as well as Ps. x., xxxiii., which are also anonymous. Their presence, as they stand, upsets the proposed arrangement. Then in Book III. there is one psalm said to be by David (lxxxvi.), and that we learn ought not to be accredited as such. A psalm of David there would be contrary to all critical order. (!) Hence he tells us its "title is unquestionably a mistake, for the psalm is a mere cento of reminiscences from older parts of Scripture. And the prayer (ver. 11), 'Unite my heart to fear Thy name,' is based on the promise (Jer. xxxii. 39), 'I will give them one heart . . . to fear me continually.' It is the law of religious life that prayer is based on promise, and not conversely" (p. 185). Is this last statement always correct? On what promise was the prayer of Jabez based? (1 Chron. iv. 10). But why say ver. 11 is based on Jer. xxxii. 39? Why not on Deut. v. 29? But that would militate against the Professor's position. To sustain, then, the arrangement of a Davidic collection, Ps. x. must be merged, as in the LXX., into ix., and xxxiii. quietly shelved as one of a later date. But the question remains, how did it get there? Ps. lxxxvi., too, cannot be by David, he tells us, nor Ps. cxxii., nor Ps. cxxxix.

Into what a confusion the Psalter has got! What wonderful people are the critics to discern it, and to put all straight! But can they? Why should Ps. x. be tacked on to Ps. ix.? Its subject is closely connected with that treated of in Ps. ix. we freely grant; but if the whole psalm is really studied, we think it will be seen that it has nevertheless a distinct line of its

own. The former takes up more God's triumph over the wicked in general by judgment; the latter dwells more on the character of the wicked man. But we are told that ix. and x. form together a beautiful acrostic (p. 183) or alphabetical psalm. We will refer to this farther on. Passing on now to Ps. xxxiii., why get rid of it here as out of place, because it is not said to be by David? It comes in in real harmony with what we believe is the moral order of the book. Ps. xxxii. 11 calls on the righteous to rejoice in God. What then more suited to follow than a meditation about the Lord in whom they are exhorted to rejoice (xxxiii.), who delivers the saints when man's power is of no avail? This is succeeded by xxxiv., the utterance of one who has been delivered, praising God, and desiring others to know Him likewise. All here seems in order and in harmony, and the arrangement is perfectly natural.

Objections are urged against other psalms. In Book III. there is one, and only one, said to be by David,—lxxxvi. But that cannot be, says our critic. All sense of order, it seems, would be lost if one Davidic composition is found amongst a number of Asaphic or Korahitic poems. But why not? On what authority does he insist on an arrangement which would place the Davidic psalms in a class by themselves? The Psalter unquestionably was not formed as a whole till after the Babylonish exile, and it is formed to express the full feelings, and to describe in detail the circumstances of God's saints, which have never yet in their completeness been known. That Mr. Smith has not perceived this is no surprise. But to those who have, no manipulation of the arrangement of the book, such as he would advocate, could be satisfactory. And when it is seen, as it must be on examination, that the Psalter as a whole could not have been formed till after the captivity, the question which has to be settled, ere he is at liberty to bring it as a witness in behalf of his case, is simply this: Is the arrangement of it, as we have it in the Hebrew, the original one or not? Has it been rearranged since it was first com-

piled? Now the order of the psalms in the Hebrew is the order in the oldest known version, with the exception of Ps. ix., x., being classed as one, and Ps. cxlvii. being divided into two, so as to make up the number of cl. in that version. His position is, that the laws of the Levitical code are presented as laws of Moses, when they are only ordinances of the prophets. This reference to the Book of Psalms will therefore only avail him, if he can show that the Psalter, as we have it, has been re-arranged since it was first compiled. That he cannot do. The question of the authorship of the different psalms has really nothing to do with it. They are not arranged according to their authors, but according to the subjects of which they treat. Hence it is perfectly natural and suited that lxxxvi., as written by David, should come in just where it does. In Ps. lxxxiv. we have expressed the saint's desire after God's house, after which we have two prayers (lxxxv., lxxxvi.), the former the expression of the remnant in their national character, the latter the prayer of the saint individually for preservation of life, founded on what Adonai is, and His ways in grace, and on Jehovah's ways in power. Who of God's saints was more suited to express themselves thus than David, whose experience must have tallied with that expressed in the fourteenth verse of this psalm? Then, closing with a request to be shown a token for good, does not lxxxvii. come in well as the answer to that petition? The more we examine the Psalter, the more its moral order is apparent. But all this is lost on Professor Smith, or rather, we should say, he has not perceived it. The beauty of the arrangement is all lost on him, who only sees a quantity of Davidic, Asaphic, and Korahitic poems, all higgledy-piggledy, awaiting the critical acumen of the lecturer, or those whose opinions he is retailing, to arrange them as he thinks right,—a work which all must see the most ordinary clerk could accomplish in the short space of half an hour.

But we may be reminded that other objections are urged against the Davidic authorship of some of the psalms. Ps.

exxii., we are told (pp. 192, 193), cannot have been written by David, for it speaks of "Jerusalem the rebuilt," and of the thrones of the house of David as a recollection of the past. Now the suggested translation of ver. 3, הַבְּנוּיָהּ, *Habbnuyah*, "the rebuilt," is, for the purpose for which it is here adduced, a false one. *Habbnuyah* is simply "the built one," or "that is built," without reference in itself to any former condition of that which is built. Nothing but the presuming on the credulity of one's hearers or readers could, we should have thought, have led any one conversant with the original to have hazarded such a statement for the purpose of disproving the Davidic authorship. And why insist that the author speaks of the thrones of the house of David as a recollection of the past? יִשְׁבִּי does not of necessity intimate that. Hebrew scholars, as Gesenius, would reject such a translation. This want of accuracy of translation we meet with on other occasions. Were such instances simple inaccuracies, one would let them pass; but made use of for a purpose, as they are, it is a very different matter. On p. 193 Professor Smith translates Ps. cxliv. 10: 'Thou that givest deliverances unto kings, who didst save David from the hurtful sword, save me.' Why "didst save"? In both clauses we have the present participle in the original, "who giveth," "who saveth." It is the character of God known by His actions that is celebrated, not a mere statement of a fact in history.

Whilst on the point of translations, the reader should be warned to take on trust no translation or interpretation of the Divine Word given in these lectures. On p. 224 we read, "The worship of the sanctuary imperatively demands the tokens of material homage, the gift without which no Oriental would approach even an earthly court. 'None shall appear before me empty' (Exod. xxiii. 15)." But that command in Exodus applies only to the appearance of every male before Jehovah at the three great festivals of the year. They worshipped at other times as well. Again, "In Levit. xvii. it appears as a per-

petual statute that no animal can be lawfully slain for food unless it be presented as a peace-offering before the central sanctuary, and its blood sprinkled on the altar. One has no right to slay an animal on other conditions" (p. 236). Has the author of these words read that chapter in Leviticus? That chapter distinguishes between domestic animals slain in or near the camp (ver. 3) and such as were taken in hunting (ver. 13), and lays down different rules for each, though forbidding the blood of any animal to be eaten.

The Professor has not read that chapter, or, if he has, certainly not with care; so his statement about it, made, indeed, for a purpose, viz., to discredit its being really God's revelation by Moses, is not correct. On p. 283, Isaiah li. 7 is quoted as if the prophet wrote, "The people *in whose hearts my revelation dwells.*" The prophet really wrote "in whose heart is my *law.*" On p. 293 we read, "The business of the Levites is to give Torah to Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 10)." Moses really said, "They shall teach Thy judgments to Jacob, and Thy law to Israel." They were not to *give* a law (Torah), but to *teach* what had been given, "Thy law." But the true statement of Deut. xxxiii. 10 would militate against his theory of the law. Micah too, we read, "declares that the priests give Torahs or legal decisions for hire (iii. 11)." The prophet wrote, "Her heads judge for reward, and her priests teach for hire." Does the lecturer, we again ask, read the passages of Scripture on which he professes to comment? Farther on we are taught (p. 319), "In Exod. xxxiii. 7, which is non-Levitical, we read that Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp, and called it the tent of meeting; but the Levitical account of the setting-up of the tabernacle, with the similar circumstance of the descent of the cloud upon it, does not occur till chapter xl." Here again a reference to the original convicts the Professor of Hebrew of making misleading statements. Why on Exod. xxxiii. 7 does he write of *tabernacle* and *tent*? The Authorised Version throughout the passage uses the word tabernacle. Mr.

Smith uses both, though he must know that in the Hebrew we have only *tent*, אֹהֶל, not *tabernacle*, מִשְׁכָּן, whereas in Exod. xl. the tabernacle is rightly called מִשְׁכָּן אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד. The tent in Exod. xxxiii. was only a tent, and not God's dwelling-place on earth. We cannot acquit the Professor of intentionally misleading his hearers. He must know, as a professed teacher of Hebrew he ought to know, that the מִשְׁכָּן of Exod. xl. is quite distinct from the אֹהֶל of xxxiii. Such statements seem like an attempt to throw dust into people's eyes, and one wonders on reading them, if they are genuine difficulties which the lecturer really feels, or only statements made by others, and taken up and repeated without careful consideration. Such a conclusion seems almost forced on the reader as he peruses the book. We cite one more instance. "How could Joshua, if he had known such a law (Deut. xii. 3), have erected a *maççeba*, מַצֵּבָה, or sacred pillar of unhewn stone under the sacred tree by the sanctuary at Shechem?" (p. 354). Again, "The two brazen pillars which stood at the porch (1 Kings vii. 21) were not different from the forbidden *maççeba*, or from the twin pillars of Hercules, from which their Tyrian artist probably copied them" (p. 248). The Lord hated *maççebas* (Deut. xvi. 22). Would He have authorised, would He have directed, the erection of such in His Temple? All that Hiram made was in accordance with that in which Solomon had been instructed (2 Chron. iii. 3), and the brazen pillars are mentioned as items in the list of things concerning which the king had been instructed. But the statement as to Joshua is quite untrue. He set up a stone *eben*, not a *maççeba*, a stone of memorial, not an object of worship, nor to be connected with worship. The credulity of the audience, or its inability to check the misstatements, must be great, when such can be put forth as true without fear of contradiction.

But to return to the psalms. The title of Ps. cxxxix. must be wrong, since it "belongs to the period when Hebrew was being largely superseded as a vernacular by Aramaic. It con-

tains at least four Aramaic forms, which are not such loan-words as one nation may borrow from another to enrich its vocabulary, but Aramaic pronunciations of roots also found in the Hebrew." Then we are reminded of Grimm's law about English and German words, and Mr. Smith proceeds, "The Psalmist pronounces words with a guttural (ayin) where the Hebrew form has a sharp s (çade), and thus he declares himself a man whose vernacular was Aramaic as clearly, as the Ephraimites revealed their tribe by saying *sibboleth*" (pp. 193, 194). All this may sound very grand, but is it sound criticism? Was there no intercourse in David's day with the Aramaic-speaking population, that Aramaic words might not have been adopted by the Israelites? 2 Sam. viii. and 2 Chron. xviii. show that there was. Does the existence of a few Aramaic words in a person's writings prove that his vernacular was Aramaic? Was that Jeremiah's vernacular, in whose writings (x. 11) we have a whole verse of pure Chaldee? But is the Professor's statement unimpeachable? We presume the two words to which he refers are רַעַי (ver. 2) and רַבְעַי (ver. 3). As to the former, if Fuerst is correct, it comes from a Hebrew root, and is not Aramaic at all. As to the latter, it comes from a root which we meet with three times in Leviticus (xviii. 23, xix. 19, xx. 16). Now, granting that רַבְעַי may be an Aramaic root equivalent to the common Hebrew root רַבַּעַי, it is jumping to a conclusion indeed to determine, that the writer of Ps. cxxxix. must have spoken Aramaic as his vernacular, because he uses a noun the verb root of which his ancestors had for centuries been acquainted with.

We have warned the reader against taking on trust certain translations of the original. We must now point out how loose at times are the statements that we meet with, by which much may be left to the imagination of the reader. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*,—Everything unknown is assumed to be magnificent. The remarks on the acrostic psalms will illustrate this. "Another clear sign that we have not every psalm in its original text lies in the alphabetical acrostics, Ps. ix., x., xxv.,

xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv., in which the initial letter of successive half verses, verses, or larger stanzas make up the alphabet. It is of the nature of an acrostic to be perfect. An acrostic poem which misses some letter, or puts it into a false place, is a failure, and therefore, when we find some of these acrostics are now imperfect, we must conclude that the text has suffered" (p. 182). Now there are three classes of acrostic psalms, as Mr. Smith states. Ps. cxix. is an example of alphabetical stanzas, and a perfect one also. Ps. cxi. and cxii. are examples, the only ones that we have, of initial letters in alphabetical order at the commencement of every half verse, and both of them are perfect. But all the others are imperfect. Mr. Smith says *some* are imperfect. The truth is, of the seven acknowledged alphabetical psalms, only three are perfect. Not *one* of those in which each verse should begin with a different letter is perfect, nor is there any proof that any of them ever were so. And of the beautiful acrostic, ix., x., as he terms it, the text must have been tampered with indeed, if his supposition is correct. So great is the variance from the alphabetical order in the latter, that it is difficult to believe the two were ever intended to be one alphabetical acrostic.

On p. 179 he states: "The musical titles" of the psalms "are full of technical terms, which occur again in the Book of Chronicles in descriptions of the Levitical psalmody of the Temple." Out of about sixteen terms connected with the musical titles of the Psalms, six are met with elsewhere, one, שִׁיר, a song used several times in the Chronicles, and two more, שְׁמִינִית and נְצִיחַ, occur each once, and in the same passage (1 Chron. xv. 21), in connection with the psalmody of the Temple, and that is all. A third example of this loose way of writing we meet with in p. 227: "The sanctuaries themselves were of ancient, and in great part of patriarchal consecration. Beersheba, Gilgal, Bethel, Shechem, Mizpah, were places of the most venerable sanctity, acknowledged by Samuel and earlier worthies." Samuel did make a yearly circuit to Bethel, Gilgal,

and Mizpah, but Shechem is not mentioned once in the history of his life, nor, though his sons were judges at Beersheba, have we any record that he was ever at that place, nor does Beersheba appear, we believe, in the history as a place of sanctity after the days of the patriarchs. Who would have thought from reading the statement on p. 227 that Samuel had nothing to do, that we read of, with Shechem, nor with Beersheba, as places of sanctity?

But there is something worse than all this loose statement, which may mean more than can be verified, and does not redound to the credit of the teacher. At page 186 we read, "In the greater part of Book II. and III. (Ps. xlii.—lxxxiii.) the name of Jehovah is rare, and Elohim takes its place, even where the substitution reads very awkwardly. . . . In the Elohim psalms, and nowhere else in the Old Testament, we find the peculiar phrase, 'God my God,' with Elohim in the place of Jehovah." This may be true, but does the substitution of God for Jehovah read awkwardly? Does Mr. Smith remember those words, "God thy God," are in Ps. xlv. 7? They are the words of God to the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. i. 8, 9).^o Does God use language which reads very awkwardly? To ask the question settles the matter. But what irreverence there is in such a display of would-be critical acumen! We can understand a difficulty rising up about the introduction of the name Elohim in the place of Jehovah, and on comparing Ps. xiv. with Ps. liii. the change is manifest. But the true solution will not be found in the hypothesis, of an editor who for some reason suppressed the name of Jehovah, but in the character of things described in that book. The remnant are outside the city, "their covenant connection," as it has been observed, "with Jehovah is lost, hence they address Him as God rather than as Jehovah."

We must now briefly glance at other parts of these lectures. The reader, if the different statements of the lecturer were true, would learn much that was new and startling too. But are the statements that we meet with true, is a question which any

thoughtful reader must of necessity ask. The difference of teaching, according to Mr. Smith, between the law and the prophets is divergent indeed. The law enjoined sacrifice, and without shedding of blood was there no remission. The prophets teach, we are told, very different doctrine. "What is quite certain is, that according to the prophets the Torah of Moses did not embrace a law of ritual. Worship by sacrifice and all that belongs to it, is no part of the Divine Torah to Israel. It forms, if you will, part of natural religion—[Does it? why then did Cain not bring an animal along with, or instead, of the fruits of the ground?]-which other nations share with Israel, and which is no feature in the distinctive precepts given at the Exodus. . . . The true distinction of Israel's religion lies in the character of the Deity, who has made Himself personally known to His people, and demands of them a life conformed to His spiritual character as a righteous and forgiving God. The difference between Jehovah and the gods of the nations is that He does not require sacrifice (!!) but only to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God. This standpoint is not confined to the prophetic books; it is the standpoint of the ten commandments, which contain no precept of positive worship" (pp. 298, 299). "If it is true that they exclude the sacrificial worship from the positive elements of Israel's religion, what becomes of the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, which we are accustomed to regard as mainly expressed in the typical ordinances of atonement?" (p. 301). "According to the prophets, Jehovah asks only a penitent heart and desires no sacrifice. According to the ritual law, He desires a penitent heart approaching Him in certain sacrificial sacraments" (p. 304).

Did worship by sacrifice form no part of the Divine Torah given to Israel? Was it unknown as such in the days of the prophets? 1 Sam. ii. 29 directly contradicts this, as we read Jehovah's message to Eli by one of His servants, "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering which I have commanded in mine habitation?" Ere the school of the prophets

arose, Jehovah declared that He had commanded sacrifices. Further, Jehovah Himself, speaking to the child Samuel (1 Sam. iii. 14), declared that "the iniquity of Eli's house should not be purged (or should not be atoned for, *ithcapper*) by sacrifice or offering for ever." A pretty conclusive proof that atonement by sacrifice, in certain cases, was part of God's provision for His people centuries before the prophets, to whose writings Mr. Smith would turn us, appeared on the scene. Again, David was evidently under the impression that Jehovah had commanded sacrifices to be offered, and that continually, since after the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem he kept Levites to attend on it, and sent Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests to minister before the Tabernacle of the Lord at Gibeon, to offer the offerings there, "according to all that is written in the law of the Lord which He commanded Israel" (1 Chron. xvi. 39, 40). Solomon, too, the wisest of men (except, we must suppose, the critics of the nineteenth century), was under the same impression when he asked Hiram to forward his desire to build an house to the Lord in which to "burn sweet incense before Him, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt-offerings, morning and evening, on the sabbaths, on the new moons, on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God." And then he adds, "This is an ordinance for ever to Israel" (2 Chron. ii. 4). And under the spell of this singular delusion, if Mr. Smith is right in his teaching, the king remained till the house was built, when (viii. 13, 14) the sacrificial ritual appointed by Moses, and carried on in the Tabernacle, was transferred to the Temple, and the ordinances of David concerning the priests and the service of song put in force for the first time. The existence, then, and observance of the sacrificial ritual, such as was afterwards, as far as it could be, restored on the return of the captives from Babylon, its existence and observance, we say, before the eighth century B.C., are facts which cannot be gainsaid. How does the Professor meet this? With the utmost complacency, and, we suppose, lest his assertion should shock weak nerves, he would

quiet all alarm by assuring us all, that though the prophets taught "Jehovah had not enjoined sacrifice, this does not imply that He has never accepted sacrifice, or that ritual service is absolutely wrong. But it is at best mere form (!!) which does not purchase any favour from Jehovah, and might be given up without offence" (p. 288). Indeed! This dictum from one occupying the professorial chair may be to some very consoling. For ourselves, who can only occupy seats on the scholar's bench, we prefer to follow on this point what Samuel, David, and Solomon plainly teach us, and what the law itself declares about it.

Now in *Exod.* xxix. 38-42 we read that God gave Moses, on the first occasion of his sojourn on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, the ordinance about the daily sacrifice, to be offered on that altar on which the fire was to be always burning (*Lev.* vi. 12). In *Lev.* vii. 35-38, the law of sacrifice is said to have been commanded Moses on Mount Sinai. The ritual for the day of atonement was given by God to Moses to be made known to Aaron (*Lev.* xvi. 1). And in flat contradiction to Mr. Smith's assertion, that ritual could be given up without offence, we are told that the person who did not perform the necessary purifications, or who eat of the peace-offering with his uncleanness upon him, or refused to afflict himself on the day of atonement, such an one should be cut off from among his people (*Lev.* vii. 20, 21, xxiii. 29; *Numb.* ix. 13, xix. 13-20). But we need not multiply proofs of the existence of the laws relating to sacrifice.

The attempt to controvert it by dwelling on the teaching of the prophets is a mere artifice, which can only deceive those who are willing to accept the statements of men without testing them by the unerring standard, the Word of God. If the observance of ritual without the practice of righteousness was all that Jehovah desired, the people could have deluged His altar with blood, and yet continued to practise unrighteousness, and to smite with the fist of wickedness at the same time. But

Jehovah is holy. So the prophets rightly insisted on reality, and not on mere lip-service, or the mere outward observance of the ritual, though without sacrifices forgiveness of sins could not be enjoyed. What set Isaiah at rest in the presence of Jehovah of Hosts but the live coal from off the altar? Nothing but the benefits of the sacrifice of One who could bear divine judgment on his behalf would meet his case. He, a prophet, knew that well, and proclaims by his recital of that which took place, as well as by his subsequent readiness to serve Jehovah, that nothing availed for him apart from the sacrifice which makes atonement.

But in various ways are artifices resorted to in this book to mislead the unstable. We are told (pp. 293, 305) that there is a priestly Torah, a prophetic Torah, a Mosaic Torah, all distinct; and also we are gravely told of a Torah of good husbandry (p. 335), which the reader is given to understand he will find in Isaiah xxviii. 23-29. Now this wonderful word Torah is derived from the Hebrew verb *Yarah*, to teach, and means primarily instruction. It is used as the title of that part of the Old Testament revelation called the law—Torah in Hebrew, *νόμος* in Greek. When we read of the *law*, Torah, the term, as in Rom. iii. 19, may be used of the whole Old Testament teaching, or be restricted to that part commonly called the Pentateuch. But we have not several Torahs, as Mr. Smith would make out, nor could we say that wherever we read of Jehovah teaching, or any one teaching, that we have a new Torah, as he would persuade us from his reference to Isaiah xxviii. Such statements are like conjuror's tricks, occupying the attention of his audience with one thing whilst he is really doing another. How rich we must be in Torahs if this way of reckoning them could be accepted! We have—does the reader know it? of course the Professor must—on that hypothesis a Torah from the beasts and a Torah from the earth, for both can teach us, as Job (xii. 7, 8) declares. But all this about different Torahs is mere trifling. The law (Torah) of the Lord

is perfect, converting the soul. Does Jehovah's Torah of good husbandry convert the soul?

In truth there is neither reverence for God nor for His Word in this volume. But these are serious charges to make. We must substantiate them. The chronicler, we are told, was a very ignorant man on points on which he wrote. "He had no complete knowledge of the greatly different praxis of Israel before the exile" (p. 219). He writes of Gibeon in Solomon's days in a way the author of 1 Kings would never have done (p. 266); and he is accused of ignorance of his nation's history and of his own tongue (pp. 420, 421). How could he state that Abijah called Rehoboam, his father, young, נָעַר, when he was forty-one years old? Into the question of Rehoboam's age at his accession we need not here enter. It is enough to reply to the objection, How could Joshua have been described by the same term when he was about that same age? (Exod. xxxiii. 11). Then, ignorant man that he was, how came he, in reporting the same speech, to speak of the evening sacrifice as an animal sacrifice, when it is said to be well known that it was wholly cereal in its composition, being called מִנְחָה, *Minchah*, in 1 Kings xviii. 36, 2 Kings xvi. 15, Ezra ix. 4, the term used for a meat-offering in the law? But the tables are turned when it is seen that *Minchah* is used in Genesis iv. of Abel's offering, which certainly was not cereal in its character; and the chronicler is justified in the way he writes, since, in 2 Kings iii. 20, *Minchah* is used of the morning burnt-offering as well. Hence the question is not as to the capability of the chronicler for his office, but as to the propriety of the Professor of Hebrew in the Free Church College of Aberdeen basing such charges on grounds which cannot be defended. Is it the chronicler that should be convicted of ignorance of the Hebrew language, or who? And why should not Rehoboam, whatever might be his age, be spoken of as רַךְ לֵבָב, which in the only other place in which the phrase occurs (Deut. xx. 8) is translated in the Authorised Version "faint-hearted"? That suits the context in

1 Chron. xiii. very well, and is so rendered in this place in the LXX., of which the Professor has expressed so high an opinion as well as in the Vulgate. And what irreverence, to use no stronger term, to charge the writer, selected by the Holy Ghost for His work, with ignorance of his nation's history and language. Any charge of the chronicler's unfitness for his task is really a reflection on Him who appointed him to write, and directed him in his service. Corruptions of the text there might be, for what is there which has been committed to man in which he has not failed? But to charge the writer with incompetence, is to impugn the competency of the Divine Author of the Scriptures to select suited instruments for His work. Had we not read it, we should have thought that even Mr. Smith would have recoiled from suggesting such a thought.

None, then, need wonder that there is no reverence for God. "The people, whose worship of Jehovah was hardly to be distinguished from a gross polytheism, could not be averse to worship other gods side by side with the national deity" (p. 229). "The Old Testament takes it for granted that Jehovah acknowledges and supplies in Israel the want which in other nations is met by the practice of divination. The place of the soothsayer is supplied by the prophet of Jehovah (Deut. xviii. 14)" (p. 278). Is it the proper way to speak of the only true God as the *national* deity of Israel? Did His prophets supply for Israel the want elsewhere *met* by the soothsayers? But worse still (p. 271): "Jehovah Himself, according to Deut. iv. 19, has appointed the heavenly host and other false deities to the heathen nations (!!), while He conversely Himself is the portion of Jacob (Jer. x. 16; comp. Deut. xxix. 26)." Has the High and the Holy One sanctioned idolatry and provided the nations with their false gods? Here we must stop. His book is indeed a saddening one. It is also profane. God uses, we are given to understand, language which reads very awkwardly. He has selected writers incompetent for the work. He has appointed false deities to the nations. With a great parade of learning,

and very probably acquaintance with the writings of men, one thing is evident, the book which the Professor has studied the least is the one about which he writes—the volume of Old Testament revelation.

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