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To Mrs. Shepherd
My first & one of my best
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PURITAN THEOLOGY.

VOL. II.

PASTORAL AND PRACTICAL.

PURITAN THEOLOGY;

OR,

LAW, GRACE, AND TRUTH,

BEING DISCOURSES

POLEMICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL.

WITH A PREFATORY LETTER TO

THE REV. ROBERT ELDER, D.D.,

ROTHESAY, MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

THE only remark of a prefatory kind that I have to make respecting the contents of this second volume is, that they were not designed to form a separate volume. But the first volume grew so much in my hands while the printers were at work, that it became necessary to divide the work, not only into two parts, but into two volumes.

The Sermons and Discourses in this volume, although taken very much at random from the manuscripts in my desk, arrange themselves in a not unnatural series.

The first is designed to indicate a threefold aspect of the Christian or Spiritual life in knowledge, love, and practical duty. The second indicates the relation of Christ and his people to the Law and the Prophets. And the third treats of the law of Christian Discipleship or Self-denial, the daily Cross, and the following of Christ. In the fourth sermon several causes of spiritual declension are enumerated, and the sixth exhibits the efficacy of faith in the transforming of the soul into the image or likeness of Christ. The fifth is a fragment inserted to suit the printer's arrangements.

The sermon on "The Beauty, Shadow, and Fruit of Christ," is designed to present Christ in certain aspects of his manifold glory, so that looking to Him we may rest in Him and in His love. The text is from the Beulah-land of Holy Scripture—the Song of Songs.

"The Untrodden and Unknown Way" is a sermon for the New Year; but it is equally fitted for each new day.

The discourse entitled "Strong Rods, Broken and Withered," contains a reference to the late Principal Cunningham, of Edinburgh New College, but it was expressly prepared and delivered in connection with the much and justly lamented death of his Royal Highness the Prince Albert, the beloved consort of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. It is printed as it was originally written.

The sermon entitled "The City of God," or "Jehovah-Shamah," is an exposition of the last ten chapters of the Book of Ezekiel. This book has had a peculiar charm for me; and while I was assistant to the late Rev. Dr. Henry Grey of Edinburgh, I lectured through a considerable portion of it,—my object being as much to keep my own mind in direct contact with the sublime mysteries of this book as to guide the people to right views respecting the contents of Prophetic Scripture.

The discourse, "The Rival City," or "Ichabod," is a rapid delineation of the Roman apostacy, as it is pourtrayed in the writings of the Old and New Testaments. "The mystery of iniquity" is set over against "the great mystery of godliness."

The sermon on "The Duty of the Church" in relation to the present state of the world, was delivered some years ago in connection with a course of lectures in the City of Glasgow.

As for the last sermon in this volume, entitled "YET THERE IS ROOM," my thoughts concerning it may be learned from the brief Prefatory Note inserted at the commencement of the sermon. May it prove as profitable to the reader as it has proved to the preacher and writer! And may the Holy and Eternal Spirit of God render the truths in this sermon, and in all the others, efficacious to the conversion of many sinners, and to the edification of many of the saints,—the called and faithful in Christ Jesus.

Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

GEORGE MACAULAY.

DUNGLASS CASTLE, OLD KILPATRICK,
27th January, 1872.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE,

IN KNOWLEDGE, LOVE, AND PRACTICE.

“This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”—JOHN xvii. 3.

“He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”—1 JOHN iv. 16.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this,—To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”—JAMES i. 27.

THESE texts exhibit a threefold aspect of evangelical religion. In the words taken from the prayer of the Lord Jesus, we are taught that spiritual religion consists in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. In the words of the apostle John, we are taught that spiritual religion consists in love. And in the words of the apostle James, we are taught that the same pure religion, pure and spiritual, is this,—“To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

PARTIALITY IN JUDGMENT.

One of the infirmities of the human mind shows itself in a tendency to confine its attention and almost exclusive regard to one aspect of a great subject, and by meditating on the subject under that one aspect, it is apt to form and to entertain very imperfect and partial views of the subject in those aspects of it which have not been minutely surveyed. And not only so.

This exclusive contemplation of one side of an object results frequently in so magnifying and exaggerating the importance of what is seen and thought upon, that the man becomes blind to the, it may be, equal or greater importance of that aspect of a subject which has not attracted his attention and has not enlisted his sympathies or regard. The human mind can give only a limited attention to any object, and it is apt to restrict that same limited regard to one side or aspect of an object which ought to be contemplated from a great variety of points of observation. Hence, in all departments of science, we find exaggerations and caricatures. Hence the rareness of anything like a fair and full statement of the bearings and relations of any great and far-reaching truth or principle. Hence, also, the artificial and unnatural antagonism into which truths and facts, in themselves homogeneous and concordant, are dragged by those who, instead of directing their attention to their points of relatedness and contiguity, restrict their observation to those points in which they exhibit a seeming if not real difference. In this way, truth has often suffered at the hands of ardent, well-meaning, but injudicious friends; and on the other hand, truth has been wounded by those who, limiting their observation and regard to points of similarity and resemblance between different objects, without respect to points of real difference, have represented objects essentially unlike and discordant as if they were one and homogeneous. These statements might be illustrated by instances gathered from all branches of human learning, observation, and research. But as related to the subjects before us, a very impressive illustration might be taken from the antagonism, on the one hand, attempted to be proved between the findings of physical science and the cosmology of Scripture; and on the other hand, from the reconciliations attempted between certain interpretations of the hieroglyphics of nature and interpretations of the statements of inspired Scripture. Sometimes we observe a forced antagonism, sometimes a forced harmony, between science and revelation. In both cases we observe illustrations of the infirmity of the human mind: and by the efforts of both the enemies and the well-meaning friends of revelation, the interests of truth—of truth

in nature and of truth in inspired Scripture—have suffered injury and damage. Truth, like its Master, has often been wounded, not only by avowed enemies, but by professed friends. Hasty antagonisms and hasty reconciliations are equally to be shunned by those who love the truth. Hasty antagonisms may do little injury and may be changed into lasting friendships; but hasty reconciliations can do little good, may do much harm, and may be changed into permanent hostilities. The interests of truth demand of us that in cases of the kind referred to, as indeed in all cases, we “do nothing rashly.”

THE GOSPEL AND FALSE RELIGIONS.

There is a necessary, an eternal antagonism, between Christianity, or the Gospel of the grace of God, and all false religions—between the scheme of salvation through the crucified Redeemer, the device and contrivance of the infinite wisdom and unsearchable grace of God, and every scheme of man's invention, device, and prescription. For here, and here alone, is the wisdom of God in a mystery: there is no other name given under heaven among men save the name of Jesus by which we must be saved; this is the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. This is the one and exclusive religion: there are not two, much less many methods and ways of restoring sinners unto God. The idea of God here presented is antagonistic to the ideas of the same Divine Being presented by all other religions or superstitions. The idea of Man—of his primitive character and state of his present and fallen condition and nature—of the provision by atonement, by the obedience unto death of the Son of God in the room of sinners, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon Man—the idea of regeneration, of justification, of sanctification, of resurrection, of eternal glory—this idea—all these ideas—are antagonistic to the ideas promulgated respecting Man in every false religion. These things entered not into the heart of man; they proceed forth from God, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. Yet, at the basis of the false, as well as of the true, there is this common belief,—that

God is, and that, being God, he is to be worshipped. This is the fundamental truth of all religions. But, on this foundation, what diverse and antagonistic systems have been reared! Man must worship: but it is Christianity alone that reveals the true nature of God, and that teaches how, through the Mediator, Christ Jesus, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, God may be worshipped in a manner and way becoming his glorious and spiritual nature, and befitting the relations of Man to his Creator, Redeemer, and Judge. In those respects, the Gospel is in direct antagonism to all forms of will-worship and superstition—to all the religions of the heathen, and to that magnificent imposture and caricature of the Christian religion which is exhibited in the so-called Church of Rome. Christ is opposed to Antichrist; the Roman apostacy is the historical Antichrist: the Gospel must then be at war with Rome, the mystic Babylon, while it heralds the call,—“Come out of her my people.”

THE GOSPEL AND NATURAL RELIGION.

But we must beware of setting the Gospel in antagonism to what is truth, or fact, in what is called natural religion and theology. The revelation of the will of God given in Holy Scripture never contradicts the truths discoverable by the light of reason or of nature. On the contrary, it assumes these, and it has engrossed them within itself. In so far as the primary truths concerning the being of God and concerning invariable and universal morality, are discoverable by the light of nature, the word of inspiration confirms the findings of reason, and the argument of the Gospel grounded on these universal truths is that they render Man's sin in not worshipping and serving God inexcusable, while they serve, also, according to the evangelical argument, to show Man his need of some such interposition for his salvation as that revealed in the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God. The ultimate findings of natural science will not be at variance with the right and true interpretation of Holy Scripture, and the truths concerning God and humanity discoverable by natural reason—that is, the natural theology is not at variance with that which is supernatural and given by

inspiration of God. And yet how often have professed sons of science and the votaries of natural religion combined themselves against the truth as given in the Holy Scriptures. And on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the professed friends and defenders of revelation have sometimes erred in so defining the boundaries and outgoings of inspired truth as to form a chasm between the natural and the revealed, forgetting that all truth, no matter how communicated, is from the same source, and comes from the One Father of lights. There is no chasm between the truths of the natural religion and the truths of the supernatural revelation. They are, as Dr. Chalmers was wont to say, conterminous—not contradictory, or merely contiguous. They coalesce and intermingle. As we say of the one testament that is complementary of the other, so we may say that the inspired revelation is complementary of the natural. For although reason could not discover and find out for itself the truths divinely revealed and inspired, yet these, instead of being contradictory to the truths already discovered by reason, intermingle with, coalesce with, and give to them their appropriate place, function, and authority in that body of truth which man is to believe, and according to the requirements of which he is to frame and order his life—his walk and conversation.

ANALOGIES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

As illustrative of the intimate relation and concord between the natural and the inspired in religion, I have sometimes thought of the relation between the workings of the natural conscience in man and the gracious workings of the Holy Spirit within the same conscience and heart of man. We know that natural conscience works in men: we know that the Holy Spirit works in regeneration and in progressive sanctification. But we cannot sharply define how far the natural extends and where the Spirit's gracious agency begins. Only, we know that the natural conscience cannot convert the soul, cannot renew and savingly enlighten itself. We know this. And we know that apart from the almighty operation of the Spirit of grace on and in the conscience and soul, on

man is or can be regenerated or sanctified. There is, however, no antagonism between the agencies and operations. Even so as it has appeared to us, we cannot sharply define the limits of human reason in the discovery of religious truth. But we know that the scheme of grace, with all its great facts and provisions, with all its blessed truths, never was and never could be invented or elaborated by human ingenuity and wisdom. Yet there is nothing in the wondrous scheme of grace that contradicts the findings of universal reason. True, indeed, there are facts and truths revealed to faith, in the light of revelation, that reason cannot comprehend and cannot explain; but there is no fact, there is no truth within the whole compass and boundaries of revelation in inspired Scripture, which reason can prove to be contradictory to its own findings within its own sphere. The Socinians have often attempted to show that the glorious fact of the Blessed Trinity—that is, of three persons in the one undivided Godhead—is contradictory to reason; but their most elaborate reasonings have failed, and must ever fail to prove that there is any contradiction in this revealed fact to the fundamental and unalterable laws of right reason. This sublimest of all facts reason can apprehend when it is stated and revealed; but it belongs not, it may be, to human or to created faculties and intelligence to comprehend and to explain this fact. For, who by searching can find out God, who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? Many others, verging on Socinianism, and having strong affinities towards it, assert that the doctrine of the Absolute Sovereignty of God, as taught in Holy Scripture, is contradictory to the fact of human responsibility—a fact attested by every man's conscience, and assumed and confirmed by Holy Scripture. Here, again, it is not the province or office of reason to explain and comprehend; but as the truth and the fact are nowise contradictory, reason's attitude should be that of patient waiting for the revelations of eternity, with this modest and becoming consideration, that possibly it does not belong to human or finite intelligence to explain this mystery, any more than the profound mystery of the Trinity. Having certified itself that the Scriptures contain the revelation inspired of the will of

God, the office of reason, in dependence on the grace of the Holy Spirit, is by humble, patient, prayerful study and meditation, to learn what is the mind and will of God—the mind of the Spirit as revealed in the Scriptures of truth. But how differently have men studied the Holy Word of God! How many have approached it with irreverence, and thus inquiring at the lively oracles of God they have failed to learn the truth—they have been learning, but have never come to the knowledge of the truth! How many having come to Scripture with their preconceived opinions and prejudices have bent and twisted Scripture to fit their models and moulds instead of seeking to be moulded into and after the truth. These and such as these have no promise that the Spirit will guide them into the truth: and they, substituting their own coloured and distorted apprehensions of the truth for the very truth of God, have alleged and daily allege that the doctrines of revelation are not only contrary to reason, but that also the parts and statements of inspired Scripture are contradictory in many instances of each other. Hence, in these days (to take an illustration from what is exciting no little attention, inquiry, and wonderment among the people) a fragmentary and partial view of the law of God, grounded on a false theory of the ends, nature, and uses of the law is set over against an equally partial and fragmentary view of the grounds, nature, and glorious ends of the Gospel. And the law and Gospel instead of being, as in the scheme of grace, two grand factors working out the same end and design, are declared to be contradictory and subversive of each other. But that they were not so in the judgment of Paul is evident, in that he says that “The law is not against the promises of God,” that the law is “our guide to lead us to the school of Christ,” and that we are “not without the law, but under the law to Christ.” This instance strikingly and forcibly illustrates all that has yet been said, and is very different indeed from that large and true and comprehensive estimate of the several parts, and various functions, of revelation expressed in the simple words that “The Old Testament is the New with a veil upon it, and that the New Testament is the Old unveiled,” in which we all

behold with open face the glory of the Lord, and, beholding, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. The case referred to not only sets law and Gospel in direct antagonism to each other, but it breaks, severs, and destroys the golden chain that links the first revelation of the grace of God to the last and completed revelation of that adorable grace. It renders the Old and the New Testaments not only not conterminous and harmonious, but antagonistic and contradictory. Far otherwise was it in the preaching of that illustrious, and faithful, and martyred man who was ordained and divinely constituted the intermediate link and prophet to connect the olden dispensation with the new. John the Baptist was no royal chaplain, was no favourite at court—the court of Herod. He thundered the law of God even in the ears of royalty, and he preached at the same time the Gospel, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” He preached law and Gospel, and the “Greater than he” took up the same subjects, and said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

But I must pass from these aspects of the subject to others perhaps even more important and more related to ourselves and to those who with us assert and maintain the harmony between the old and the new dispensations, the harmony even of the law and the Gospel in the wondrous scheme of grace—who believe that while the law was given by Moses, grace and truth have come by Jesus Christ—who believe that there was in the law of Moses everlasting truth and but a faint and feeble display of grace, but that in the Gospel there is the fulness of truth and the exceeding abundance of grace. This is all the more necessary because as one alike distinguished by his profoundness of thought and by his almost unrivalled eloquence in expressing and enforcing his thought, has well said—“In the shadow of Christianity, and in the very bosom of the Church itself, there flourish certain religions, without a history, without form and name, which to many persons take the place of Christianity.”

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

According to texts before us the spiritual life consists in knowledge, in love, and in practical duty. Now, there is nothing more common than the disjunction of these three elements—nothing more common than to set these three aspects of the same life of God in the soul of man in antagonism and opposition, as if they were not three aspects and manifestations of the one great reality. And my desire is through the promised grace of the Spirit, to show that these three agree in one; that the knowledge here spoken of promotes love, and that the love here spoken of promotes practical and pure religion, as described by James the apostle, and that they act and react on each other, and that these three aspects of the Christian religion are but proofs and manifestations of the reality of the life of God in the soul. For to know God in Jesus Christ is to have life in the Spirit—even eternal life; to love God, to dwell in love, and to have God dwelling in us, is evidence of our being begotten of God unto eternal life; and to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world, is index and proof of our being in Christ and of our being heirs of the eternal life. The three aspects of the spiritual life or religion agree therefore in one. They are not contrary to each other, but they each contribute to give evidence in support of that given by the others.

LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE.

According to the statements in the texts before us, the life of God in the soul, the spiritual life shows itself by the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ. Knowledge therefore is essential to the Christian life. Ignorance—the ignorance of God and Jesus Christ is an index of spiritual death. “They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee.” Those who know not God and obey not the Gospel must perish, for “what shall be the end of them who know not God and obey not the Gospel?” It concerns us, therefore, first of all, as rational and responsible creatures, to see to it,

that we attain to the true and saving knowledge of God. But this true and saving knowledge implies that we know Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. For no man knoweth the Son but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but by the Son. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me. And no man cometh unto Me except the Father who hath sent Me draw Him. And him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." The spiritual life therefore begins with spiritual knowledge: and it is an injunction that believers "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is, therefore, of infinite importance that the true doctrine concerning God in Christ be known by us; for on our knowledge of this depends our life—our eternal life. Superstition may build itself on ignorance, and call that ignorance the mother of devotion. But the Christian religion builds itself on knowledge. For it is written, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten of the Father He hath declared Him;" and, again, "All thy children shall be taught of God." Jesus hath said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." In order that we may attain to this knowledge, God has been graciously pleased to make known His will to us in the Scriptures of truth, and to constitute His Son Christ Jesus the prophet to His Church. For when we had sinned against God an immediate consequence of this, our sin, was the loss of the true knowledge of God. We then died spiritually, and when we died all right knowledge of God perished with us. Who then is blind as we are? We need light and life, for darkness was among the first calamities entailed upon us by the fall. Hence, in accomodation to our blindness, weakness, and ignorance, the Lord has been graciously pleased to make known to us in the Holy Scriptures the truth which we are to believe—which we are to know and obey. A great part of Holy Scripture consists of doctrines, which we must learn and know, in order to our salvation, and that we may glorify God, who hath called us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Son Jesus Christ.

Our first great business, therefore, in life is to attain to the saving knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. This knowledge

includes among other things the truths and doctrines concerning the being, character, perfections, and will of God; the truths concerning our guilty and helpless state as sinners; the truths concerning the grace of God through the mediation, incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory of Jesus Christ, and concerning His intercession for His people at the right-hand of God; the truths concerning the person, grace, and operations of the Holy Spirit; the truths concerning the law under which all men are by nature, and according to the requirements of which all are bound to regulate their life and conversation; the truths concerning the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man; concerning death, judgment, and eternity. These and such as these are among the first and necessary principles of the doctrine of Christ. And to attain to the spiritual and saving knowledge of them must necessarily be the first concern of every man who thoughtfully reflects on his condition as a sinner, liable as a sinner to fall at any moment under the load of wrath, spoken of in Scripture as "the wrath to come."

But next to this, a man's duty is to make this precious truth known. It has been said of ordinary knowledge that it is not knowledge unless it be published, *i.e.*, it does not serve the ends which knowledge is designed to serve. But if this is true respecting the sciences of this world, much more is it true respecting the knowledge and wisdom that come from above. And it is a duty laid upon every one who has come to the knowledge of God in Christ, that he spread the glad tidings in order that others may be enlightened, sanctified, and saved. Alas! for the selfishness that is so prevalent amongst us. We profess to have found the heavenly treasure, and we think we do well to appropriate it to ourselves. But in this we act unkindly, uncharitably towards our brethren. We should, instead of acting in this manner, imitate those of old who, having found much spoil, said, "We do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace; if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us; now, therefore, come, that we may go and tell the king's household." If indeed we have found the great treasures of heavenly knowledge and grace, we must

publish to others in our several places and stations the glad tidings. We must make known the truth as it is in Jesus.

NECESSITY AND USE OF CREEDS.

But not only so. The truth in this world meets with opposition from gainsaying enemies. The friends of truth must therefore defend it. They are set for the defence of the Gospel, and must, by manifestation of the truth, by solid argument and convincing proof, put to silence the loquacious ignorance of foolish men. To know the truth, to publish the truth, to defend the truth, are duties of infinite importance, and of the weightiest obligation. In order to the discharge of these duties, it is of the utmost value that there be brief and summary compends of the truth, such as are contained in some of the creeds and confessions of faith. These arise necessarily out of the circumstances and necessities of men and of the Church. The world asks from the Church a manifesto of its creed—the credenda or things to be believed. The Church exhibits these in a summarised form in a Confession of Faith. Those seeking admission into the Church, and fellowship with it, ask what the grounds and terms of Church fellowship are, and what are the bonds of truth that unite the members of the Christian society in their fellowship as distinct from the fellowship of citizens, and the fellowship of men in ordinary worldly societies. The Church, because of its own organization and constitution, constructs a creed or summarised expression of its grand *credita* and *credenda*. Such a summary of doctrine is of great utility, not only as a bond of ecclesiastical communion, but also as a help in the instructing of the young and others in the knowledge of the great truths of Christianity. And, again, the progress of error or of unscriptural teaching renders it necessary that the Church should from time to time embody the main heads of Scripture doctrine in a confession, as a testimony and protest against error and heresy. Thus we see that a creed or confession is necessary as a manifesto to the world, as a bond of union among those in the fellowship of the Church, as a help for the instruction of the young, and as a testimony against erroneous

and heretical opinions. Such a manifesto or creed does not supersede the Scriptures, and does not take a place of authority beside the Word of God. For that Word is the one, the supreme, the ultimate standard in all matters and questions of faith and duty towards God. But a confession of faith is a declaration, whether by an individual or by a Church, of the sense in which the individual or Church understands and believes the statements of Scripture, respecting the heads of doctrine embodied and expressed in the creed or confession emitted. And every such creed proceeds, or ought to proceed on the infallible authority of God speaking to us in the inspired Scriptures. For what my creed expresses is my interpretation of the statements of the Word of God. It is a declaration to the Church and to the world, to friends and foes, of my faith, of what I am persuaded to believe to be the mind of God concerning the doctrines or duties that make up the several heads and articles of my creed or confession. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." If there ever was a period in the history of the Church and of human opinion, when a Scriptural creed was needed, or was of utility for the purposes and ends already specified, it cannot be denied that in the present age such a creed is indispensable, if we would not be drifted into the great whirlpool of heretical and antisciptural opinion. Into that vortex many of great fame in the Churches have already drifted, and fragments of their shipwrecked creeds are seen floating about like the spars and beams of stranded and shipwrecked vessels. If then we would abide faithful to the truth of God, and to the charge committed to us, we must hold fast the form of sound words delivered unto us. And as we believe that the creed or confession of this Church, the Westminster Confession of Faith, is a fair and true interpretation of the Scripture concerning the heads of doctrine contained in that Confession, we must, in faithfulness to the truth, beware of the attempts made to disparage that Confession. "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule."

THE BIBLE.

But on the other hand, we must, while highly valuing the Confession of Faith and similar summaries of Christian doctrine, beware of confounding an exact knowledge of these with the spiritual and saving knowledge of the doctrines which they enunciate in regular order and system. We must not substitute even a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the Holy Scriptures themselves for the spiritual apprehension of them by living faith. It is a common thing for those who make free with the words and statements of Scripture, and pervert them from their original and manifest ends, to accuse us, and those who with us believe in the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, of being guilty of a sort of Bibliolatry, or worship of a book. But so far is there from being any ground for this railing accusation, that we assert and teach that no mere knowledge of the letter, even of Scripture itself, can renew, sanctify, and save men. But because we believe that the inspired Word is the great instrument of the Spirit in the regeneration and sanctifying of men, according to the prayer of the Lord Jesus—“Sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth;” and the words of Peter concerning believers,—that they “are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever;” and the words of Paul, that “the Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus”—we must preserve and jealously watch over the purity and integrity of inspired Scripture. In order that we may have eternal life, we must have the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. But how can we attain to that knowledge without having the word of life, the word of truth given unto us, that we may “believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that, believing, we may have life through his name?”

NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT'S TEACHING.

A confession containing the main heads of Christian doctrine may be valuable and useful. The Bible is of infinite value, revealing to us the whole will of God for our salvation, but it is

a doctrine of the Bible, and a fact witnessed to by all experience, that in order to the spiritual and saving apprehension and knowledge of the contents of Scripture—the things of the Spirit—we need the vivifying and enlightening grace of the Spirit,—“For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Systematic knowledge of the truth is in itself good and to be desired, but if the truth be known merely as a system or as a science, there is the utmost danger of such knowledge being spiritually unproductive; and the tendency of it will be towards what is called rationalism. For although “to analyse the Divine attributes and to harmonise them, to explain the connection of the Creator with the creation, and to form, with reference to God and Divine things, a body of systematic doctrines, may be as it certainly is, a noble exercise of thought, yet it is less a religion than a study. . . . Additional ideas may be acquired by the student, but they produce in him neither emotion nor change. But the field of religious ideas, when it is trodden by the foot of natural reason, is only a field of problems and contradictions . . . Thus the religion of the student neither enlightens, converts, nor consoles him, and he finds himself as far removed from his aim as before his laborious investigations.” (Vinet.) While, therefore, we are to bend the whole force of our intellect towards the investigation of scriptural truth, ever depending on the grace and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we must beware of the tendency, so natural to us, to regard the truths of revelation as mere matters of speculation. We must never forget that we ourselves are most deeply interested in the truths which are before us in the page of revelation, and that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Highly, therefore, though we value and esteem the systematic knowledge of scriptural truth, and earnestly though we would contend for maintaining the Confession of this Church, as exhibited in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, yet we must go continually to the Scriptures; for they are the fountains

of the water of life. Confessions and systems are as cisterns into which this water is collected or forced, and from which, as Lord Bacon says, it is fetched and derived for use. But we must not substitute these cisterns for the fountain, but rather repair to it, each man with his pitcher to draw the fresh water for himself, remembering that in the clauses and words of Scripture there are infinite springs and streams of doctrine to water the Church in every part. And as we repair to these fountains and springs, let us not forget the words of the Lord Jesus,—“If any man shall do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.”

This then is the first aspect of the Christian life presented to us by the words before us. This life consists in knowledge, the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. This life begins with knowledge, is sustained, nourished, and invigorated by knowledge, even by the wholesome, sound, and health-bringing words of the Scriptures of truth. It is, therefore, the duty of the individual and of the Church to know, publish, and defend the truth as it is in Jesus, in the sure and certain hope that at length notwithstanding the rage and fury and power of all adversaries, “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

II. LIFE AND LOVE.

A second aspect of the spiritual life is presented by the words of John—“He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.” This is grounded on the sublime statement—“God is love.” And beneath these words there is this truth, that the spiritual life in man consists in conformity to God. That life is perfect in so far as the Christian according to his capacity reflects the image of God. Thus with respect to the view already taken of the Christian life as consisting in knowledge, it may be said that this aspect of the spiritual life is grounded on the truth that “God is Light.” In so far, therefore, as the Christian makes progress in spiritual knowledge he grows up into nearer and nearer conformity to “God” who

“is light and in whom is no darkness at all.” But “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” The Christian, or spiritual life, being the life of God in the soul, is a life in love. The Christian dwells, lives, or abides in love, and God dwells or abides in him. And as in knowledge there is a progressiveness, so also is there a growth unto perfection in love, this love of God—till the soul be filled with all the fulness of God.

The intimate connection between the spiritual knowledge of God and the life in the love of God is very impressively indicated in the concluding words of the prayer of the Lord, from which the first of our texts is taken—“O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” Christ Jesus is the express image of the Father: He knows the Father even as the Father knows Him. And commensurate with this infinite and mutual knowledge is the ineffable love of the Father to the Son, and of the Son to the Father. And what the Lord prays for is, that as believers know the name of the Father, and know Christ as sent by Him, they may be sharers in that love wherewith the Father loves the Son, “that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” It is in and through Christ that the love of God reaches the guilty children of men. But those who are in Christ participate in the love wherewith the Father loves the Son. And in proportion as believers grow up towards the perfection that is in Christ, in the same proportion they reflect the love of Christ to the Father. No wonder, therefore, that the Apostle should pray “that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, would grant us according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height,

and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God."

THE GOSPEL A REVELATION OF LOVE.

Christianity is a revelation of the love of God, and it is the product or effect of that great love—"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And it is designed to beget love in the hearts of men towards God, so that we may be able to say, "We love Him, because He first loved us." Thus we see that as a system of knowledge or truth, Christianity presents itself to our understandings, but as a revelation of love it presents itself to our hearts. The truth and the love are combined in the revelation, and the understanding and the affections must be united in receiving the word of truth, and the word of love. There is the receiving of "the truth in the love of it;" there is the love of the truth that we may be saved. But while highly valuing the truth or the knowledge communicated by revelation, we set a yet higher value on the object itself that is revealed, viz., the character and love of God. And while highly valuing faith as an instrument apprehending and embracing the truth, giving within the mind the substance of the things hoped for and the evidence of the things not seen. We set a yet higher value on love, that love which cleaves to and delights in the great and glorious objects revealed in the truth, and apprehended by faith. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity: these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

As in the natural light, there are both light and heat, so in the beams, the healing beams that radiate from the Sun of Righteousness there is truth and there is love—the truth to illuminate the understanding and the love to quicken and give warmth to the heart. So that it has been justly remarked by President Edwards, that "True religion consists much in the state of the heart or affections." Indeed, the knowledge that is not operative within the heart, purifying and transforming it, and stimulating and enlarging it in love, is not

knowledge that will save the soul. And those who are contented with such dry speculation and barren knowledge cannot be classed with the heirs of salvation, for of them the Apostle Peter says, that they "have purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren."

THE NATURE AND HISTORY OF THIS LOVE.

This love, without which there is no life unto God, like the spiritual knowledge that distinguishes the true Christian, is not natural to the heart of man; and like this knowledge it is the result or product of the effectual grace and operation of the Holy Spirit within the heart and soul of man. According to the economy of grace, it is one of the offices of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto men, and at the same time to enlighten the eyes of the understanding and to renovate and purify the heart, so that the enmity of the carnal mind may be taken away, and that the gracious principle of a holy love to God may be implanted in the heart. In begetting this love in the heart, the Holy Spirit reveals to man the trust-worthiness and love-worthiness of God in Christ. He unveils the beauty of the Lord, and by the sight of this the heart is affected. Faith is called into being and exercise, and love is the invariable handmaid and companion of faith. This spiritual love, by which the heart goes out from itself towards God, is at once a love of complacency in God as the only Holy and Good One, and also a love of gratitude towards God, for that great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. This, again, is never separate from a love of goodwill to all the creatures of God as his creatures; and a love of delight and complacency towards brethren in Christ—the family of God—the household of faith. Thus, the believer dwelling in love dwells in God, and God dwelleth in him. Union and fellowship are thus the immediate and blessed fruits of this love—"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ." A divine union and a divine fellowship is that secured by this love, is that to which a poor guilty sinner,

once an heir of wrath, is exalted by this love. "God is love"—and "who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even the princes of His people." This love unites the believer in fellowship with all who love the same Father and the same Lord Jesus Christ. It binds earth to heaven, and it gathers into one the scattered and divided family of God. It is, indeed, the bond of perfectness.. Very different is this heaven-begotten love—this love which is the fruit of the Spirit, from that sickly and sentimental thing that is often substituted for it or confounded with it. Men who disparage the great and cardinal doctrines of the grace and word of God think they do well when they extol the importance and excellence of what they call love, the religion of the heart. But he of all the Apostles who treated most largely of doctrine, and contended most earnestly for the faith, is that Apostle who has pronounced the loftiest eulogy on love. But in his case, knowledge and love were not antagonistic. Knowledge was, indeed, ministerial to love, but love was begotten of knowledge. And that he might the more love God, he sought the more to know God. Love, like the flower and fruit of a tree, supported by the stem and roots of the tree, is the efflorescence and fruit of the tree of living spiritual knowledge. Take away the tree and where shall be the beautiful flower? where the pleasant fruit? Take away the doctrine concerning God and his Son Jesus Christ, and where shall we find love? Where shall we find that fruit and flower of paradise? If, therefore, we would have the abundant fruits of heavenly love, let us watch over that blessed tree of life—the truth—the knowledge of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ.

TRUE LOVE DISTINGUISHED FROM FALSE.

Very different, as I have already said, is this love from that thing of mere sentiment which men call by its name—or call the religion of the heart. In these days there is a pantheistic

spirit abroad among men, and among multitudes who profess to be the disciples, followers, and even ministers of Christ. This spirit is doing incalculable damage to the truth as it is in Jesus, to the love of God as shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and to the interests of godliness and immortal souls. We hear much of the excellence of charity, and but little, comparatively, of the dignity and worth of truth. Now, charity divorced from truth is not love, is not love in the Spirit. For the Spirit of love is the Spirit of truth. We hear much of "that immense paternity of God which embraces all animated beings from the seraph to the worm." Much of the fatherhood of God apart from the moral government of God—apart from the obedience and vicarious death of the Son of God—much of the love and pity of God apart from His justice and severity; and all this is fitted and designed to beget in men fits of "fugitive emotions," fits of "involuntary tenderness," depending on the degree of sensibility with which men are endowed. But do these emotions, do these fits of tenderness change, subdue, renovate, or sanctify the heart? "If anything is evident, it is, that the sensibility which frequently overflows in tears, often leaves in the heart a large place for selfishness; just as our fellow-men do not always derive any advantage from the tenderness we have felt at a distance from them. Love, true love to God, is a love of His truth, of His holiness, of His entire will; true love is that which is reflected in obedience; that which renews and purifies the conscience."

Nothing is more common than a kind of religious sentimentalism, professedly grounded on love—love to God; and yet nothing is rarer than a religion in which the love of God is the ruling and governing principle. Hence the fitfulness and the capriciousness that give mark and character to the religion of so many in the present day. At one time men seem all in earnest for holiness and heaven. They seem to run well. But by and bye they are offended. At one time men are generous and liberal. They seem to deny themselves that they may lay their gifts on the altar of the Lord. But at other times they are churlish and niggardly. They seem to themselves to do well in being angry because Christ claims their service and

their substance. At one time men seem tender-hearted, meek, gentle, and ready to forgive and forget injuries and offences—ready also to throw the mantle of charity over the faults, failings, and sins of their brethren. But at other times they seem proud and puffed up in their vain minds—sensitively alive to offences—quick and earnest to return evil for evil, and ready to backbite and devour their neighbour. At one time as if on the wings of sentiment they seem borne aloft to the very gates of heaven, where, with entranced eye, they behold as they imagine the unveiled glory of the Lord. But, again, from these sublime and airy heights they fall back into themselves and find not God—they sink into despondency or melancholy—or they even fall into the depths of sin and infidelity, saying, “What profit is there that we have served the Lord and walked in his ordinances, or that we have kept ourselves from our iniquity?” At one time men profess love the most ardent and earnest for the truth as preached by apostles and prophets, and as lifted up out of the Holy Scriptures, and published by the godly reformers and as now preached and made known by the faithful ministers of Christ. But at another time these very men may be feasting their imaginations and nourishing their religious sentiment by taking part in the sensuous, gorgeous, and idolatrous worship of the apostate Church of Rome. Now, it becomes those whose religion is of this fitful and capricious character to examine themselves whether the words of Christ may not be true concerning them: “I know you, that the love of God is not in you.” How dreadful must their state be if, indeed, notwithstanding all their religious feelings and sentiments, they are yet without the love of God, without that which is the heart and essence—the sum and substance of all true religion. How dreadful is the case of such: “For, if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, mar-anatha.”

True Christian love, as distinguished from fitful and evanescent sentiment, resembles the perennial stream as distinguished from the torrent caused by a summer shower. That torrent may make greater noise, may rush onwards with greater fury and impetuosity, and on its angry surface there may be

more foam and froth. But it passes soon away, and its only trace and mark is the empty channel which it had made for itself on its wild and shortlived career. Far otherwise is it with true Christian love. Flowing from an everlasting fountain, it continues to flow in summer and in winter. The colds of adversity do not congeal its living waters, and the heat and warmth of prosperity do not dry up its currents so as to leave its channel empty. It may and does exhibit variations in volume and in momentum. Now it moves with rapidity and force, bearing down before it all opposition; and now it glides softly in the midst of green and blessed pastures where the flock of God delights to be. As distinguished from the boisterousness of the other stream, this river of the water of life may be said to be waters of gentleness. How blessed are they in whose hearts the Spirit of the Lord has opened the fountain of this love! for it shall well up unto eternal life. Happy those who can, with an approving conscience, say in answer to the question of the Lord—"Lovest thou me?" "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee." For "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Love, then, is an essential part of the life of God in the soul. It is an essential part of that image of God into which believers are being progressively transformed.

III. LIFE AND ACTION.

A third aspect of the Christian life is presented by the words of the Apostle James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this—To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." These words, like the other two texts, proceed on the principle that the spiritual life in man consists in conformity to God. "God is light." "God is love;" and "There is none good but one, that is God." Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The believer is called and preordained that he may be like God, that he may reflect the image or likeness of

the Father in heaven. But Christ Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Even so the believer is to imitate God in working. For according to the words of Paul, "We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." "Let your light," said the Lord Jesus, "so shine before men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father who is in heaven." And to quote yet one other passage bearing on this part of our subject—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." "But whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" "My little children, let us not love in word neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Thus it is evident that godly practice is, by all these testimonies and statements, required as the index of godly principles; and where knowledge and a professed love are disjoined from practice—where a godly life is not the commentary on the principles of knowledge and love, the reality and worth of the knowledge and love may be questioned. "For an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, nor can a good tree bring forth evil fruit. Wherefore by their fruits men are known." And yet what is more common than for men to profess the knowledge and love of God, and to remain far away from the practice of Christian and godly deeds? Both what we may call theological Christians delighting in doctrines exhibited in system and scientific method, and sentimental Christians rejoicing in the delineation of the various phases of experience and feeling—both can fold their hands in indolent repose as if they were not the keepers of their perishing brother—both can enjoy their luxurious feast of doctrine or of emotion, while their brother is left to perish in the pit in which there is no water, without the knowledge and without the love of God. But as it was not lawful to divide and to tear into pieces the robe of Christ, so it is not permitted us to divide between knowledge, love, and practice. For "He that saith he abideth in Christ ought himself also so to walk even as He walked," and of His walk it is

said that "He went about continually doing good." Let "the disciple, then, be as His master and the servant as His lord."

GODLY ACTIVITY, WHAT?

There is, however, another and a more subtle form in which this disjoining of godly practice from godly knowledge and principle is observable. As some make all religion to consist in knowledge, as some make it all to consist in love, so others represent it as consisting almost exclusively in the performance of acts of kindness, humanity, and benevolence. Doctrine and sentiment are of little or rather of no account with a certain class of men. "God," say they, "will not surely condemn us for an error of intellect or even an error of sentiment. Religion does not consist in propositions or in emotions. No. It is a thing of the life. Let us do our duty, and God is just and will not doom us to perdition." Now there is at once some truth and at the same time much error in this view of religion. A life regulated by duty or a sense of duty is, perhaps, the noblest life that can be lived by man. And beautiful was the epitaph which the late godly and heroic Henry Lawrence, of India, wished to be inscribed on his tombstone—"Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty." Noble sentiment—noble epitaph of a noble and heroic man! But in the case of Henry Lawrence, duty was grounded on the knowledge of God, and the doing of it proceeded from love to God. How very different is it in many cases—the cases of those who disparage the worth of spiritual knowledge, and have never felt the constraining power of the love of Christ. True religion is no doubt a life—a life in the Spirit—a life unto God. But this life proceeds from the knowledge and love of God. Take these away and you destroy the spiritual life. No word is more abused than that noble word "duty." If, indeed, men will do their duty, they must *know* their duty; and the mere performance of certain acts, apart from the motives prompting to it, cannot be duty in the sight of Him who looketh on the heart. Duty is a word of high sacredness and of great compass. It is our duty to study, learn, and know the will of God: it is our duty to

love the Lord supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves: it is our duty to show and vindicate the sincerity of our professed faith and love by a life of obedience to the law of the Lord: and it is our duty, after having ministered to the poor, the sick, the needy, and the perishing—to say that we are unprofitable servants: we have but done what it was our duty to do.

If, therefore, it is our duty to learn the will of God, and to love the Lord, let us not be guilty of the profanity of those who say that God will not surely condemn them for errors of intellect, and for cherishing certain emotions and sentiments. For, apart altogether from what the Spirit in Holy Scripture teaches concerning these things, reason and universal experience teach, that the life and conduct of mankind are determined by their principles and by their sentiments. We cannot, without destroying man's responsibility, disjoin man's actions from his belief and feelings. Knowledge, love, obedience, principle, sentiment, practice—all are combined in the spiritual life. Let us not, then, untwist this threefold cord: what God hath joined let not man put asunder. Light—as we are told by men of science—consists of luminous rays, of colouring rays, and of chemical rays. All these enter into what we may call the composition of light. And it would cease to be what it is, and to produce the effects which it produces if any of the three ingredients or qualities were abstracted from it. Even so, the spiritual life consists of knowledge, love, and obedience, and if any of these three elements or constituent parts or principles of it be taken away, it ceases to be the spiritual life described in Holy Scripture, and it must cease to yield or bring forth the fruits of that life. The intellect, heart, will—all the parts of man's nature and constitution must be met and provided for, must be acted upon by the religion of the Gospel. And it is the distinctive glory of the Gospel, that it exhibits at once the most complete revelation of the character and will of God, and at the sametime presents this revelation in most perfect adaptation to the capacities, faculties, and susceptibilities of the soul of man.

Every false religion, that is, every religion except that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, exhibits on the one hand a partial and

defective view of the character and will of God, and on the other hand because of this, a partial view of the nature and relationships of man. But the Gospel carries with it a double class of witnesses. For it makes known the name, character, and will of God in such a manner that the sublimest objects of knowledge—the supreme object of love and sovereign authority—are all presented to man. And corresponding with this, and because of this, the Gospel alone satisfies the soul of man. For there is the truth concerning God for man's understanding; there is the goodness of God for man's heart; and there is the law of God for man's conscience and will.

HARMONIES AND DIVERSITIES.

But not only so. The Gospel exhibits all this in adaptation to man as ignorant, guilty, disobedient, dead in trespasses and sins. For Christ Jesus is made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It becomes us, therefore, to aim at, and strive after, a complete and full realization in our own souls—in knowledge, love, and obedience of what is presented to us, and enjoined upon us in the Scriptures of truth—that we may stand complete in all the will of God. Instead of attempting to separate knowledge from love, or love or knowledge from practical obedience let us rather strive to increase in the knowledge of God, to grow in grace and love, and to be followers of God in all holy obedience, as dear children—counting it our meat and drink to do the will of our Father in heaven. This is all the more necessary—first, because from constitutional tendencies and sympathies even godly men are prone to exaggerate the importance of one or other of the three great elements of spiritual religion to the injury or detriment of the others. Great allowance must be made for this tendency, and in our judgments of others, more especially so long as men do not practically disparage the intrinsic value, say of doctrine, we must not condemn them if they seem to as to magnify almost to excess the worth of love and of obedience. On the other hand it becomes not those who profess to serve the same Lord and Master to bring railing

accusations against brethren who may appear to them to attach what they think to be undue importance to the knowledge of the truth—to soundness in the faith. Let each man strive after the symmetrical development of the Christian character in knowledge, love, and obedience. “Be perfect,” says the Apostle—perfect in knowledge, perfect in love, perfect in obedience. Towards this mark of perfection let each man press, striving after it—reaching forth towards it while forgetting the things that are behind.

Constitutional tendencies and sympathies shew themselves in regenerated and holy men—nay more even in men inspired of God—apostles and prophets. The most cursory perusal of the writings of Paul must convince us that the *doctrinal* tendency was dominant in him: a similar perusal of the writings of John must convince us that *love* was dominant in him: and we cannot read the Epistle of James without being satisfied that the *practical* tendency was strongest in him. But Paul did not depreciate love and obedience: he exhibited the doctrines of grace to beget love and to promote holy obedience. John did not disparage doctrine; on the contrary he magnified it; and as he did so he rejoiced all the more and lived all the more in love; and love with him was regarded as the mighty motive to all holy practice. Nor did James under-value doctrine or love. For he would have men receive in the meekness of wisdom the ingrafted Word which is able to save their souls. But he cautioned and warned men against putting knowledge or a professed faith instead of obedience and a working faith. “Be ye,” he says, “doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” “Doers, not hearers only;” there is much in these words. Doing must be added to hearing, and the doing must be regulated by the hearing. Not doers only, not hearers only. But both hearers and doers of the Word. For “the wisdom that cometh from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

It has been well said, that the great desiderata of the Church of Christ—comprehending under that august and holy designation all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth—are, *unity, activity, spirituality*. But how these may be attained unto is the question earnestly put by brethren to each other, and it is the burden of the prayer of many of the Lord's remembrancers in every land. These three most desirable things can ultimately be obtained only through the supply and communication of the Spirit of Christ. For he is the author of concord and order, not of discord and confusion; and he will yet cause the watchmen on Zion's walls to see eye to eye, and He will gather into one the dispersed of Israel, giving unto them one heart and one way. For as Robert Hall has said,—“That union among Christians which it is so desirable to recover must, we are persuaded, will be the result of something more heavenly and divine, than legal restraints or angry controversies. Unless an angel were to descend for that purpose, the spirit of division is a disease which will never be healed by troubling the waters. We must expect the cure from the increasing prevalence of religion, and from a copious communication of the Spirit to produce that event. A more extensive diffusion of piety among all sects and parties will be the best and only preparation for a cordial union. Christians will then be disposed to appreciate their differences more equitably; to turn their attention to points on which they agree; and the consequence of loving each other more, to make every concession consistent with a good conscience. Instead of wishing to vanquish others, every one will be desirous of being vanquished by the truth. An awful fear of God, and an exclusive desire of discovering His mind, will hold a torch before them in their inquiries, which will strangely illuminate the path in which they are to tread. In the room of being repelled by mutual antipathy, they will be insensibly drawn nearer to each other by the ties of mutual attachment. A larger measure of the Spirit of Christ would prevent them from converting every incidental variation into an impassible boundary; or from con-

demning the most innocent and laudable usages for fear of symbolizing with another class of Christians—an odious spirit with which some writers are strongly impregnated. The general prevalence of piety in different communities would inspire that mutual respect, that heartfelt homage for the virtues conspicuous in the character of their respective members which would urge us to ask with astonishment and regret—Why cannot we be one? What is it that obstructs our union? Instead of maintaining the barrier which separates us from each other, and employing ourselves in fortifying the frontiers of hostile communities, we should be anxiously devising the means of narrowing the grounds of dispute by drawing the attention of all parties to those fundamental and catholic principles in which all concur.” In order to real union among Christian men, there is needed the baptism of light, of love, of life, and power. More knowledge—more, not less of the truth received and held in the love of it—and spoken in love and acted out, carried into practical effect in love—is needed to the healing of the divisions of the Church of Christ. A more spiritual, symmetrical, and adequate apprehension of the truth of God, revealed in Holy Scripture, would go far to silence and remove many of the divisive controversies that prevail and fiercely rage between brethren in the Lord. This would lead all Christian men to a more thorough and practical recognition of the supreme authority of the Head of the Church, and it would teach them that as His revealed will given in Holy Scripture is the supreme and only rule of faith and practice to Christian men, they ought not to invent, much less to dictate terms of communion in His Church, as if they were lords and not mere servants in the house of God. It would teach that to the inspired Word all professing faith in Christ are astricted and bound. A single eye and an honest heart, with a competent knowledge of the Scriptures would, under the grace of the Spirit, lead men insensibly into similar trains of thought and meditation, and being more and more under the guidance of the Holy Ghost as their infallible teacher, according to the rule of His inspired Word, “they would gradually tend towards the same point, and settle in the same conclusion.” Let us

then, aiming at that unity or union, which is strength—that unity of the Church which shall so surprise and impress the world that they shall see in it demonstration of the truth that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of the living God,—pray and labour for increase of spiritual light and life in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Let us pray for the spirit of wisdom and grace. For “upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briers . . . until the Spirit be poured upon as from on high.” (Is. xxxii.)

If we would have more wise, sustained, and effective Christian work and activity—for this is earnestly required at our hands—we must not only have more light, increase of knowledge, but more love. It was love to Christ and love to perishing men that enabled Paul to interpret so readily and easily the vision which he beheld by night at Troas; “when there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” It was love, Divine love, that gave him the key to the revelation made to him, and so it is added, “After he had seen the vision immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them.” Faith in Paul worked by love; and in him with progressive knowledge there was increase of love. Alas! that in the case of some, it should hold true that as knowledge is increased their love waxes cold. This ought not so to be. For surely the more we know of Christ and of our obligation to Him, the more should “the love of Christ constrain us, urge and press us forward, to live not unto ourselves but unto Him who died for us and rose again.” The prevalence of this love would heal many of our divisions, and would prompt to nobler and more heroic enterprises and achievements than have been for many centuries undertaken or accomplished. This dovelike and chaste and modest spirit of love would remove and drive out—would exorcise the demons of worldliness, indolence, ambition, self-seeking—the attachments of men to secular interests, their love of a little brief authority and power, and their irreverence, cunning, craftiness, and dishonesty in handling the Word of God, and in treating of the ordinances, laws, and affairs of the

house of God. "For the true *schismatic*," it has been well said, "is not so properly the person who declines a compliance with what he judges to be wrong, though he may be mistaken in that judgment, as the man who sedulously employs every artifice to alienate the affections of good men from each other."

We need more knowledge, but we also need more love. For knowledge may puff us up, but love will build us up. If we had more truth and love, we should be heard more frequently saying with Carey before he set out to India, "Let us attempt great things for God: let us expect great things from God. The attempt is required by the word of precept: the expectation is warranted by the word of promise." And we should like him, when writing from the far distant shores of Bengal, be found saying, "What is there in all the earth worth the living for but the glory of God and the salvation of the souls of men!" More light, more love, more work! With more work, more godly activity, the waste places of the world would be brought under Christian tillage and husbandry; and some at least of the very much land yet remaining to be possessed would be annexed to actual dominions and territories of the Messiah. With more love there would be more disposition for work. Christian men would have a mind to Christian work, and they would have little time and less inclination for controversy and war among themselves. The shepherds would cease from unseemly strife, remembering that the Canaanite, their common enemy, is yet in the land. And more light, sweetened and chastened by love, would at once stimulate, regulate, and direct unto wise ends the out-going of ardent zeal. The question of Paul and the answer of Isaiah would be an echo of the spirit and mind, a reflex of the very heart of the Christian—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—"Here am I, send me." Knowledge merely for the sake of knowledge, a knowledge like the fire in Ezekiel's vision infolding itself, knowledge pure and speculative, knowledge feeding on itself, gratified by its own processes and discoveries, regaling itself by its exercise of "scanning with self-fixed thought profoundest things," is not the knowledge for man in this scene of sin, confusion, war, and death. Man is more than a spectator, more than a mere philosopher here. "If ye

know these things," said the Lord Jesus, "happy are ye, if ye do them."

Love, merely for the sake of loving, whether it be a love in-folding itself or a love clasping in its embrace even the Saviour Himself, much less a love "nursing in some delicious shade its dainty sympathies," is not the truly Christian love. To Mary Magdalene, as she would have clung to the risen Jesus, holding Him by the feet, the Lord said, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." The Christian's love is not a thing of sentiment merely. It is a powerful, practical, and most energetic principle. It suffers long and is kind. It rejoiceth in the truth. It seeketh not its own, but it seeketh its neighbour's good. It seeketh not its own things, but the things that are Jesus Christ's. It denies self, takes up the daily cross and follows Christ, saying—"Entreat me not to leave thee nor return from following after thee. For where thou goest, I will go: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

And so, also, with respect to Christian activity, work, or practice. It is not work for the sake of work; not activity for the sake of activity, not practice for the sake of practice. The Roman army took its name *exercitus*, from the constant exercise or drill to which its legions of soldiers were subjected. But this was not an exercise in mere gymnastics. It was exercise with a view to serious work, conflict, and battle. Even so Christian work is not mere exercise for its own sake. It is work in the service of the Lord, done for his name's sake and the Gospel's, from love to him and a desire that God may be glorified. It is, therefore, a faithful saying, to be constantly affirmed, that those who believe in Jesus and profess to love his blessed name should be careful to maintain good works. In this way there will be infallible evidence of the reality of the Christian and spiritual life, the health and vigour of personal Christianity will be greatly promoted, love will grow by indulging it, the prosperity and union of the Churches will be furthered, souls will be saved, and the Saviour's valedictory command will be obeyed—"Go ye and preach the Gospel to

every creature." Then, too, shall be answered the prayer of the Old Testament Church, and the hope and expectation of the Church of the New Testament shall be proved to be no visionary prospect—"God be merciful unto us and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. . . . God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." AMEN.

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

FULFILLED BY CHRIST.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The following discourse was delivered in December, 1865, and bears upon views of the law of God which at the time attracted much attention. Truth never suffers by being sifted: whatever may befall those who put it to crucial experiment. The law of the Lord is perfect, and abideth for ever. Law, grace, and truth, make up the completed revelation of the will of God.

G. M.

OLD KILPATRICK, *December, 1871.*

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.”—MATTH. v. 17.

Among the hearers of the Lord when He uttered the words of the text, we may, without any undue or excessive exercise of conjecture suppose that there were at least three classes of people. We may suppose that there were among the multitudes some truly devout and godly persons zealous for the law and the prophets—walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and waiting for the promised consolation of Israel—the Messiah. We may, also, suppose that there were

those who, while professing obedience to the law and faith in the predictions of the prophets, nevertheless by their regard to the traditions of the elders and the glosses of the rabbis, made the law and the prophets of none effect. And we may suppose that among the multitudes there were those who hated the law, did not believe the words of the prophets, and at the sametime despised the traditions of the Pharisees. These several classes would all have their peculiar and distintive apprehensions and thoughts respecting the tendency, scope, and design of the ministry and teaching of Christ Jesus. The godly and devout among the audience hearing, and rejoicing to hear, the gracious words of blessing spoken by the Lord, would doubtless be reasoning with themselves as to the relation in which Jesus in His ministry stood, or professed to stand, to the law and to the prophets. Their hearts, like that of old Eli, trembling for the Ark of God—trembling for the honour and sacredness of the law and the prophets might fear lest this new teacher should derogate from the honour of that law which had been divinely-given to them, or should in any way invalidate the teachings of the holy prophets. The words of the Lord—“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil;” were fitted to remove all misapprehensions of the kind referred to from the minds of those who worshipped God according to the law, and who looked for the fulfilment of the promises made by the prophets to the fathers. Those zealous for the traditions of the elders, while listening to the words of Jesus, words so different in manner and matter from the words of the Pharisees and Scribes,—would be eager to find ground on which to accuse the Lord, as setting himself against the law and the prophets. The words of the Lord were fitted to correct the misapprehensions of this class in the auditory. Whatever they might think of this new teacher in Israel, and whatever might be his attitude in relation to their traditions superinduced on the Scriptures of truth, they cannot after this, with any show of truth, assert that he took up a position of antagonism to the law or the prophets. For, said he, “I am come not to destroy but to fulfil.” The apprehensions of the libertines who, hating the

restrictions of the law, and cherishing the most carnal expectations and hopes concerning the Messiah, as if he were to absolve them from obedience to law, and at the sametime to confer upon them the blessings promised by the prophets—must have been grievously disappointed when they heard the words of Jesus. The Gospel economy, according to these words (which may be regarded as the manifesto of the Saviour regarding the matters referred to) is not inaugurated or set up on the ruins of the law—it is not a dispensation grounded upon the abrogation of the law or the prophets; but it proceeds upon the establishment of the law and the fulfilment of the words and promises of prophetic Scripture. Let not libertines in thought, let not libertines in practice, let not theoretical, let not practical antinomians plead that the Gospel is on their side. The law is not against the promises of God. The promises are not against the law. The same Lord by whom grace and truth have come has for ever shattered the arguments of all libertines by the words, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.” To speak, after these weighty and express words, of an abrogated law—of an abrogated decalogue—of the abrogation of what Lightfoot calls, “The very words of the words of God;” or what we may call, “The very law of the laws of God,” is not only to utter a statement subversive of the foundation of the economy of grace and the Gospel,—for that economy is erected on the foundation of the law not abrogated, but magnified and made honourable;—but it is, in so many words, to contradict the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a daring and presumptuous act of the heretic Marcion, in the early age of the Church, to pervert the words of Jesus as if they should be read—“Think not that I am come to fulfil the law or the prophets; I am not come to fulfil but to destroy.” But although the presumptuous daring of that heretic shocks every feeling of reverence entertained by Christian men towards the gracious and authoritative words of the Lord Jesus, his conduct was not more at variance with the truth and scope, and design and nature of the Gospel than is that of those who, in our own day and in this city, represent Christ as having abrogated the decalogue, as if He had come

not to fulfil the law or the prophets but to destroy. This will appear more evidently after we shall have considered the import of the statements here made by the Lord.

But while libertines in thought or practice are rebuked by the words before us, they also are reprov'd who confound the the law and the prophets—the sacred sayings and writings of God with the inventions, traditions, and glosses of men. Christ came not to fulfil any such commandments of men, but to expose their unholy and ungodly character, and to destroy them, that His people, emancipated from the tyranny of an ungodly traditionalism, might be not without law, but might be under the law, the perfect law of liberty, under law to Him who is the only Lord of the conscience, our only Saviour, Lawgiver, and Judge. A marked distinction must be made between the law and the prophets, which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil, and all laws or ordinances imposed by human authority. It belongs not to man, be he prince or priest, bishop, or presbyter, to impose laws of his own, or of his own devising, upon the Church and people of Christ. Yet, by a strange inconsistency, those very men who cry out for a liberty of belief and action beyond that sanctioned or permitted by the Lord, are the men who, in the wantonness of their falsely named liberty, would bring the Church into the bondage of ceremonies, customs, traditions, and observances, from which Christ has for ever emancipated His Church. But let not these men, be they papists, puseyites, prelates, or presbyters, think that the Lord will confirm or ratify their impositions. In keeping with His words, "Think not," &c., He says of all such unwarranted observances and ceremonies—"In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." For, by fulfilling the law and the prophets, Christ has abrogated and for ever taken away all these ordinances, and has rendered it an offence against Himself, and a crime against His people for any to attempt to abridge the liberties of His Church, as under law to Him and to Him alone.

As for the faithful servants of God, who know that His law is exceeding broad—that it is perfect, converting the soul; that His testimony is sure, making wise the simple; that His statutes

are right, rejoicing the heart; that the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; that the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; that by them His servants are warned; and that in keeping of them there is great reward: (Ps. xix.), let them rejoice when they hear the words—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." For in the fulfilment of the law and the prophets by Christ Jesus, the foundation is laid for faith, hope, and peace towards God: and He at the same time is seen and manifested to be the Just God and yet the Saviour.

In the words of the text, as has been already indicated, the Lord Jesus declares to us the relation in which He stood to the law and to the prophets; and inferentially, the relation in which His people, represented by Him, stand in the dispensation of the Gospel to the law and to the prophets.

WHAT DENOTED BY LAW OR PROPHETS.

In treating of this most important matter, our first inquiry must be what is to be understood by the terms here used, viz., the law and the prophets? Now, it may be answered that these terms taken together denote the whole of the dispensations by which God had revealed His will before the incarnation and advent of the Messiah. These all, while serving great ends for the Church in the ancient times, were so planned, adjusted, and ordained, that they had reference to the grand and stupendous event of the appearance in the flesh of Jesus the Son of God. They were all parts of that grand train and succession of revelations, ordinances, and laws, by which preparation was made for the bringing in of the only begotten into this world. More particularly the term "law," as used in the New Testament and by the Lord himself, signified the revelations of the will and purpose of God as made to Moses, and recorded in his writings, which are collectively "The Book of the Law." The law in this sense is comprehensive not only of the decalogue—of the law of ceremonies—and of the national

or judicial law given to Israel, but also of the discoveries of the will of God, of the promises and precepts given to the patriarchs, including the Edenic institutions, precepts, and promises, as well as all those given till Moses the servant of God died and entered into his rest. "The prophets" comprehensively included all the writings of the Old Testament except those of Moses. All those writings were penned by inspired men—prophets—who were by the Holy Ghost moved to record what it seemed good to the Lord to cause to be preserved in writing for the instruction of His people in all ages. In these writings we find laws as well as promises. But as distinguished from the books of Moses, these others are called the prophets.

The law and the prophets taken together make up one grand whole. And yet they have such differences and peculiarities that they are justly distinguished by their names respectively. The law and the prophets are together subservient to the great and gracious purpose manifested in the Gospel. But while thus completely subservient to the evolution of the purpose of the grace of God, they reveal that purpose in their own distinctive lights, aspects, and forms. The law, as law, exhibits the will of God in the form of injunctions, precepts, commandments, and prohibitions. These all, more or less directly, have relation and respect to the incarnation, obedience, and sufferings unto death of the Son of God. And the law by its nature, requirements, extent, and sanctions, is designed to cut men off from trust in their own works and righteousness, to cast them at the footstool of the mercy of God, and to induce them to look to the blood of atonement, even the blood of God's dear Son—to look to the righteousness of God in the Mediator, even in the Man Christ Jesus. The grand centre and ground, as I may say, of all the laws of Moses, was the law of the two tables—the decalogue. This was the rule of the covenant with Israel, and as such, written by God's own finger on tables of stone, it was deposited in the ark over which the mercy-seat was erected. God communed with Israel from a mercy-seat of which, sprinkled with blood, the decalogue was the foundation. But that law was not only the rule of that covenant, it was in substance the rule of the covenant with Adam, and is, in

fact, the rule of the covenant with the people of God in the Gospel age. For when Christ comes to do his Father's will and to be the true propitiatory or mercy-seat from which God shall commune with sinful men, he comes with the law enshrined within the ark of his heart—"Thy law, O God, is within my heart." It is a mistake, and a very grievous mistake, to represent the law—the decalogue—as in itself the covenant with Israel. It is the rule of the covenant. The tables are the tables of the covenant and of the testimony. The covenant proceeding on the rule of the decalogue, on the ground and condition that these laws shall be inviolable, was a form or manifestation of the covenant of grace. Had the decalogue been the covenant, it must have been a covenant of law or works. But while the law is at the basis of the covenant-transaction of Sinai, the covenant itself proceeds on the provision made in the laws of sacrifices and ceremonies, according to which the mercy-seat should be sprinkled with blood, while the people acknowledging the sanctity and obligations of the decalogue were bound to observe the laws of commandments contained in ordinances. In the decalogue, God takes the people into covenant with himself, and requires them to take Him to be their God; but apart from the provisions and laws of the Levitical service, there was not, and there could not be what was at Sinai constituted a covenant foreshadowing the covenant in the Gospel. The covenant with Israel is, therefore, to be distinguished from the tables that were the rule of the covenant, and that were witnesses to it on the part of God. If any people are to be taken into covenant with God, the fundamental ground and rule of such covenant must be the inviolability of the moral law, or decalogue. Justice must be at the root and foundation of all transactions between God and man. But if justice alone regulate the covenant, then there can be no covenant between God and fallen man. Mercy with its provision of a mediator must have part in any covenant with man, since the Fall. The law broken cannot be at the basis of the mercy-seat, but the law there in its integrity sprinkled with the blood of atonement can exhibit both the justice and the grace of God—his severity and his goodness.

Israel, as all men, were bound to observe the moral law—to yield to it an exact, uniform, and perfect obedience. But, for fallen Israel, as for fallen man, this obedience being impossible by reason of sin, a covenant according to the tenor and requirements of this law, could not be a covenant through which any good could be enjoyed. The curse, and the curse only, could come upon those under such a covenant. But we know that good—temporal and spiritual—was enjoyed by Israel, and that in connection with the covenant made with them. We must, therefore, in treating of the covenant with them, have respect to those provisions and institutes that were made and appointed by the Lord, when at Sinai He entered into covenant with Israel. These all were added to the decalogue; they were subservient to the decalogue: they were designed to prefigure and foreshadow Christ Jesus through whom the covenant of grace is made with all who believe in His name. Thus we see the place of the ten words as the centre ground and rule of the covenant with Israel, and we see also the place and functions of all the Levitical ordinances, provisions, or commandments. It was not by obedience to the law of the ten words that the Israelites were distinguished from other nations, tribes, or people; but it was by their having in addition to that law, the provisions according to which they were taught to look forward to Him who is the end of the law for righteousness. It was by their spiritual observance of the ordinances given them—by using these as helps to faith—that the Israelites were, indeed, a people diverse from all other people—a holy nation, a peculiar people—a kingdom of priests. A devout Israelite could distinguish, and the devout Israelites did distinguish between the requirements of the ten words and the commandments of the ceremonial law. But, knowing that the commandments contained in ordinances, were ordained of God, and were designed to prepare the way for the advent of the Messiah, devout Israelites offered to the Lord a spiritual worship through the medium of these carnal ordinances. On the other hand, many while using these ordinances saw not the end designed by them, and their service was at best an elaborate formalism. They adhered to the letter of the law, but

they entered not into the spiritual significance of the Mosaic ceremonies. In the case of such, even to this day, "When Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts."

The law included not only "the ten words" and the ceremonial laws, but also judicial or national laws—laws specially adapted to the state and condition and circumstances of the Israelites, considered as a political community or nation. These laws, enjoined by the Lord, were designed to be, as all laws, guardians of morality, order, and religion in the body politic, and they were also designed to bind the people into a distinct nationality, and to preserve them separate from the other nations and kingdoms of the world. Even these laws, like the others, were adapted and framed with a view to the great objects for which the Israelitish people were taken into the covenant of God, viz., to keep alive among men the true knowledge of the living God, and to prepare the way for the advent of the Messiah. We misapprehend the grand aim and design of the law when we do not regard the law in relation to Christ. And we can never perceive much of the glory of the Gospel till we understand, in some measure, the import of the words—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law—I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." But in the words of the Lord the prophets are associated with the law. And it is obvious from the association here and in other statements of the Lord, that the connection between the law and the prophets involves much more than that the law is the first part or division of the Old Testament, while the prophets make up the second division or part of the same. The connection is not that of mere antecedence and succession. And the diversity between them is not merely that the law consists of injunctions or precepts, and that the prophets utter predictions or promises. We may find the principles of the relationship between the law and the prophets in the books of Moses. For in them, although they are summarily called the law, yet we find promises and prophecies intermixed with precepts and threatenings. All the laws of Moses have reference and respect to the first promise given concerning the Seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent, as well as to the promises concerning the

same Saviour made to Abraham and others of the patriarchs. Nay, more, not only were many if not all of the Mosaic institutes designed to be typical and so far prophetic of the advent, person, offices, and work of Christ; but Moses, as a prophet, foretold expressly the coming of the Lord. It is in the light of the promises contained in the books of Moses that we interpret the meaning and see the end of the institutes of the law. And when we come to study the writings of the prophets, we find that the connection between law and promise underlies the whole prophetic teachings. The prophets may be regarded, 1st, as exponents of the spiritual meaning of the law. They unfold what is hidden or involved in that law; and invariably they assert the superiority of what is moral over what is merely ceremonial. Their teaching is in this way most intimately connected with the law. Because they expound and enforce the law, bringing into prominence the spiritual requirements and nature of the law. 2nd. They may be regarded also as indicating the limits of the law; for the prophets, as with one voice, teach that the economy by Moses was not to be a perpetual or abiding dispensation, but was to give place to another and more glorious economy. This is the unanimous consent and voice of the prophets. 3rd. But the prophets must also be regarded as giving, in the name of the Lord, exceeding great and precious promises concerning the advent, person, offices, and work of Christ; and concerning the blessedness to be enjoyed, not by Jews alone, but also by Gentiles, under the reign and government of the Messiah. Pharisaism would contract the Church of God into a mere Jewish sect: it would bind and for ever enage it within the Mosaic institutes, or rather, within the bandages and bonds of traditionalism. Instead of inviting the other nations to come to the Mount Zion, it would stand apart, saying, Come not near, for this is holy ground. The prophets, on the other hand, while honouring the laws of Moses, brought into conspicuous view the promise that in Abraham and his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. They foretold, and rejoiced to foretell, that in the latter days—the age of the Messiah—all nations should go up to Mount Zion to worship the Lord. They foretold, and re-

joined to foretell, that in the latter days the Lord should make a new covenant with His people, and that His people should consist of men saved from among all nations, for the Lord would pour His Spirit upon all flesh.

Thus we see that the law and the prophets constitute one grand whole, all the parts of which have reference to the mediation and work of Christ. And with reference to them—to the law and the prophets—Christ says in the words of the text, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.”

WHAT DENOTED BY DESTROY AND FULFIL.

Our second inquiry must be into the import of the expressions “destroy” and “fulfil,” when these are used as here with respect to the law and the prophets. A law may be said to be destroyed when its injunctions are not obeyed, and when its requirements are not complied with. And a prophecy or promise may be said to be destroyed when the event foretold does not take place, or when the good promised is not bestowed and enjoyed. On the other hand, the law may be said to be fulfilled when its commands and requirements are practically acknowledged and submitted to, and prophecies or promises may be said to be fulfilled when the events predicted take place, or when the blessings promised are conferred and enjoyed. Now, Christ Jesus was made under the law, and in Him the promises made to the prophets are fulfilled. He came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil. He is law personified—He is prophecy accomplished.

But this part of the subject must be more minutely handled. Keeping in view what has now been stated, let it be remarked—1st. That the law may be destroyed when erroneous and perverse interpretations of the law are promulgated. These being contrary to the real and just requirements of the law, set aside, subvert, or practically abrogate the law. 2nd. The law may be destroyed when human and unsanctioned traditions or commandments are substituted for the law, or placed on a level of equal obligation with the law. “Full well ye reject the law

that ye may keep your own traditions." 3rd. The law is destroyed when men in thought, word, or deed contemn the author of the law, and venture to set the law aside in so far as it abridges, restricts, or curbs what men call their liberty in thought, speech, or behaviour. Disobedience is practically the abrogation or destruction of the law. Now, speaking of His relation to the law, Christ says, I came not to destroy it. I came not to pervert its meaning, or to evade its requirements. I came not to relax its binding authority, by substituting for the law any ordinances of man's invention or appointment. I came not to annul, abrogate, or subvert the law, by questioning the authority of the Lawgiver, or the righteousness of the commandment. I came not to destroy but to fulfil the law. The fulfilment of the law is obviously opposed here to the destroying of it. Accordingly, Christ here declares that He came to be under the law, and to be the end or fulfilment of the law: He came to meet and satisfy all the claims and demands of the law.

The fulfilment of the law here spoken of, when regarded in opposition to the destroying of the laws, implies—1st. That Christ came to expound the true nature and to exhibit the far reaching and spiritual requirements of the law. This is evident from the exposition which, immediately after uttering the words of the text, He proceeded to give of the law of God. From that exposition we learn that the law is indeed exceeding broad. And, after reading that wonderful exposition, who can fail to exclaim, "Who can understand his errors?" and to pray, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults, keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sin—let no iniquity have dominion over me." It is in the school of Christ that we learn the true nature and extent of the law. It is when the Lawgiver becomes the interpreter and commentator that we learn to behold the wonders of the law. 2nd. It is implied in the words of Christ that He came to raise up and assert the authority of the law against the commandments and ordinances of men. He came to fulfil the law of God, but He came to set aside the traditions of men. This is also evident from His exposition of the law, and from the whole tenor of His teaching and life. In His teach-

ing He denounced the formalists and Pharisees, who imposed other laws than those of God on the consciences of the people; and, in His acts, He vindicated the liberty of His people against the attempts of the Pharisees to reduce them into bondage. 3rd. It is implied in the words of the text that Christ placed himself under the law, that He submitted voluntarily to it in order that He might fulfil it. This submission of Christ to the law is the mystery of the Gospel, it is the wonder of the universe. This part of our subject therefore demands very special treatment, and calls for special care with respect to what we say regarding the obedience of Christ to the law. Here, if anywhere, our words should be well chosen, lest we should be guilty of darkening counsel by words without knowledge.

As already explained, the law is here to be taken in a very extensive sense. But we must carefully distinguish the several parts or parcels of the law when we speak of the fulfilment of the law by Christ. In general, Christ obeyed and fulfilled the whole law of God. He fulfilled that law as it was a law for the Jews and as it was a law for the Gentiles. For in His obedience He represents not the Jew only, but also the Gentile. He submitted to the law of ceremonies imposed upon the Jewish Church, and by submission He fulfilled that law, and so fulfilled it that in Him and in His obedience unto death that law has received its end. That for which it was instituted is attained. He therefore by fulfilling it took it out of the way, so that no longer can it claim to be law to those who believe in Him for righteousness. In Him, the types of that law find their antitype, and in Him the shadows of that age find their substance. He is thus at once the end and fulfilment of that law. But He placed himself under the moral law and submitted to the rule of the covenant, made not only with Israel, but with Adam. He obeyed that law. He fulfilled it. But not so as that it should cease to be a law and rule to all men. That law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments. And the sum again of that summary is contained in the words, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

That law was broken by Adam when he rebelled against God. That law broken demanded satisfaction if any of the lost children of men were to be saved. Christ Jesus took that law, and not only obeyed its requirements, but underwent and suffered the penalty and maledictions attached to the violation of the law. He was made sin for us. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. The obedience unto death of the Son of God fulfils the ceremonial law and abrogates it: the same obedience unto death of the Son of God fulfils the moral law and abrogates the curse; that is, he has so satisfied the claims of the law that no longer can it pronounce accursed any sinner who believes in Christ Jesus for righteousness unto eternal life. Thus we see that Christ Jesus fulfilled both the moral and the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law, consisting of commandments contained in ordinances, being thus fulfilled, vanished away. The moral law, honoured and magnified by His obedience, and in its penalty fulfilled and satisfied by His obedience unto death, has not passed away, but it has been deprived of all power to condemn those who are in Christ. "There is, therefore, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." All this is in accordance with the predictions and promises of the prophets. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Therefore, in the advent, life, work, and sufferings of Christ, the prophecies receive their fulfilment.

But when we have regard to the words of Christ respecting himself, as come to fulfil the law and the prophets, we must direct our thoughts, not only to His own personal obedience and sufferings, but also to what is accomplished in His people by Him. It is implied, 4th, in the words of Christ, that the law and prophets are fulfilled by Him, inasmuch as He invests

his believing people with the righteousness required by law, and confers upon them the blessings, graces, and privileges promised by the prophets. It was not foretold that the Messiah should abrogate the moral law or the rule of the covenant considered as a rule of life, a perfect law of righteousness. But it was foretold that they should call Him, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," and that he would write his law in their hearts and put his Spirit within them. The law of the Lord is still to them a rule of life. It convinces them of sin: it reminds them perpetually of their need of Christ and of His blood: it reminds them of their obligations to the mercy and grace of God by Jesus Christ: it sounds in their ears continually the words—"Be ye perfect." And they, assenting to the law, acknowledging its inexorable claims and authority, betake themselves to Christ for the righteousness witnessed to by the law and the prophets.

PERPETUAL USES OF THE LAW AND PROPHETS.

This brings us to the second part of this great subject, viz., to the relation of the believing people of God now in the Gospel age to the law and to the prophets. This aspect of the subject is suggested by the thought, that Christ spoke the words before us, not only to indicate his personal attitude towards the law and prophets, but also to indicate his relation to the law and prophets as representing all his faithful followers. There is no doubt a singular and pre-eminent sense in which Christ himself fulfils the law and the prophets. But this is not inconsistent with the fulfilment of the law and prophets on the part of his people, in so far as they are one with him. *For* them he obeyed and suffered, and died and rose again according to the Scriptures; but while He has personally, and also as the forerunner of His people entered into the holy place above, He now by His Spirit lives and works *in* the hearts of His people on earth. Now, if we consider on the one hand the work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of men before their conversion, and on the other hand the work of the same Spirit in their hearts after their conversion, it will appear

that Christ in them, as well as for them, came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil.

The work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of His people before their conversion is commonly said to consist in convincing them of sin and misery. This, at least, is part of the Spirit's work in the hearts of men before they are converted unto God. I do not, by any means, assert that this is all. But this at least is part, and an important part of that inward work of the Spirit of Christ. Now, to look at the first part of this work, viz., the conviction of sin. How is this conviction lodged in the conscience. Is it not by the ministry of the law? Does not the Apostle in writing to the Romans, when he brings in the whole world guilty before God, ground his verdict on the fact that Jew and Gentile have broken God's law? It matters not for our present argument what the law is, or in what form it was delivered. It is enough that the ground on which he proceeds is, that all men have broken the moral law—whether written on tables of stone or engraven on the tablets of the natural heart. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Without regard to this law, no man could see the sin and guilt of unbelief in the rejecting of Christ. For, while sin is brought home to the conscience at Sinai—or is witnessed to by the law written in the heart, the heinousness of the sin of unbelief is indicated at Calvary. But why at Calvary? Is Calvary,—is the Cross separated and disjointed from the law? By no means. The law is there seen in its inexorable authority, as it is seen in no other place. The law, then, is still of use. The Spirit of Christ employs it to convince the transgressor of his sin.

If we consider the second part of the Spirit's work in this preparatory process—viz., his work in convincing men of their misery as transgressors or sinners reference must be made to the law. Where no law is, there is no transgression. But the very idea of sin, or of transgression, implies that there is law. But what law? Not the law of ceremonies, but the law moral and universal—the law requiring us to love the Lord supremely, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. But this law having sanctions and penalties annexed to it demands that the sinner

be accursed. And now the sinner, convinced of sin, feels that he is under the curse of that broken law. Sin, by the commandment, becomes exceeding sinful, and the sinner dies—he is dead, being condemned by the law. Having regard now to the equity, holiness, spirituality, and goodness of the law, the sinner says of himself—“I am carnal, sold under sin.” He now feels that he is miserable, and that he deserves to be miserable. And by what is all this sense of sin and misery wrought in him, but by the law? And yet we are told by professed masters and doctors in the Church, that we have no need of the law of the decalogue to convince of sin and misery. Paul, with all his teaching and with all his experience—all the saints of God, with all their experience—nay more, the Lord himself must be taken out of the way, and be silent, before we can believe that the ministry and functions of the decalogue have ceased, before we can believe that the words of God have been abrogated.

There follows upon this conviction of sin and misery, a deep sense of need of a Deliverer. There rises the cry—O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from my guilt and from my misery? What is it that begets that sense of want—what is it that extorts that cry for help, if help can be found? Is it not the law? Is it not the law in the hand of the Spirit? Is not the law, then, still a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? Manifestly, the office and functions of the law have not passed away. So far is the convinced sinner from feeling or believing that the law has been abrogated or buried, that on the contrary he knows it to be a living reality, wielding giant-like power over him in his sins. No sinner, under conviction of sin, will believe that the decalogue is either buried or abrogated—especially after hearing the words,—“Verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.” Whatever the fancies or the sophistries of men may suggest and teach, the convinced sinner has a witness to the power and authority of the law within his own breast. His conscience bears witness that the law is still in force. And woe to all those who would by their sophistry attempt to stifle and to silence the awakened con-

science of the sinner—a conscience awakened by the law in the hand of the Spirit. There was a time, indeed, when he might have been disposed to catch eagerly at such views of the law—a time when he thought sin a little thing, but it is not now. For sin is seen by the law to be exceeding sinful. There was a time when he might have welcomed the statement that the law was abrogated, dead, and buried; but it is not now. For now he feels the power of the law, and—like Moses—he exceedingly fears and quakes. There was a time when he might be glad to hear the law disparaged, and to say to himself—Eat, drink, and be merry, for the law is buried; but it is not now. On the deathbed of all his hopes he now feels that they are miserable comforters who teach that there is salvation by the abrogated law. Little matters it now to him whether you say that the moral law is abrogated, or whether you allege that the decalogue *qua* decalogue is abrogated. He now feels and knows that the ten words have an unabrogated power, that they demand his life, because he has sinned against the Lord, because he has not loved and served the Lord, and has not loved his neighbour as himself. Nor will the impious remark, that the Lord did not bring him up out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage remove his scruples and convictions about the obligation under which he is to keep the law of the Lord. For he feels the iron enter his soul; and with him the great question is—How can man be just with God? Miserable comforters must all be who can say to such a man—the law is dead. And we have something far better, infinitely grander and better now in the Gospel age.

But there is another aspect of the work of the Spirit in the hearts of men before what is properly termed conversion. The law in the hand of the Spirit convinces men of sin and of misery—of sin inasmuch as it brings home to them their guilt in Adam—their want of that righteousness in which he, as their covenant, representative, and head, was created—and, inasmuch as it reveals to them the corruption of their whole nature, by reason of which they are utterly indisposed, disabled, and opposed unto all that is spiritually good and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually. Besides this, the law brings

home to the consciences of men the sin and guilt, the accumulated sin and guilt of their actual transgressions, and the same law convinces them of their misery, inasmuch as it makes manifest to them that as sinners they are excluded from communion with God, are under His curse, and liable to all punishments or penal sufferings under the displeasure and wrath of God, not only in this life, but in that also which is to come. In keeping with these functions and offices of the law are the feelings of the convinced sinner. He despairs of righteousness by the law, and in his wretchedness he cries out, if so be there may be any hope. His sin appears to him and is felt by him to be exceeding sinful, and his misery is felt by him to be deserved and to be inevitable. How shall man be just with God? This is now the grand question—the great inquiry of the sinner. And with it in his heart the Spirit lays him at the foot of the cross.

At this stage of a sinner's experience, when that experience is to issue in conversion, the sinner is brought into relation to the prophets or the promises. The law teaches him his need of Christ, and the prophets or promises reveal to him the Saviour that he needs. He now is enlightened to perceive that by the grace of God there is a Saviour, Christ Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners. This keeps him from absolute despair. There is a Saviour—to Him give all the prophets witness: precious truth. He is taught that Christ is the only Saviour: for there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. To Him, as the only Saviour, give all the prophets witness—"Besides Me, there is no Saviour." A Saviour—one only Saviour—encouragement to hope—antidote to despair, yet a check upon presumption—a stimulus to earnest seeking after God the Saviour. "Seek ye the Lord while He is to be found, call upon while He is near,"—this is the voice of the prophets. The convinced sinner where conviction issues in conversion is also taught, and his mind is enlightened by the Spirit to perceive that Christ is the all-sufficient and almighty Saviour—able to save unto the uttermost all those that come unto God by Him. Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help found. In Christ,

prophecy receives accomplishment, and in Him, according to the promises, the grace of God appears bringing salvation unto all men: "For it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Thus the law and the prophets have functions to perform in the experience of every sinner guided by the Spirit to Christ. By the law the sinner's vain hopes are cut off; by the grace revealed by the prophets in the exceeding great and precious promises, the sinner is introduced to the new and better hope—even the hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. The grace revealed by the prophets and that hath been manifested and confirmed by Jesus Christ, assumes in words the forms of invitations and promises. Of these the Holy Spirit makes use in drawing men to Christ; and, using these as gracious instruments in His hand, the Spirit renews their wills, and persuades and enables them to embrace Jesus Christ, as He is freely offered to them in the Gospel. This embracing of Christ is nothing else than faith in Him as the Son of God and Saviour of men. But this faith proceeds upon an acknowledgment of the holiness and justice of God revealed in the law, and of the truth and grace exhibited by the prophets. It is an acceptance of Christ as the fulfilment of law and prophecy. Thus the faith of God's elect establishes the law and confirms the testimonies of the prophets. The believer sets to his seal that God is true and that God is gracious. And thus, at the very entrance of a man into the spiritual and Christian life, God is honoured in His law; and His promises in Christ Jesus are believed to be gracious and true. For Christ Jesus is received and confided in as the end of the law for righteousness—as the righteousness of God unto the justification of the sinner—the righteousness witnessed to by the law and the prophets. The sinner now in Christ is above the condemning power of the law; while he confesses that the law is holy and the commandment holy, just, and good; and in Christ Jesus he is entitled to the blessings and privileges promised by the prophets. Thus far it appears that according to the teaching of the Word of God, as brought to bear on the heart and experience of a sinner drawn to Christ, the law is not regarded as abrogated, nor the prophets as obsolete. The sinner has to

do, as a sinner, with both law and prophets; and as a believer he has also to do with both. So that every Christian man is represented in the words of Christ—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."

We shall arrive at the same conclusion if we have respect to the life of the believer, or the life of a man after he has been regenerated and converted unto God. A believer in Christ is a renewed man: he is a pardoned man: he is accepted into the favour and family of God: he is a partaker of the Spirit of Christ: he is entitled to eternal life, being an heir of God—a joint-heir with Christ Jesus, the only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Let this description serve for the present occasion. Our inquiry now is concerning such a man—"In what relation does he stand to the law and the prophets?" That he is not bound by the judicial or civil laws of the Jews, except in so far as "the general equity thereof" may require, will, I suppose, be readily admitted. That he is not bound by the ceremonial laws of the Jews will also be admitted by all who believe that these were temporary and prefigurative observances, designed to be of force only till Christ should come. But to assert that he is released from the duty of obedience to the moral law, as expressed and summarized in the precepts of the decalogue, is to allege what is contrary to the whole doctrine of the Gospel and of the prophets concerning the duty and responsibilities of man. In every dispensation anterior to the Gospel, there were rites and observances considered in themselves of a transient and temporary nature. These were either displaced by succeeding dispensations, or were absorbed and incorporated into them. Now all these have been taken away in the Gospel, while only two rites have been ordained in their stead, viz., Baptism in the room of circumcision, and the Lord's Supper in the room of the Passover. But in every dispensation prior to that of the Gospel there were laws or principles that were in their own nature permanent and immutable. These entered more or less, either implicitly or expressly, into the first and earliest of all dispensations, and they were interwoven into the structure of every dispensation that followed. And we

cannot conceive of any economy or dispensation, regulative of man's duty towards God, in which these permanent principles or laws do not find a place. It matters not whether in any dispensation they were only implied, or whether, on the other hand, they were formally expressed and committed to writing, except, indeed, that if the Lord should at any time have given them his direct sanction, by committing them to writing, as expressive of His will; in that case and from that time forth they bind men not merely because of their own moral character—a character attaching to them antecedently to their being given as express statutes—but also and in addition to this, because of the authority of God who prescribed them as His law. Now, it cannot be denied that the law of the Ten Commandments formed part of the original law or covenant under which man was made. By man's sin that law was broken. But instead of being abrogated, it claimed, and rightfully claimed obedience, and demanded satisfaction from man. The precept and the penalty remained unabrogated. Through the intervention of grace, the penalty was not exacted from those who of old believed God making promise of the Saviour. But though they were delivered by grace from the condemning power of the law, they were bound, before the giving of the law at Sinai, to obey the law. Grace having respect to the atonement to be made in the fulness of time by the Man Christ Jesus, delivered them from the curse of the law, but not from obligation to frame their lives according to the law. The curse of the law was abrogated as to believers under the Old Testament. But the rule of the law was not taken out of the way. For at Sinai it pleased the Lord to insert the law in a summarized form in "ten words" in the covenant with Israel. Contrasted with former times, there was then given a more complete and full and express revelation of the law. But although the law was then embodied in the covenant with Israel, yet being in its nature, precepts, and requirements moral, and therefore permanent, it did not and could not vanish away with the statutes, ceremonies, and institutes, which were in their nature and design temporary and transient. The moral law—the law in the decalogue—abides in the Christian age. And as we

have seen together with the prophets, it serves great ends in the process of the conversion of a sinner. But the function of the law does not cease when a sinner is brought to Christ. It continues and is exercised towards the saints—towards the believers in Christ. It is said, indeed, by some that the Christian man does not now need the law—that the law is no longer a rule to him, seeing that he is a partaker of the spiritual life. The life has become the rule, and love has taken the place of law. This, however, is merely to talk so as to darken counsel by words without knowledge. For all the saints of God, since time began, possessed the spiritual life, and they all served God in love. Yet their life and their love were regulated by the law. It was only in so far as they were spiritual and lived in love that they kept the law of the Lord. And so now. It is only in so far as men walk and live in the Spirit and in love that they keep the law which is holy and just and good. Believers now have great advantages over the saints of former times; but among these we must not assert that this is one, viz., that now the law of the Lord is abrogated—for how can the law be abrogated—the first and great commandment of which is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, strength, and mind;” and the second commandment of which is, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?” Christ has not released His followers from that law, but has left them an example that they should walk in His steps. He has, indeed, abrogated and taken away the curse; but so far from having relaxed the obligation to obey the moral law—the ten words—He has, by reference to His own example in obeying the law, and suffering the penalty of it in the room of His people, exalted and carried to the loftiest pitch the requirement of the law, saying, “A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another as I have loved you.” Love such as this is now what is required to the fulfilling of the law. The love of Christ to His people we confess to be grander and sublimer than the law. It accomplishes objects and ends which the law could not accomplish; but it achieves these ends, not by abrogating but by fulfilling the law. It is in the light of the law that we see the glory of the love of Christ, and it is by that

love manifested in His obedience unto death that we see the majesty, authority, and immutability of the law. The believer is not then redeemed from obedience to the law, but he is redeemed from the curse of the law unto obedience to the law, that the law may be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh—that is, who seek not to fulfil it by the observance of carnal ordinances after the manner of the self-righteous in Israel, but after the spirit, *i.e.*, as depending on Christ's obedience and satisfaction to the law, and as quickened, enlightened, and enabled by His Spirit to follow after holiness.

The law is taken into the Gospel—it is incorporated with it. But it is not abolished. The obedience of Christ—the sufferings and death of Christ—the teachings of Christ—are all, so to speak, commentaries on the law, and they all furnish arguments and motives to the Christian for obedience to the holy law of God. The ancient Israelites were not without law; they were baptized into Moses unto obedience to the ceremonial institutes added to the decalogue. Believers now are not without law—they are baptized unto Christ Jesus—a baptism emancipating them from the Mosaic ceremonies, but bringing them under law to Christ, through whom the law has been magnified and made honourable.

Whereunto, then, serves the law in relation to the believer? The answer has been given generally in what has been already stated. But a few details may, perhaps, better impress this matter on our consciences, and lodge it in our understandings and hearts.

1st. The law is used by the Spirit in dealing with believers, to present to them continually the holiness and authority of God. The law serves as a glass through which we may behold the glorious holiness of the Lawgiver. It serves also to be a perpetual witness to the authority of God. He alone has right and authority to declare His will contained in the law as rule to all men, in all places, in all times.

2nd. The law is used by the Spirit to remind believers of the severity or eternal justice of God. For, according to the law, satisfaction as well as obedience must be rendered to the law. The believer, looking to the Lamb of God, whose blood

cleanseth from all sin, beholds the justice of God in the requirement of that sacrifice, in order that sinners might be saved, and that the majesty of the law might be vindicated and maintained.

3d. Accordingly, the law reminds the believer of his indebtedness to the unsearchable riches of the grace of God by Christ Jesus. For what the law could not, and what could not be done by abrogating the law, for that were impossible, Christ has done by submitting to the precept and penalty of the law. Thus is kept alive within the believer a sense of gratitude, and a sense of deep unworthiness and humility. The believer sees the love and law of God in the very sentence of his pardon and acceptance; and his daily prayer, forgive our debts, is a testimony to the majesty of law, and to the exceeding abundance of grace.

4th. The law is not only a mirror in which they see the holiness of God, but it is also light—the candle of the Lord by which they discover the sinful pollution of their native hearts and lives. The Antinomian may prate about perfection here. But the child of God is ever reminded by the law that he is far indeed from being perfect. He knows and confesses that the law is holy, but that he is carnal sold under sin. Thus is he stirred up continually to aim at the perfection to which he is called; and to pursue it looking unto Jesus.

5th. The law, in a word, is of perpetual use to the believer as a rule or directory of life, in his walk before God and before his fellow-men. It is to his practical life or journey what way marks are to the traveller. Because it indicates the straight line and royal way, as distinguished from all bye-paths. Along this, the king's highway, Jesus walked; and, along this same pathway, quickened by His spirit, constrained by His love, and animated by His example, He invites His people to follow Him. "For he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk even so as He walked."

To these uses of the law in the Christian life and walk, others might be added. But for the present let these suffice for your instruction, and for showing the unwarrantable and unscriptural teachings of those who treat of the decalogue as

an abrogated law, and who ask whether they must go to the decalogue for a rule of life. If our doctrine is according to Scripture, there is no rule of life in the Bible, if the decalogue be abrogated. For the whole Bible, old and new, proceeds on the eternal obligation resting on men to obey the holy and righteous law of God. We do not send men from Christ to Moses, but when men really and by faith look to the law apart from Christ, they do not lawfully use it. Till the words of the text be revoked, we must deny and brand as unscriptural, all doctrines, opinions, or statements that proceed on the idea of the decalogue abolished.

The method of the discourse would require that I should indicate at this stage the relation in which the believer stands to the prophets. After what has been already said, I think I need say little more. It is enough to state, without laboured proof, that the believer enjoys either actually, or in prospect, the blessings and privileges promised to the people of God by the prophets. For in Christ all the promises are sure to all the seed—to all who are in Him. Thus in the experience of the Church, or faithful followers of the Lord Jesus, the law is not destroyed, but fulfilled, and the prophets are not destroyed, but fulfilled. Believers now have the promise regarding a new heart fulfilled. They have the promise in course of fulfilment that the Lord should write His law in their hearts, and that they should walk in His statutes. They have the promise fulfilled that He should put His spirit within them. And the grace, according to the promises now enjoyed, is foretaste, seal, and earnest of the complete fulfilment in glory of all the promises made to the people of God. Not one jot or tittle of law or promise shall fail. All shall be fulfilled. Faithful is He who hath said it, who also will do it. Take as illustrative of the relation of the believers to the prophets and promises the words of Paul (2 Cor. vi. 16-18; vii. 1), "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said I will dwell among them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and

I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." On these words I shall make no comment. They bring out most vividly the force of all that has been stated respecting the relation of the Christian to the promises and teachings of prophetic Scripture. And I pray that you and I, in our own experience by the grace of the Holy Spirit, may know what it is to perfect holiness in the fear of God, admonished and directed by the holy law, and encouraged by the exceeding great and precious promises which are given us in Christ Jesus the Lord, while remembering the words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

I conclude by quoting the notes or statements of that remarkable commentator, Matthew Henry, on the words of verse 19—words closely connected with those of the text: "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." "It is a dangerous thing," says Henry, "in doctrine or practice, to disannul the least of God's commands; to break them, that is, to go about either *to contract the extent*, or *to weaken the obligation* of them; whosoever does so will find it at his peril. Thus, to vacate any of the Ten Commandments, is too bold a stroke for the jealous God to pass by. It is something more than transgressing the law: it is making void the law (Ps. cxix. 126). The further such corruptions as these spread, the worse they are. It is impudence enough to break the command, but it is a greater degree of it to teach men so. This plainly refers to those who, at this time, sat in Moses' seat, and by their comments corrupted and perverted the text. Opinions that lead to the destruction of serious godliness and the vitals of religion, by corrupt glosses on the Scriptures, are bad when they are held, but worse when they are propagated and taught as the word of God. He that does so shall be called least in the king-

dom of heaven, in the kingdom of glory: he shall never come thither, but be eternally excluded; or rather in the kingdom of the Gospel Church, he is so far from deserving the dignity of a teacher in it, that he shall not so much as be accounted a member of it. The prophet that teacheth lies shall be the tail in that kingdom (Is. ix. 15); when truth shall appear in its own evidence, such corrupt teachers, though cried up as the Pharisees, shall be of no account with the wise and good. Nothing makes ministers more contemptible and base than corrupting the law (Mal. ii. 8-11). Those who extenuate and encourage sin and discountenance, and put contempt upon strictness of religion and serious devotion, are the dregs of the Church." Such are the expressive terms in which the godly Matthew Henry comments upon the words of Christ. May it be ours to lay these things to heart, that we may not be guilty of the heinous sin of breaking the law of the Lord, and teaching others so to do; but that looking unto Jesus, and running in the way of His precepts, we may come to enjoy the felicity spoken of in the words, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. xxii. 14). Amen.

THE LAW OF
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP ;
OR,
SELF-DENIAL, THE DAILY CROSS, AND THE
FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

“ And when He had called the people unto Him, with his disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

“ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it ; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.

“ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?

“ Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?

“ Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.”—MARK viii. 34-38.

The Lord, after having predicted in explicit terms, that he must suffer at Jerusalem, be killed, and rise again, and after having rebuked Peter, who had said—“ Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto thee,”—called the people unto Him, with His disciples, also, and said unto them—“ Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” These words may be regarded as expressing or declaring the terms, conditions, or law of discipleship : and they are followed by words designed to give them weight, solemnity, and force. “ For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it ; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the

Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

In treating of the matters here brought before us, in the few but weighty words of the Lord, I shall, in dependence on the grace of God, direct attention—

- I. To the view here presented of Christian discipleship :
- II. To the law or rule of that discipleship :
- III. To the reward promised to the faithful disciple ; and to the penalty or consequences of unbelief, or of non-compliance with the Gospel terms and way of salvation here propounded and made known.

I. CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP.

In answer to the question—"Who is a Christian?" many have been the replies given. A Christian, according to one large and numerous section of mankind, is a man baptized into the communion of the Papal Church, and living in fellowship with that Church: all others are excommunicate—are accursed—have neither part nor lot in Christ. According to others a Christian is a man who not only renounces the fellowship of that apostate Church, but who lives in communion with some particular sect or coterie called brethren agreeing together, it may be holding and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. The shibboleth of the coterie is the test of Christian discipleship. All who do not speak that word, or adhere to their party are excommunicate—are separate from Christ. According to others, "He whose religious life is grounded upon (what is called) the consciousness of the redemption of the world, and consequently of *himself* through Jesus Christ, and who exhibits the reality of this life by resignation to the will

of God, joyous freedom in serving Him, and the expansive spirit of love—this man, be his minor peculiarities what they may, we venture,” says one speaking for a large multitude, “to denominate— a *Christian*.” All who are comprehended within the wide range here described are Christians according to what is regarded as modern philosophical Christianity. But in a matter of this kind we must give heed rather to the voice of Christ himself than to the voices either of Churchmen so called, or of philosophers.

It is obvious that there are two extremes, towards one or other of which the tendencies of men lean, in giving answer to the question—“ Who is a Christian ?” The one extreme is that of narrowing and limiting the description, so that it can apply only to those of a particular sect. This is the exclusiveness of bigotry—it is thorough sectarianism. The other extreme is that of so enlarging and widening the range of description as to include almost all who make any profession of belief in the Word of God. This is the comprehensiveness of rationalistic latitudinarianism. Our speculative reasonings and our feelings may take the one direction, or may take the other. But in this matter we are not to follow the guidance of our own reasonings, nor to be moved by the promptings of our own feelings. The Word of the Lord must direct our judgment and regulate our feelings. The Christian man, according to the Word Christ, is the man that goes after Christ—“ Whosoever will come after me.” This is the first and general description of a Christian, or of Christian discipleship, given by the Lord himself. A Christian is a follower of Christ. Of what is more particularly involved in this description, I shall treat under my second head of discourse—“ The law or terms of discipleship ;” but here the following things may be noted. First, a Christian is not to be distinguished as such merely because of his connection with any ecclesiastical communion, or organization. That I follow with the purest and most devoted disciples, that I am in fellowship with the purest of Churches, is no sufficient evidence that I am a Christian. The Christian takes his distinctive character and designation from Christ. Judas was among the apostles—yet, he was no Christian. He was that “son

of perdition." Secondly, and as flowing from this, a Christian is one who makes *personal* and deliberate choice of Christ. The words of the Lord single out and individualize men—"Whosoever will come after me"—"Whosoever shall lose his life"—"Whosoever shall save his life"—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me." In Matthew the words are—"If any man will come after me let him," &c. Each man for himself must take the Lord to be his God, and Jesus to be his Saviour. This choice must be by each individual. No other can choose here for a man, as no other can follow after Christ for a man. A Christian in this aspect is, then, a follower of Christ—a willing follower of Christ.

Before passing to the next head of discourse there is yet another view in which we may contemplate and consider the words here before us. They may be regarded as expressive or indicative of a certain state of mind—a state in which a man is thinking about and inclining as it were towards Christ—wishing and willing to be a Christian—a follower of Christ. This is a peculiarly interesting state of mind. The understanding is exercised about the truth, the affections and the wishes are stirred and in motion. It is an interesting state of mind. But it is a state most critical. Yet in some of its aspects it is far from being uncommon. Among those who frequented the ministry of the Lord there were many who seemed inclined to follow Him, and there were many who did follow for a time—some for a longer and some for a shorter period—but who at length grew weary of His service, and drew back to follow Him no more. I believe that many in all our congregations are in this state of mind. They think more or less about Christianity, about Christ, about becoming Christians. They even wish, as they say, that they were Christians: but with all their thoughts, wishes and intentions, they never come to a fixed decision and choice. They live wishing, and they die wishing, and in that day their thoughts and wishes perish with them. Distinct, however, from this common and abortive wishing is the state of mind to which more especially the words of the Lord are applicable. There were among His hearers those who after hearing Him seemed persuaded and appeared willing and pre-

pared to follow Him, to join themselves to Him, like the young man that said, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. This state of mind and feeling is indeed interesting and critical. How shall we deal with a man in this state of mind? Alas! this question reminds us that because of the manner in which too many treat persons who have attained to this state of feeling, many have been drawn back, while many have been encouraged to conclude too rashly that all is well, and to remain dead in sins. By all means we are to encourage men in this state of mind and feeling. But as we would have them follow Christ unto the end, we must instruct them and admonish them saying, in the words of the Lord, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." For Christ will have His disciples to be those who with intelligence and deliberation choose Him to be their Lord, leader, commander, and Saviour.

II. THE LAW OF DISCIPLESHIP.

Following up the thoughts already expressed, it is evident that when here the Lord prescribes the terms, conditions, or law of discipleship, more is implied in being a Christian indeed, than wishes, or a general willingness, as I may call it, to side with Christ, or submit to Him. If wishes of this kind were sufficient to constitute men Christians, the number of the disciples of the Lord would be great indeed. But wishes, protestations, resolutions, vows, are not enough. Not by wishes, not by vows even, is a Christian distinguished from the world. No library could contain the volumes of Christian names if all who wish or even all who make solemn vows respecting this matter were to be registered among the true and faithful disciples of Christ. The vanity of human wishes is proverbial. But sad indeed must be the heart of him who thinks on the vanity of the wishes and the vows of multitudes who at one time or another in their lives wished to be or vowed to be Christians—vowed that they should follow the Lord.

Compliance with the terms of salvation, as these are proposed in the Gospel—this and this only entitles a man to be called a

Christian. It is, therefore, a question of the greatest moment—one in which every man ought to feel the deepest and liveliest interest, and about which his most anxious solicitude should be stirred, “what is the law—what are the terms of Christian discipleship?” The answer to this question is given in the simple, few, but weighty, words of the Lord—“Let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.” The word “Let him follow Me,” includes the two other terms respecting self-denial and taking up the cross. “Follow Me” is the grand brief imperative law universal binding on every man who would be a Christian, who would be saved with an everlasting salvation. But here the Lord in mercy to our dulness and slowness of apprehension gives the law in three parcels, parts, or clauses, and we must not divide what He has joined. Self-denial must not be separated from following Christ, following Christ must not be without self-denial, taking up the cross cannot be without self-denial, and must not be without following Christ, and following Christ must not, cannot be without taking up the cross. Let this thought regulate all the statements which we make respecting the several parts of the law of Christian discipleship, and through the grace of the Lord, let it regulate our life.

The prominency here given to self-denial and to the taking up of the cross is surely significant. Does it not teach the two following lessons? first, that self and the cross are two of the main hindrances and difficulties in the way of the followers of Christ,—and secondly, that without denying self and without taking up the cross we cannot be reckoned among those who follow Christ. Self and suffering, self and cross-bearing are two of the grand obstacles in the way of personal, practical, and real Christianity. By the cross only men are saved, and by the cross men are hindered and deterred from salvation. “To the Jews, a stumbling block, to the Greeks, foolishness, but,” &c. Let us consider the law of discipleship as here declared in its several terms or clauses as well as in their mutual and inseparable relations to each other.

SELF-DENIAL.

Let a man deny himself. This word cuts deep, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. It is a hard saying who can bear it? some one may exclaim. Yet hard though it is, or seems to be, without complying with this first term or condition of the Gospel law of life, we cannot be Christians indeed. It is evident that it includes, first of all, the denial of all ungodliness and worldly lusts. If we would go after Christ, we must come out from our former lusts and deny ourselves—our former life—"that we may no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." (1 Pet. iv. 2, 3.) The word here spoken by Christ the Lord teaches us that we cannot have Him and enjoy the gratification of our sinful lusts. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation teaches us that denying ourselves all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Christ Jesus is a Saviour from sin, therefore, He says, Let a man deny himself.

This Gospel command requires not only that we should abstain from gross lusts and things in themselves manifestly sinful; but also that we should deny ourselves in things lawful, dear, and profitable, that may tend to hinder us from following Christ in all the duties of Gospel obedience. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee." "Let a man deny himself." You remember that the refusal of those invited to the feast, or their ground of excuse, was not taken from things in themselves unlawful or forbidden. The first had bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it. The second had bought five yoke of oxen, and must go to prove them; and the third had married a wife, he could not come. Property, business, home pleasures or duties, were the excuses which they offered. There are those who seem to have clean escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lusts; who live tem-

perately, soberly, and honestly, and who think themselves Christians because they are not as some others, or as they themselves once were. They are reformed in many things, exemplary in many things. Yet they may be so engrossed in the affairs of business, in merchandise, trade, or in providing for their house, wife, and children, as to neglect compliance with the Gospel call and terms of salvation. When closely pressed, urged, and dealt with, they begin to make excuse. Let us not be deceived, brethren; the Lord says, If any man will come after Me, "Let him deny himself." Whosoever he be of you, therefore, that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be the disciple of Christ. Men here are in great danger of deceiving themselves, and of being deceived. They renounce their manifestly sinful courses; they deny themselves those vices which were really hurtful to their health, to their reputation, as well as destructive of their souls, and then they conclude that they are in the way with Christ. But the Gospel requires not only that we renounce things hurtful and vicious, but that we part also with things dear, precious, and profitable, when the pursuit, use, or enjoyment of them conflicts with our course of obedience to Christ. "What things were gain to me, said Paul, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him." "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Matt. x. 37. And again, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke xiv. 26. The call to follow Christ resembles, according to the words here quoted, the call of Moses when standing in the gate of the camp he said, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me." In answer to that call we are told that all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. It was a hard duty to which they were called, for Moses said unto them, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword

by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." Severe though the command was, the obedience was prompt. "The children of Levi did according to the word of Moses." (Ex. xxxii. 26-29.) And for this, in the valedictory blessing of Moses, of Levi it is said, "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father, and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant." (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9.) If any man would be on the Lord's side, let him come to Jesus—let him deny himself.

This command is a call not only to renounce things sinful—things also dear and precious; but it is also a call to deny our own life. Self-denial strikes at the root of self—at the life of self. When the question comes to be death for Christ or life denying Christ, then life must be denied and Christ confessed. Self must be disowned and Christ acknowledged. To this, reference is made in the word, he that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. When we are threatened with the loss not only of goods, of kindred, of all that we hold dear, with loss of life itself for Christ's sake, the law of self-denial here enjoined requires that we part with life, keeping firm hold of Christ. The martyr spirit must be in every Christian man who is a Christian according to the judgment of the Lord.

From all this it is obvious that the self-denial here required of every man who would go after Christ involves the denial of self as the aim of life; the denial of self as the rule of life: the denial of self as the motive of life. Self must not be the aim of the Christian's life; self must not be the law of the Christian's life; self must not be the motive of the Christian's life. In all these things self must be denied. In all these things, the end, law, motive of life, Christ must be all and self must be denied. And tried by this three-fold criterion, the true follower of Christ is distinguished from all others. For however varied seem the

ends and aims of men, they may be reduced to one of these two—either for Christ or for themselves. Self advancement or self gratification is in some form or other the end of the life of all worldly men. They live for themselves—not for God. Many indeed within the Church endeavour to make a compromise in this matter, and attempt to serve God and themselves. But in these cases the bye-ends are served and the great end is neglected. Self is advanced, not denied. God is not glorified. Ye cannot serve two masters—Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Let a man therefore deny himself. According to the ends of men, so is the law by which they walk. Those who walk and live to themselves are a law unto themselves, but to the Christian Christ is law. Self will is the law of those who live not unto God, but the Christian has learned to deny his own will, saying with his Lord and Master, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt; Father, thy will be done.” And as the Christian has denied his own will as law, so he denies self-love as his motive in obeying the law of his Lord. A higher and holier motive has become in the Christian the impelling power. For the love of Christ constraineth us so that we live not to ourselves but unto God. In all this we see not only what distinguishes the Christian from the world, but we see the grand secret of the true Christian’s dignity of character, the secret of his fortitude under suffering, of his steadfastness in the face of oppositions, of his courage in the presence of enemies, and the secret of his life as a life of goodwill, charity, and beneficence. From the time that he entered on the service of his Lord he learned to say of self as his law and motive, “Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Wherefore let a man deny himself.

Thus have we seen that the denial of self here enjoined includes the denial of things sinful and injurious; of things dear and profitable; of life itself; of self as our aim; of self as our law, of self as our motive. But as this first precept of the law of love is of transcendent importance, and as multitudes, in judging of themselves, commit most fatal mistakes about this matter, it may be right, as it seems also necessary, that I should

dwell a little longer on this part of the subject, and present it in another and somewhat different aspect, if by any means men may be led to the exercise of this indispensable grace and duty of self-denial. Let me, therefore, state that Christian self-denial is opposed to self-dependence and to self-pleasing. Meditate on self-denial,

First, As opposed to self-dependence. Self-trust or self-dependence shows itself in countless and most diversified forms in the commerce of daily life. But it is in matters relating to God that we here more particularly have respect to self-denial as opposed to self-dependence. Man fell, at first, from his desire to be as God—independent, absolute; and man, in his fallen condition, shows how strongly this desire took hold of his soul. For his recovery from his guilt and misery he would be indebted to none, not even to the gracious and ever blessed God. Hence the confidence placed in remedial schemes of man's own device, of man's own inventive brain and wisdom; and the distrust, unbelief, or rejection of the sch \acute{e} me provided by the grace and wisdom of God for delivering man, and for raising him from his guilt and his misery. To the wisdom of this world that wisdom of God seems foolishness. But if any man would be saved let him renounce dependence on his own wisdom, and on the wisdom of this world, confessing that the foolishness of God is wiser than man. Let a man confess that he is a fool for Christ's sake, that Christ may of God be made to him wisdom.

Again, man's spirit of self-dependence shows itself in the tenacity with which he cleaves and clings to the notion that he can, some how or other, deserve well—merit favour before the Lord. Ignorant of himself, not knowing his thoroughly fallen and lost condition; ignorant of the law and character of God, ignorant of the righteousness of God, and refusing to be indebted absolutely to the righteousness of God for his acceptance with God and entire salvation, man depending on self goes about to establish and build up for himself a righteousness in which he may stand and demand that he be acquitted and justified. Hence the opposition with which in every age the doctrine of justification by faith alone, without works of law, has met in this world. But if we would be disciples of Christ,

let us deny our own righteousness, and confess that it is filthy rags, that it deserves only that we should perish for ever. Let us deny ourselves, renouncing self-dependence, that Christ may be made unto us of God righteousness.

This confidence shows itself in our unwillingness to admit that we are without strength. We would, in our walk with God, be indebted for something, not to Him, but to ourselves. We would act on the principle of "Self-Help." If we cannot do all, yet we would do something. If we cannot justify ourselves, yet we would sanctify ourselves. Now, the self-denial here enjoined extends to all the steps of the Christian's walk after Christ. The dependence must, in everything and for everything be on Christ. Self must be denied. For thus it is written—Thus saith the Lord, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. xvii. 5—8.)

Meditate, Secondly, on self-denial as opposed to self-seeking, or self-pleasing. And here let us confine our observations almost entirely within the sphere of our human relationships—the relations of man to man. How insensibly, yet how determinedly does self obtrude itself here in the various forms of self-preference, self-aggrandizement, self-display, to the neglect of considering, and esteeming, and preferring our brethren, to the neglect of the demands of human charity, sympathy, and benevolence—nay, even to the detriment, defamation, and dishonour of brethren in the Lord. Are there not many ready to say, with Peter, "Though all should deny thee, yet will not I?" Many who, with Peter's confidence, never felt Peter's real love—many who boast with Peter, sin with Peter, fall with Peter,

but never weep bitterly with him, never repent and are restored with him to live with him humbler and holier lives, in honour preferring one another. How has it almost become a proverb—"See these Christians how they hate one another!" Surely it ought not so to be. Let each, therefore, deny himself, remembering the word—"Seekest thou great things for thyself seek them not;" and that other word—"He that is least among you the same is the greatest." For, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Let self-seeking and self-pleasing, therefore, be denied and put away—let all selfishness be expelled by love—the love of Christ—the love of the brethren.

Before proceeding to the second requirement of the law of Christian discipleship, two remarks must be made in addition to all that has hitherto been said respecting self-denial. First, this denial of self must proceed from an evangelical motive. Let a man deny himself "for my sake"—"for the Gospel." Other motives may produce much apparent self-denial, but the motive which will move a man really to deny himself is this only—for Christ's sake. The love of Christ will produce Christian self-denial, and nothing else will or can. Secondly, although we have spoken of this denial of self as required at the first entrance on a course of Christian obedience, yet it is and must be a daily and habitual exercise of the Christian life. It is one of the badges of the Christian profession first put on, and it is one which must ever appear when a Christian man is living unto God. Let a man, therefore, deny himself. A Christian man is one who willingly denies himself for Christ's sake. But it is added—"And take up his cross."

THE DAILY CROSS.

Let a man "take up his cross." The taking up of the cross cannot be separated from self-denial, nor from following Christ.

Self-denial is in order to the taking up of the cross, and the cross is in order to following Christ. The expression here is familiar to us from early childhood. May it not be that through our familiarity with the sounds of the words we neglect inquiry into the meaning of the very significant expression, let a man "take up his cross?" Through our familiarity with the words we may be ignorant of the meaning intended by them; and it is highly probable that the novelty of the expression when used by the Lord speaking to His disciples and the people, and describing His own followers, may have startled and surprised the hearers, and if at that time they understood what the Lord said and signified by taking up the cross, the effect must have been to lay many of their hopes and cherished expectations low in the dust. Had not the disciples dreamed of a kingdom to be set up in Israel—the kingdom of Messiah—the head and top of earthly principedoms, though diverse from all other kingdoms? Had not the disciples coveted and expected high place advancement and honour in that kingdom beside the King? Were they not like judges and princes to sit on thrones? If these were their expectations, how strangely must the words, "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross," have sounded on their ears! They expected promotion to a throne, but lo, He speaks of each and every man taking up his cross! "I thought," said Naaman the Syrian, when he heard the words of the messenger of Elisha the prophet saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean"—"Behold I thought he will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper." Naaman was wroth at the word of the prophet—his expectations were disappointed, his pride was hurt. Must he be made a fool of to go in his simplicity and wash seven times in Jordan. Might he not wash in Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus—better rivers than all the waters of Israel. Might he not wash in them and be clean? He was offended, and would have returned to his own country a leper as he had left it, had he not been persuaded to try the experiment, "Go wash and be clean." When the Lord spoke of His own suffer-

ings and death, saying He *must* suffer, Peter was offended; Peter would put his *must not be* before the Lord's *must be*. But for this, the Lord not only rebuked the too forward disciple, but in the words before us, he tells Peter himself and every other who would follow Him as Lord and Saviour, that every such man must take up his cross. As He had said of Himself, that He must be rejected of the elders, scribes, and chief priests, must suffer many things, must be killed, and rise again the third day, as it was necessary that He should bear His cross, so He intimates here that it is necessary that every disciple bear also his cross. The disciple must in this be like his master, he must take up his cross.

The cross was the symbol of disgrace, of suffering intense and protracted, of cursing, of death. Thus regarded the taking up of the cross as necessary on the part of every one that would follow Christ, could not to the carnal apprehensions and to the natural feelings of men, be other than a scandal, an offence, a stumbling block. Yet here the Lord lays it down as indispensable to discipleship that every man take up his cross; evidently signifying that a course of obedience to Him for His sake and the Gospel's would expose men to shame, to suffering, to cursing, and to death itself.

Let us first and for a little consider Christ Himself taking up His cross, and then we shall be the better prepared to understand the import and significance of the word, let a man take up his cross.

First: With respect to Christ bearing His cross we are to remember that the cross was laid upon Him, and that He took it up. It behoved Him to suffer, and yet He suffered willingly.

Secondly: We are to remember that the taking up and bearing of the cross by Christ must not be restricted to the things which He suffered when He went to Golgotha bearing His cross: but must be considered as including all that He suffered—all the shame, sorrow, and obloquy suffered during His earthly ministry, as well as what on the cross itself He endured as the substitute for sinners and propitiation for sins, is signified by His cross.

Thirdly: It must be remembered that there is a high and singular sense in which Christ took up, bore, and endured the cross. He took our sins upon Him: He bore the penalty due to our transgressions. He was made sin for us: He was made a curse for us: He died for us that we might be made righteous and blessed, and that believing in Him, we might never see death. "For the joy set before Him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

For our sakes, and that His Father might be glorified in the salvation of sinners, He took up the cross and bore it, suffered all the shame, cursing, pains, of which the cross was the symbol. For our sakes He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Bearing all this in mind, let us consider what He teaches when He says, "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross." It is obvious that He here teaches that every man following Him shall have a cross laid upon; and that instead of refusing the cross the Christian must take it up, take it willingly, consenting to it, and this for Christ's sake, as He took up His cross for our sake.

It is then after Christ, in His service, for His sake, that the Christian is to take up his cross. And it is also to be remarked that as self-denial is binding on every man who would follow Christ, so the bearing of the cross after Christ for His sake is a law universal. To be without this is to be separate from Christ. The cross borne for Christ is a badge of the Christian.

Here it may be asked, "Has not the offence of the cross ceased?" The profession of Christianity no longer, especially in this Christian land, exposes men to shame, to cursing, to persecution, to death. So far this is true, and thanks be unto God that we enjoy liberty of conscience and protection by law from outrage and wrong in our profession of Christ and in the worship of God. It is true that the leaven of the Gospel has so leavened society in this land that a Christian man is not treated as the off-scouring of all things, but is generally held in esteem by the community in the midst of which he lives. It is true that the cross so far from being the symbol of shame and cursing has become the symbol of honour and blessing, the symbol

of civilisation, truth, progress, liberty. It has been and is used as the ornament and decoration of churches and palaces. The artist's skill and labour have been exhausted to depict it on the wide-spread canvas. Female hands have wrought it into the most delicate and ornate embroideries. It is assumed and worn by ignorant myriads as a charm and mystic spell, and by gay women, women of fashion, as an ornament of beauty. In ivory, in gold, in precious stones, it is set. Soldiers have put it on their arms; statesmen and diplomatists have used it on their seals. Columbus set it up on the newly discovered world. Armies have gone to battle with the cross on their banners and the inscription under it, "By this sign I will conquer." Has not the offence of the cross ceased? Has not this requirement, this clause of the law of discipleship, become antiquated—has it not been superseded, rendered unnecessary, by the advancement made by modern civilisation and Christianity? There is no cross now for the Christian to bear distinct from the general burden of suffering or calamity falling to the lot of all men. Is it so? I trow not. The offence of the cross yet remains, and the word is as imperative now as when first spoken by the Lord, "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross." For the cross to be taken up involves more than the assumption of the name of Christ, more than the wearing on our persons, or in our reputation, a symbol or outward badge and appearance of Christianity.

The cross is to be taken up by submitting to the crucifixion and daily mortification of all corruption, all worldliness, all carnality of feeling. We must lay the cross on all our un-renewed man. The old man must be so nailed to the cross that we shall be able to say, "I am crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ liveth in me." Let a man take up the cross in that way and make it his cross; for those that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Daily self-denial will find work for the daily bearing, and taking up of the cross.

The bearing in a Christian spirit of chastisements and afflictions sent upon us by the Lord will give scope and occasion for taking up the cross. There are two ways of bearing affliction,

the worldly way, and the Christian way. The world bears the cross as the impenitent thief suffered on the cross beside Jesus. He reviled Christ. So the worldly suffer under the stern "must be," without the sweet feeling—"It is well." The Christian suffers confessing, "We indeed justly,"—nay, with prayer and calm, gracious resignation. He takes up the cross and sees upon it, "For My sake." He sees love inscribed on it, and therefore he can say and sing—

"'Tis my happiness below
 Not to live without the cross,
 But the Saviour's power to know,
 Sanctifying every loss.
 Trials must and will befall,
 But with humble faith to see
 Love inscribed upon them all,
 This is happiness to me."

The cross is yet to be borne and taken up in the daily course of a godly life—of a life taking its model and rule not from the fashion and course of this world, but from the example of Christ Jesus, from the pattern and law shown to us in the Word of God. Let us not be mistaken: the lively Christian is not a favourite of the world; he is not a favourite of Christians less lively—Laodicean Christians, neither cold nor hot. There is room yet in the daily course of a lively and practical Christianity for taking up the cross. The shame of the cross has yet to be encountered, and must yet be despised by every man who would faithfully confess Christ. But many never have so much of real Christianity as to expose them to shame. And many are tempted to remain in dubious neutrality, or to conform to dubious and worldly courses, that they may avoid the stigma of being counted over-strict, over-righteous, over-zealous—lest they should, even by the so-called liberal Christians of this age, be denounced or nick-named hypocrites, fanatics, Pharisees, or Puritans. Because of this shame, it is to be feared that many do not follow Christ—or do not follow him fully.

Let a man even now set himself in right earnest to elevate the standard of holiness among professed Christians: let him set himself to bring Gospel principles to bear on

the citizenship of men—on their whole conversation: let him expose sin, treachery, dishonesty, double-dealing, covetousness, sensuality, worldly gaiety, and any of the ten thousand practical and palpable evils and vices which, with false names and glosses, prevail in the Churches, or in society, and he will find that direct and indirect opposition will be encountered by him. Yet is he therefore to cease from his work if it be according to the will of Christ, for His sake and in His name? Is he in weariness to give up well doing because it exposes him to the attacks, or the malignant activity of evil doers? Nay, he must not, he must take up his cross, and following Christ say with Paul, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 24.) If, therefore, you have any work in hand for Christ's sake and the Gospel's—be strong in the Lord, be undaunted, take up your cross and count it a blessed thing if it is given you to suffer for His name—"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Taking up the cross you will be more than a conqueror.

But in treating of a law such as this we should consider others in other lands and in other circumstances. The convert in a pagan land knows the force of the law of self-denial, and hard is the struggle to hate and tear himself away from father, mother, wife, sister, children, that he may win Christ and obey His will. He knows what is signified by the daily taking up of the cross for Christ's sake, he knows that it means to be loaded with disgrace, obloquy, ignominy, cursing, and if possible, to be persecuted unto death. So also does the convert from Judaism know the significancy of taking up the cross for Jesus' sake. It is to be excommunicated, to be cursed with terrible imprecations, to be treated as one not worthy to live, in the spirit of those who cried "Away with such a fellow from the earth." Yet the law unbending is here, "Let a man deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Those fined, imprisoned, and tortured for no other crime than for reading the Word of God in countries such as Spain and in the Papal

States,* know what is signified by self-denial and by taking up the cross. Let us remember them—but let us not forget that the word is true in every case where there is a real and living disciple of Christ—self is to be denied, the cross is to be taken up.

Before passing to the next part of the law of discipleship, let the three following remarks be duly considered. The cross here to be taken up is not one of our making, although we willingly take it up. Let us beware of making crosses for ourselves. For among the many and subtle devices of Satan this is one, that he tempts men to make and impose crosses for themselves. We make crosses for ourselves when we let self-will and unmortified affections prevail in our walk. And we are in these circumstances very prone to imagine and conclude that the cross thus made by ourselves is the cross which, in a holy profession of Christ, is laid upon us. O, let us not add to the offence of the cross by our own offensiveness. Let us strive to give none offence in any thing, lest the ministry, service, and cause of Christ—yea, lest Christ himself should be blamed and reproached, be evil spoken of through our foolishness. We make crosses for ourselves when we impose rites, ceremonies, and observances of a religious kind which are not sanctioned, warranted, or required by the will of God. Of this nature are all the penances and bodily services which superstition imposes on its votaries. These are self-made crosses. Against them let us assert the liberty that is in Christ, for He hath made us free from that grievous bondage, having taken all the ceremonies of that kind and nailed them to His cross.

Let us never forget that where there is “no cross there is no crown.” If we would reign with Christ we must serve and suffer with Christ. If we refuse the cross which He has laid upon us, or would lay upon us, then He will refuse to give us the crown. To the crown of glory there is no way but by taking up the cross. “It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with

* This was written, of course, before the recent revolutions and grand events in Spain and in Rome.

Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign: if we deny Him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim. ii. 11-13.) So wrote Paul, who had daily experience of taking up and bearing his cross, suffering as an evil doer unto bonds. But for Christ's sake, and the elects' sake, he endured all things. Hear him as he exults under the cross—"We are troubled," says he, "on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. . . . For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv.) The cross is for time; the suffering for a little season; but after ye have suffered a while there is rest; there is the incorruptible crown, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory, for ever. Grudge not, therefore, to take up the cross, it will soon be exchanged for the palm of victory, for the harp of gold, for the amaranthine unfading crown.

Let it be ever remembered that the cross laid upon the Christian, and to be taken up daily by him, is the cross laid on him and taken up by him after Christ in following the Lord. The heavy cross was laid upon Christ, or we may say with many of the older writers, the heavy end of the cross was borne by Christ, and He gives us the light end to bear after Him. He bore the curse, the wrath, He took on Him the sin; He merited righteousness, and purchased everlasting redemption for His followers. In our cross bearing there is not the load of wrath, there is not the weight of the curse. All that has been taken away, carried and endured by Christ. In our cross

bearing there is no merit. The merit is all in His. But yet He gives to His people to take up the cross after Him. Let us then be sure that it is in serving and following Him that we take up the cross. And let His example in bearing His cross be followed by us in bearing our cross for His sake. Let the mind which was in Him be also in us. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." (1 Pet. iv. 1.) Let the mind which was in Christ be also in us while we go out after Him, taking up the cross and bearing His reproach. The Christian is one who denies himself and takes up his cross for Christ's sake.

FOLLOWING CHRIST.

The third requirement or clause in the law of discipleship must now receive attention and be deeply, prayerfully considered. If any man will come after Me, "Let him follow Me." Here again as in respect to the former clause it occurs to us that so familiar are we with the formula "Follow Me," that we fail to apprehend the meaning and significance of the expression. But brief and familiar though this formula be it includes or involves and requires all that is implied in self-denial and in taking up the cross, while it exhibits another aspect of the Christian life and character. Self-denial and taking up the cross must not be apart from obedience to the word "Follow Me." In illustration and proof of this remark we may refer to the words of the Lord spoken to the young man who came to Jesus and kneeling asked Him saying, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" When in answer to the words of the Lord respecting the commandments He had said, "All these have I observed from my youth;" we are told that Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said unto him: "One thing thou lackest, go thy way and sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come take up the cross and follow Me." The same law of discipleship as that before us was that which the Lord prescribed to the young man. There was self-denial included in going selling all and distributing it to the poor: but not there did the law

end; the cross must be taken up—come take up the cross; but more is added, “take up the cross and follow Me.” The self-denial and taking up the cross must be joined with, must be attested by following Christ. Men may forsake all, give all their goods to feed the poor, and give their bodies to be burned, and yet not be followers of Christ. But if men follow Him, continue following Him, they give proof the most satisfactory and infallible that they have forsaken all, that they have taken up the cross.

Before evolving in some heads or particulars what is signified by the formula “Follow Me,” it may be noted here that two correlate acts are implied in the call to follow Christ: first, an act of renunciation, involving the entire and absolute committal of our souls and persons unto Christ; and secondly, an act of choice and submission by which we take Christ in His entireness, that is in His person, offices, work, to be our Saviour, Lord, and Redeemer. These two acts are really one, for they are the act of faith embracing Christ and submitting to Him. But in that very act our connection with all that is over against Christ and His cause and glory is broken. The new union is destructive of the old. From the time that Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus and prostrate on the ground said, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” he renounced confidence in other saviours, he abandoned the service of other lords, he conferred not with flesh and blood, but became a follower and servant of Jesus Christ. So from the time that any man acting faith in Christ casts from him his weapons of rebellion, agrees to the terms of salvation proposed and offered by Christ, saying, “I am for thee, not for another,” he becomes a follower of Christ. For by that act he submits himself entirely to Christ, and takes Christ as He is to be his Saviour and Lord.

“If any man will come after me, Let him follow Me.” The call to follow Christ is a call first to receive Him as our teacher, and to place ourselves under His instruction and guidance. Those who followed Christ when He went in and out among men were called His disciples or scholars. They attended on His ministry to be taught by Him their master. This continued to be the distinctive designation of believers in Jesus for some

time after the Lord was received up into heaven. And we are told that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts xi. 26.) As those who attended at the school of Socrates were the disciples of Socrates; those at the school of Plato, disciples of Plato, taking their distinctive appellation from the master on whose instruction they waited, and whose doctrines they embraced and professed, so believers in Jesus, those who followed Him, were called His disciples. Although the name is now merged in that of Christians, and although Jesus is no longer visible among men, yet those who believe in Him and profess to submit to His authority as the Messiah are His disciples, and follow Him to be taught the way of God by Him. And as among the disciples of Christ, there were some who followed Him only for a time, and afterwards went back and walked no more with Him, being offended at His teaching, finding His sayings too hard for them to bear; so from among the multitudes who profess to be believers in the present day, there are those who draw back from Christ when self-denial and the cross are practically inculcated and necessarily required.

In following Christ as our teacher, we confess that we are ignorant and foolish, that apart from Him we know nothing: we renounce our confidence in our wisdom, and in the wisdom of men, and acknowledge that the light of nature is insufficient to direct us to God as the God of our salvation. Further, we profess our desire and willingness to receive and learn the will of God by the teaching of Christ Jesus, whom we confess to be the Son of God, the Messiah, and light of the world.

The history of Justin Martyr furnishes an interesting illustration of the wanderings and experience of a man, till brought to sit at the feet of Christ. Born at Neapolis, and brought up in Gentile learning, he visited almost all the distinguished schools of the wise men of that age, earnestly desiring to be taught concerning the nature, being, and perfections of God. Having received no satisfaction from the representatives of the several schools of philosophy, for the world by wisdom knew not God, he betook himself to meditation in retirement. At this period of his life, he tells us, that when walking near the sea he was met by an aged man of venerable appearance, who directed him

to the Hebrew prophets, and gave him some view of the nature and evidence of Christianity, and added, "Above all things pray that the gates of light may be opened to you; for they are not discernable, nor to be understood by any one, except God and His Christ enable a man to understand." Justin never saw his aged counsellor again. But immediately, he tells us, "a fire was kindled in my soul, and I had a strong affection for the prophets and for those men who are the friends of Christ: I weighed within me the arguments of the aged stranger; and, in the end, I found the Divine Scriptures to be the only sure philosophy." This event, so important in his life, took place about his 23rd year, A.D. 137. Thenceforth he became a disciple and follower of Christ, and, at length, about thirty years after this event, he suffered martyrdom on the mere accusation of his being a Christian.

In following Christ as our teacher we should cherish a deep and growing sense of our ignorance; we should cultivate close fellowship with Him, that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. In following Him we should cherish a docile or teachable spirit, ready and willing to catch the slightest intimations of His will, while we sit like Mary at His feet. In following Him we should be diligent and prayerful in the use and improvement of the means which He has appointed and promised to bless, that the steps of His people may be guided into the way of peace. In following Him we must be willing to receive not only parts of His teaching, but to receive all His words, knowing that they are spirit and life, and that what we do not now understand, we shall, by waiting on Him, know hereafter. By His word He enlightens men: by His spirit He makes the word in the soul quick and powerful. Let us, waiting on Him, pray that the gates of light may be opened to us—that He, by his gracious spirit, may open our eyes that we may behold the wonders of His law, and open our understandings that we may understand the Scriptures, which, through faith, are able to make us wise unto salvation. When the first converts in Otaheite separated themselves from the gross idolatries in which they had lived, when they joined themselves to the Lord, they were spoken of by their neighbours as the praying

people and the reading people. So should all the followers of Christ be known among men as those who give themselves to prayer, and as those who search the Scriptures, that the word of Christ may dwell in them, richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and that they also may shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life. Nor should we omit here to say that the teachable and willing scholar should also remember the word of Mary, the mother of Jesus, spoken to the servants at the marriage feast, in Cana of Galilee—"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do."

The call to follow Christ is a call to trust in Him as the propitiation for our sins, and as our advocate with the Father. We are not only blind and ignorant, we are guilty and condemned because of our sin. We need not only a teacher and a guide to direct us in the way to God, but we need a priest, a sacrifice, atonement, reconciliation, a righteousness, an advocate, and intercessor. Accordingly, Christ the prophet reveals himself as the Priest, the propitiation for sin. Among the doctrines which he teaches as a prophet these are of infinite importance—that we are lost, depraved, guilty, and in ourselves without righteousness or hope before God: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself:" that He, the Son of Man, came to give His life a ransom for many, to seek and to save the lost, and that His blood secures the remission of sin to all those who believe in Him for righteousness, and confessing and forsaking their sins, commit to Him the keeping of their souls. Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, to follow Him. In following Him, therefore, we renounce our self-righteousness, and depend upon Him for righteousness and life. It is through the shedding of His blood that the way is opened into the holiest of all, and by His sacrifice that sin is taken away. Therefore, all who would go after Him, must look to Him, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. As God is pacified through that blood, so when it is sprinkled on the guilty conscience it purifies the heart from an evil conscience, and diffuses peace through the soul. He is no disciple of Christ who is not convinced of sin, grieved and vexed because of sin, and who does not betake himself for relief, for

pardon and acceptance, to the propitiation that has been made by Christ. "When I speak of a Christian," says one, "as a believer in Christ, I mean that he is one who has been deeply convinced of his guilt as a sinner; of the righteousness of the sentence of condemnation that has been pronounced against him; of the truth of the Scripture testimony concerning Jesus Christ as the Divine and all-sufficient Saviour, who hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and of the entire suitability of the free salvation revealed through His atonement to his own state as a guilty and justly condemned creature;—and who, under an impressive consciousness that he has in himself nothing worthy to form any part of the ground of his acceptance, humbly relies on the mercy of God, through the work and merits of the Saviour alone."

There are those who would have salvation without the cross, without the sacrifice and atonement of Christ; but we know of no deliverance from sin except through the shedding and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. The followers of Christ are distinguished by this that their entire trust for acceptance with God rests on the righteousness of God in Christ. For they believe, according to the testimony of Scripture, that Christ Jesus suffered as the surety and substitute of sinners, that the sins of His people were imputed to Him, and that He bore the curse in His own body on the tree, being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. This perfect and all-sufficient righteousness is the ground of our justification, and because we are justified on that ground the justification is perfect. There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Following Christ, let us ever look to Him as the crucified Saviour. Without this view of Christ we do not follow Him. But if we behold Him as our crucified Lord Jesus, then we know that His blood cleanseth us from all sin. Let the eye be ever directed to the cross, for it was that it might be fixed on that object that he intimated the necessity of His own sufferings and death, and that he rebuked Peter before He said to the disciples and to the people—"Let a man follow me."

In following Him we must look to Him, and depend on Him

as the advocate, as well as the propitiation. We follow Him for the remission of daily sins—sins after conversion as well as sins before we were regenerated. “If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; we make God a liar. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” Christ the priest, Christ the forerunner, who has for us entered into the holiest of all, appears there the priest upon His throne, our advocate with the Father, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

In following Christ, depending on Him, the propitiation for sins, and committing our case into His hands, as the advocate within the vail, it becomes us to cherish and cultivate a deep and growing sense of the evil and guilt and demerit of sin. Many seem to forget altogether that they are by nature corrupt and utterly ruined. They have no adequate sense of their guilty condition, so faithfully described and set forth in the words, “The sinfulness of that estate into which man fell consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions that proceed from it.” And, as they have no adequate sense of their sinfulness, so they feel not the misery of their condition, as having “lost communion with God, being under His wrath and curse, and so liable to the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.” Very different from the experience of such persons is that of the pilgrim going out to follow the Lord—“I saw a man,” says John Bunyan, “clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with a book in his hand and a great burden upon his back. I looked and saw him open the book and read therein; and, as he read, he wept and trembled, and not being able longer to continue, he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying, ‘What shall I do?’ In this plight was the pilgrim at the outset of his course, but when he

came up with the cross his burden loosed from off his shoulders and fell from off his back and fell into the sepulchre; then too, did he hear the words, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' 'Peace be unto thee.' Then was he stripped of his rags, and clothed with a change of raiment; then was a mark set on his forehead and a roll put into his hand. Thus favoured, he went on his way joyfully, yet walking humbly." So let us follow the Lord, setting Him continually before us for righteousness, life, and peace.

The call to follow Christ is a call to submit to Him and serve Him as our Master and King. In another place, the call is thus expressed,—“If any man serve me, let him follow me.” (John xii. 26.) The service and the following are joined together. The follower of Christ is a servant of Christ. The followers of Christ are described in another place as ministering unto Him of their substance. (Luke viii. 3.) In this service, the heart undivided is given to the Master. One is your Master, even Christ. “We are thine” is the language of the servants of the Lord; or, “I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid.” The service like the following is with a willing mind. It is with a free and cheerful spirit, and the believer glories in it as his high dignity that he is the servant of Jesus Christ. As in this service the heart is given to the Lord, so the eye of the servant is turned towards the Master, watching for the intimations of His will—“Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord.” (Psalm cxxxiii.) As the eye is fixed on the Lord, so the ear of the servant that had been bored and nailed to his door post, in token of perpetual servitude, is open to hear His commands or reproof. “Thy servant heareth.” His ear is opened to discipline—“He that is of God heareth God’s words.” “The sheep follow Him for they know His voice.” As the ear is open to hear, so the hand of the follower of Christ is ready to act, and the foot shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace is ready to run in the service of the Lord. Whatsoever, therefore, thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might—do it not with a slack hand, but with all thy might. Wherefore, laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, let us

run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children.

The manner in which the old servant of Abraham kept the charge of the dying patriarch may serve as an illustration and pattern of the manner in which believers should keep and obey the words of their Master who says, "Then are ye My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." He had promised under oath that he would fulfil his master's will concerning a wife for Isaac. In executing his commission he showed promptitude, prayerfulness, fidelity. Having gone to the city of Nahor and resting outside the city by a well, he said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham send me good speed this day and show kindness unto my master Abraham." And the Lord having begun to prosper his way, "the man bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord." Having been received and welcomed into the house of Nahor, meat was set before him; but he said, "I will not eat until I have told mine errand." His master's service must have his first care. Surely the Christian should count his Master's service his first care. Ought he not to be mindful of his Master's honour? As the aged servant of Abraham said, "I am Abraham's servant;" so ought the Christian to glory in this, that he is the servant of Christ. Ought it not to be his meat and his drink to do the will of his glorious Lord and Redeemer? Let promptitude, prayerfulness, fidelity distinguish the servant and follower of Christ. For then shall we not be ashamed when we have respect to all His commandments; "If any man serve Me, him will my Father honour." Let us, then, seek to be good and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, glorifying Him in soul, body, and spirit; for we are not our own, we are bought with a price, and as we have sworn, so shall we perform, we shall, through grace, keep His statutes, for His commands are not grievous. His yoke is easy, His burden light.

The call to follow Christ is a call to copy His example and

to walk in His footsteps in all the way of our obedience unto God. Christ is not only our Prophet to instruct us in the will of God, not only our Priest, Propitiation, Righteousness, and Advocate, not only our Master, Lord, and King, but He is also our example. "He has left us an example," says Peter, "that we should follow His steps." (1 Peter ii. 21.) "I have given you an example," said Jesus himself after He had washed the feet of His disciples, "that you should do as I have done to you." (John xiii. 15.) And we read that the people of God are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son. (Rom. viii.) He, therefore, that follows Christ is called to walk as Christ also walked. The example of Christ is therefore law to the follower of Christ.

Before proceeding to single out some of the features of the example set before us by the life of the Lord Jesus, let me here remind you of the importance and prominency given to the personal elements in the words of the Lord,—“If *any man* will come after *Me*,” “let *him* follow *Me*.” We are prone to forget this—we are prone to merge *our* personality in the general profession of Christianity, and to remove from view the person of Christ behind abstract truths and doctrines concerning Him. We speak of believing in Christianity rather than believing in Christ. Nay, even we speak of the cross apart from Jesus Christ crucified. This tendency to deal with abstractions rather than with personal realities, shows itself in the universal language of mankind, and reminds us of the attempt of Adam after his sin to hide himself from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden. Men speak of providence and deity of religion and Christianity, and sometimes let it be admitted from motives of awe and reverence—but the Scriptures bring to view a personal and living God, a personal and living Saviour. From his hiding place among the trees of the garden the Lord called forth Adam with the word, “where art thou?” And from the crowd, whether of companions, or of fancies, ceremonies, and abstractions, the Lord, a personal and living Saviour, calls forth and singles out every man saying—“What is that to thee? Follow *thou Me*.” It is true, indeed, that it is by the word of inspiration that Christ is set forth to our view, to our faith.

It is by that word as by a reflecting glass that we behold the glory of the Lord: but it is also true that we may be much conversant with the Scriptures and yet fail to behold the glory of the Lord. Let us, therefore, never forget that precious though the truth be, yet its preciousness consists in this, that it exhibits Christ as the object of faith. "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that believing ye might have life through His name." Although I have little sympathy with those in the present day who talk in philosophical slang and cant of Christianity being a life, not a doctrine, as I believe that it is both life and doctrine, life because it is a doctrine, yet I must remind you and myself that to be Christians we must not only profess faith in certain truths called Christianity, but we must also be in fellowship with the Saviour Jesus. To be Christians we must believe in Christ, receive out of His fulness, grace for grace, be partakers of His Spirit—We must be followers of Christ. "Let a man follow Me."

The call to follow Christ is a call to copy His example, and to walk in His footsteps. The example of Christ is law to His followers. For as one has well said, "Jesus Christ, by the spotless purity of His character, by His entire devotedness to the Divine will, by the incomparable perfection of His obedience, and the superabundant fulness of His love, is the *law personified*. He who beholds Jesus Christ, beholds the law. He who lives with Jesus Christ, lives in the law, is one with the law." When at the first, man was created in the image of God, the law was written on his heart. In the state of innocence and sinlessness there was on the heart of man a transcript or copy of the law or will of God. But when man by sinning against God fell from his high estate of bliss and holiness, the writing on his heart was defaced and obliterated. And although fragments, traces, and remnants of that law were still observable in human nature, yet it pleased the Lord having given promise of a Restorer and Redeemer to give also a transcript of His law engraven on tables of stone. But when the Redeemer Himself came, the law in its totality was inscribed in His heart, so that He could say,—"Thy law is within my heart." In His life He

obeyed the law, and in His death He endured the penalty of the law due to transgressors. His life is therefore become law to us, for in Him the law is magnified and made honourable. And as the law of the Lord was in His heart, and expressed in His life, so He calls His people to follow Him, promising to write His law in their hearts, to put His Spirit in them that they may walk in His statutes. As His life was law expressed, embodied, personified, so the believer's life is to be an imitation or copied resemblance of the life of Christ. Accordingly, the call to follow Christ may be regarded as a call to dedicate ourselves unreservedly and entirely to the Lord, after the example of Christ Jesus. In response to the question, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Christ Jesus the Son of God said, "Here am I, send Me,"—"Lo, I come, I delight to do Thy will." Let this mind which was in Christ be also in us. As He at the call of His Father prepared Himself, dedicated Himself, sanctified Himself for His people. So when He says, "Follow Me," let us respond saying, we come unto thee. The thoroughness or completeness of His consecration of Himself to the Father's will and service was manifest in all the actings and sufferings of Jesus. "Wist ye not that I should be about my Father's business?" were His words to Mary His mother, when He was yet but about twelve years of age. "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" were the words with which he removed John's objection when he hesitated to baptize the sinless and holy one. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work," were His words to the disciples when at the well of Samaria. Though weary, He taught the woman and revealed Himself to her as the Messiah. "Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt," were His words when in agony He prayed the more earnestly. All through His life, even unto the time when He gave up the ghost, we find the proofs innumerable of His entire and absolute devotedness to His Father's service. His followers must in this respect be conformed to Him. Wherefore, says Paul, I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, your reasonable service.

Seeing that Christ himself hath set us an example of prompt

and entire consecration to His Father—seeing that He does not say “Go,” but “Come—Follow me—Come after me,” we ought surely to yield a prompt and thorough obedience to the call. Yet many are so entangled with the cares of life, many so engrossed with what they call the business of life, many so immersed in sensuality, many so addicted to pleasure, that they refuse to devote themselves entirely to the Lord. Many, on the other hand, who seem willing to follow Christ, and who seem to follow Him for a time, are again entangled and ensnared. When Christ says, Come, follow me, let us beware of saying, Let us first go and attend to this or that business, or pleasure, or care. Rather let us say, Lord, draw us, and we will run after Thee. For to whom shall we go but unto Thee: Thou hast the words of eternal life.

The following of Christ implies that we take His aim or end to be the aim or end of our life. As He consecrated Himself to the Father, so the grand aim of His life in obedience and suffering was to honour and glorify His Father. “I have glorified Thee on the earth” said the Lord, in that prayer which He offered before He went over the brook Kedron to Gethsemane. That word reveals the great object of His life in relation to the saving of the lost. To the attaining of that end, He became incarnate, He obeyed, taught, did, and suffered the will of God. To make that our object and aim He calls when He invites us to follow Him. Man, in sinning, made himself his glory, himself his end. He sought equality with God, and fell into abject misery. The law declared that man’s chief end was to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever, but it is in Christ Jesus that we behold the perfect fulfilment of the law, and the perfect exemplar of a life having for its aim the glory of God. The follower of Christ must be conformed to Him in this respect, that he live not unto himself but unto God. It is this aim or end before us that will elevate and enliven our desires after progressive holiness—that will give a noble dignity and, at the same time, an unfeigned humility, to our bearing and to our walk among men. We are not our own—we are bought with a price, therefore, let us glorify God. Whatsoever therefore ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.

The following of Christ signifies and requires that we walk after Him according to the rule which He has left—the rule by which He himself walked. That rule is none other than the royal law of love. The follower of Christ is not placed under the law as a covenant of life. His title to eternal life does not rest on his personal obedience to that law: yet the follower of Christ is not an Antinomian. We do not make void the law through faith, we establish the law. For accepting of Christ as our propitiation and righteousness, we acknowledge that the law is holy, just, and good. But this acknowledgment is practically belied if we do not walk after Christ in obedience to the holy, just, and good law of the Lord. The Christian is redeemed from the curse of the law, not from the rule of the law. For we are under law to Christ. In following the Lord, we walk in the footsteps of Him who walked in all things according to the requirements of the law and will of God. That law, if we may so speak, now appears more venerable and more obligatory than ever. For, not only is it seen to be reasonable, not only is it seen to be the law of God, but it is now seen to be the law which Christ fulfilled—the spirituality of which He expounded and taught—the precepts of which He observed and kept continually, and the terrible penalty of which He suffered when He was made sin—made a curse for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

The obedience of Christ to the will and law of His Father, flowed from love to the Father, and from delight in His Father's will. He became a servant that He might yield obedience to His Father: but when He served it was with the heart of the Son, and therefore was His Father well pleased, for though He was the Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. So should the obedience of His followers proceed from filial love. For they, though by nature slaves, are adopted into sonship. Therefore, should they both from gratitude and from filial love serve the Lord saying, each one, "O how I love Thy law, it is my meditation all the day." How dearly should that law now be loved which carries about with it the fragrancy and perfume of the obedience of Christ.

The obedience of Christ was constant and universal, that is

to say, He obeyed all through His life, and obeyed having equal respect to the whole will of God—to all the requirements of that law which is exceeding broad. Even so should the follower of Christ have respect unto all the will of the Lord, and be faithful in all things, in all times, and in all places. “Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all Thy commandments.” “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

The call to follow Christ is a call to live in the Spirit, to walk after the Spirit, and therefore it is a call to copy and cultivate those graces which were manifested in the life and character of Christ Jesus. The faithful follower of Christ is a partaker of the Spirit of Christ. For if a man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Being a partaker of that Spirit, the graces of the Spirit must be found in Him. For the Spirit is the root of all grace in the believer. In Christ the Spirit dwelt without measure, and out of that measureless fulness His people all receive. As in Christ there was the overflowing fulness of the Spirit—so every grace was in Him, and every grace in full perfection.

III. THE ARGUMENT.

Having treated of the law of Christian discipleship, I now proceed to consider the reasons annexed to this law, and by which compliance with the Gospel terms of salvation is urged upon men. These are given in the words—“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels.” In these words the Lord reasons with men, as if He said, I speak as unto wise men—come let us reason together. In calling men to follow Him, he had laid down terms requiring self-denial and the taking up of

the cross. He who has said that He must suffer and be killed, called on men to follow Him. These are hard terms, who can comply with them? who can bear them?—To remove the objections of such persons, the Lord here shows that compliance with the terms proposed is wisdom, the only wisdom. 1. For He shows that if we have respect to life—if the love of life is a motive to our actions, then life is saved, not lost, by taking up the cross—that life is lost, not saved, by refusing to take up the cross after Christ, for His sake and the Gospel's. 2. The Lord here shows that if we have respect to profit, gain, or real advantage—if the love of gain or profit is a motive to our actions and course of conduct, then we are really gainers—we are really enriched and profited by denying ourselves for Christ's sake; and that the way to irretrievable ruin or loss is by refusing to part with all for Christ's sake. 3. And again, the Lord shows that if we have respect to honour and reputation, if the love of reputation is a motive fitted to influence our actions, then the way to secure honour and to avoid shame and ignominy, is to take up the cross and to follow Christ; and that the way to dishonour and everlasting contempt is to refuse to be followers of Jesus. It is by this threefold and most wonderful argument that the Lord would here persuade us to be His followers. How impressive, how persuasive should His words be! O that they were this day brought home with Divine authority and with irresistible power to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Let us thoughtfully and prayerfully meditate on the words of Him who spake as never man spake.

Is it not the fact that the love of life has deterred many from being the followers of Christ the Crucified One? Here the Lord Himself removes that objection out of the way.

Is it not the fact that the love of worldly profit, gain, or advantage, deters many from being the followers of Him who had no place where to lay His head? Here the Lord takes that objection out of the way.

Is it not the fact that the love of reputation, of applause, the love of the good opinion of others, deters multitudes from following that Saviour whose name is blasphemed by an adul-

terous and sinful generation? The Lord here takes that objection out of the way.

Life, profit, honour, are here held out as the rewards of following Christ. Eternal wisdom, the wisdom of God incarnate appears before us offering in his right hand length of days, and in his left riches and honour. For riches and honour are with him, yea, durable riches and righteousness.

Ignominy, loss, death, are the wages of those who refuse to follow Christ. He that sinneth against the Lord wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate Him love death.

Let us meditate upon and weigh the arguments here before us.

THE LOVE OF LIFE.

The first may be regarded, as we have already said, as designed to meet and remove the objection taken against the terms of salvation grounded on the love of life, or the instinct and principle of self-preservation. The law of discipleship declared by the Lord, appears at first sight contradictory to that law in the constitution of our being, or nature, as the creatures of God, that prescribes to every one the duty of preserving or saving his own life. The indestructible instincts of our nature prompt us to disobey the requirement to take up the cross, and to lay down our life for Christ's sake. Is the Gospel, then, at war with the feelings and instincts which God has implanted in our humanity? Must we in becoming Christians cease to be men? Surely this is not the Gospel requirement. For Jesus, the Son of God became man, took on Him bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, that he might be the Saviour of His people—that He might save them, not from their humanity, but from their sins. The Gospel does not destroy; it does but regenerate, purify, and ennoble our humanity.

The love of life is one of the root principles, or instincts of our nature, showing itself in our aversion to pain, in our desire of happiness, and of the continuance of our life. In man this instinct is associated with other instincts and feelings, and placed under the regulation and control of reason. The instinct

itself is, in its lower forms, common to man with all sentient creatures; but it is in man grafted into, or associated with, rational and moral principles. These are the distinctive principles of man as man. In keeping with these, the instinct of self-preservation assumes the form of a rational self-love, or respect to a man's good or happiness on the whole. This rational self-love is characteristic of man, and it shows itself among other things in the desire to save the life—to preserve from injury from pain, or from death.

Now, what the Lord here teaches is,—that so far is the call to self-denial and to taking up the cross, or to laying down the life for His sake, opposed to this principle in our nature, that it meets this and presents the only means and way for saving, that is for preserving for ever the life which is so precious. “For whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it.” This seems paradoxical; but it is the truth.

The love of life and the instinct of self-preservation prompt us to avoid at all times what may tend to injure or endanger life. But reason and forethought belong to man, so that we find ourselves often willingly subjected to pain and to hardship, nay, we endanger our lives from a regard to what we reckon our good, upon the whole our continued or permanent good. Our love of life does not prevent us from undergoing severe discipline for a time, that we may, as we say, afterwards live a life worth the living. We bring our instincts under the regulation of reason, and under the restraints of forethought. And conduct of this kind, when the aim is good, is said to be reasonable and worthy of man. Thus it is with the discipline and education of our earlier years. Thus it is with the labours of the husbandman, with the studies of the scholar, with the training and exercises of the soldier. In all the arts of life we find men looking beyond the present to the future, beyond present hardship, pain, and toil to rest, pleasure, or enjoyment in the future.

Now, as we look at the present, and anticipate an uncertain future, a time to come in the life that now is, the Lord surveys life in its full extent, in its length through an endless futurity;

and he tells us the saving of the life now involves the losing of it for ever, and that the losing of it now, for his sake, secures it unto life eternal.

In refusing to submit to the terms of salvation, proposed by Christ, we are, therefore, blind to our own good on the whole. We are guilty of extreme folly. "For the life is more than meat," more than the body, and it continues beyond death, and beyond the grave. For when Jesus foretold his own sufferings and death, he at the sametime foretold his resurrection. He must die—He must rise again. When His body lay in the grave, His soul lived, and on the morning of the first day of the week, it was re-united to the body in which He had suffered, and which had lain in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. So He tells us that although our bodies may be killed, yet our real life is not extinguished. The disembodied spirit, the life, is imperishable; if, therefore, we would save that life, and have part in the blessed resurrection, let us not fear them that can kill the body, but after that have no power; but let us fear Him who hath power to cast soul and body into hell—let us take up the cross and follow Christ.

There are among men those who are so lost in sensuality that they do not look on the consequences in after years of their present infatuation. They are counted among men—brutish. There are those who spend their days in a round of empty pleasures, not forecasting the future, even of this life, but sipping each cup of pleasure: they are counted frivolous and silly—men call them foolish. There are others, more thoughtful, who rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, making provision for days to come—days that to them may never come. They are counted wise—they scorn delights and live laborious days. Yet, how few of them forecast the future of eternity! Wise they are for life, if life were measured in duration by the few years spent here below; but life is interminable. And the wise man is he who anticipates eternity, and lives for God. The foolish man is he who thinks to save his life by avoiding the cross. And his folly shall be made apparent yet to himself, and to all—when it shall be *too late* to recover what has been lost.

THE LOVE OF GAIN.

The second argument here advanced by the Lord may be regarded as doing away with an objection taken from man's love of profit or property. This principle is deeply rooted in human nature, and shows itself in countless varieties of form. As men excuse themselves from following Christ because of their inordinate self-love—the love of life; so they excuse themselves because of the loss or damage to which the profession of faith in Christ subjects them. So far from being willing to part with life for Christ's sake, or the Gospel's, many will not part with any of their goods for the sake of the Lord, or in His service. They have such a love of life, that they cannot die for Christ's sake. The Lord shows them that if their love were more intelligent—if they really loved life, their real life, they would willingly consent to lose their present life for Him. They have so strong a love to profit and gain that they will holdfast that which they have, and will not part with it to follow Christ. Now, here again the Lord reasons with men, and reasons, if we may so speak, on commercial principles, and on relative worth and values. He puts the argument in the form of a question of profit and loss: and he so puts it that only one answer can be given. You account yourselves wise and far-seeing, shrewd men. You know that pain is pain, that loss is loss, that life is life, that gain is gain. You are not so foolish or fanatical as these brainsick people, who take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and who submit even cheerfully to torture and to death for Christ's sake. You congratulate yourselves on your superior policy, discernment, and sagacity. You keep and know how to keep a whole skin and a sealed purse, and you smile at the weakness and folly of these others, so prodigal of their goods and substance, so reckless of their precious lives. We believe that these are the sentiments of all worldly men, if they were faithfully expressed. This their wisdom is their folly. For on their own principles of profit and loss they are proved to be fools—proved to be engaged in a course that must end in irremediable ruin—in everlasting bankruptcy. For, says the Lord, "What shall it profit a man,

if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Consider this argument. Put the case in the most favourable light—the case of a man who has gained much—who has gained the whole world, and as he is about to view his prize and to say—"It is mine"—falls down a dead man. What has he gained? A grave for his body. That is his gain. But what has he lost? In effort to gain the great prize he has lost his life. Set the world over against the life lost, and what has the gain been? Whether is the world or the life the more precious? Is the world an equivalent for the life that has been lost? Will death accept it in exchange for that soul now in eternity? The man who, on these terms, gained the world incurred an irreparable loss; for the life is more precious than the world; it consisteth not in the abundance of the things which we possess, or call our property. More valuable than the whole world to a man is his own life.

But put the case in another light. Life is more than the animated existence which we call life. Life is the soul in its imperishable and continuous identity, capable of permanent happiness or of permanent misery. The case now is,—What is the profit resulting to a man from a transaction in which he has gained the world, the whole world, but in exchange for which he has given away his soul. Suppose him after attaining possession of his large domains to live for many years. But he lives having sold himself—his soul, his life—to Satan. What has he gained when the word reaches him—This night is thy soul required? Will death, will God accept the world as an equivalent for his soul, or for his life? Will the world purchase for him an eternity of bliss? Ah! he knows and feels that he is poor indeed—that he is a lost man; for he has lost his own soul. Life is too cheaply sold when it is given in barter for the world—the soul is too cheaply sold when the world is taken as a substitute for it. Yet, behold the folly of man! Forgetful of what they in words admit and confess, they live as if their souls were of little or of no value—as if the veriest trifles and baubles were more precious than their immortal souls. For a mess of pottage one will

sell his birthright. For a wedge of gold, or a goodly garment, another will bring everlasting trouble on himself. For thirty pieces of silver Judas will sell his Lord, and bring swift perdition on himself. For the world, what crimes do men not perpetrate—but what say I? For the world? Nay, for a crumb of bread—nay for the momentary gratification of appetite, pride, or passion, a man will sell away that soul which the whole world cannot repurchase, cannot redeem.

Brethren, let us be true to ourselves. Let us read the value of the world in the light of the word of Him, who is the creator and proprietor of heaven and earth. Let us read the value of life, of the life of the soul, in the light of the words of Him, who both made and redeemed the soul—made it after His image, and redeemed it with his own precious blood, that he might renew it after his own glorious likeness. All is lost if the soul is lost. All is gain if the soul is gained—if the soul is saved. The whole world is no compensation for a soul lost. A soul saved is absolute gain—everlasting profit even if the world be lost.

Let us take a lesson in estimating values from yonder company returning by ship from a foreign land. They have spent life in accumulating wealth. They have realised their expectations. Their fortunes in solid gold are carried with them in the vessel. They are homeward bound. But suddenly the sky is overcast. The waves begin to roll heavily. Gloom gathers above and around. The wind rises, the whirlwind and tempest overtake them. Deep calls to deep; and the proud vessel that had so often crossed the seas, becomes disobedient to the rudder. The sails are riven and in shreds. The beams give way. The gallant mast begins to move to and fro. Spar after spar creaks. And the wild waves roll mercilessly over the devoted ship. The alarm spreads. The ship is sinking. It is a cry for life. Escape who can. The gold is left. It is of no account now—only let life be preserved. Let us but be saved from the watery grave is the cry—let all else perish. The life is more than gold—more precious than the world.

Let us take a lesson from the merchants and accountants of

the world. They take stock. They draw out their balance sheet. They set profit and loss over against each other. Let us do the same. On the one side let us put in order and in detail, our items of gain, and on the other our loss. If on the one side we set down gains, millions upon millions, till we read *the whole world*, and on the other side the single item—*lost* our own soul,—the gain is nothing, the loss is irretrievable. If on the other hand we can set down gains—the soul; loss—all things, even the whole world; the loss is nothing, the gain incalculable. “For he that loses his life shall save it. He that saves his life shall lose it. For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul. For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

THE LOVE OF APPROBATION.

The third argument here used may be regarded as designed to obviate the objection arising out of a sense of shame or love of applause and commendation. The love of reputation, or the desire to stand well in the good opinion of their neighbours, is a very strong motive in the minds of the great mass of mankind. The Lord knew how this would hinder many from taking up the cross and following after him, and on another occasion said to His hearers—“How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?” As this feeling of shame works within us when we for the first time think of confessing and following Christ, so it continues to be a powerful hindrance to the faithfulness, consistency, and progressive holiness, and usefulness of many who profess to follow the Lord. The man who would follow the Lord fully, must say with Faithful, in “The Pilgrim’s Progress,”—“Shame, depart! thou art an enemy to my salvation. Shall I entertain thee against my sovereign Lord? How then shall I look him in the face at his coming? Should I now be ashamed of his ways and servants, how can I expect the blessing?” All who know what it is to profess the truth in sincerity will agree with what “Faithful” and “Christian” say regarding shame. “Indeed,” says the former,

“this Shame was a bold villain; I could scarce shake him out of my company: yea, he would be haunting me and continually whispering me in the ear, with some one or other of the infirmities that attend religion.” “Of all,” says Christian, “I think he has the wrong name; for he is so bold as to follow us in the streets, and to attempt to put us to shame before all men—that is, to make us ashamed of that which is good. But if he was not himself audacious, he would never attempt to do as he does. But let us still resist him; for notwithstanding all his bravadoes, he promoteth the fool and none else.” “The wise shall inherit glory,” said Solomon, “but shame shall be the promotion of fools.” As in the first argument, the Lord set life over against life; and in the second, profit over against profit; so in this third argument, he sets shame over against shame. He puts the case of a man being ashamed of Him and of His words, and because of this, refusing to confess Christ and to follow Him. But why is the man ashamed? Is it not that he dreads the censure of his fellow-men? He is ashamed to confront public opinion. He is ashamed to be singular, ashamed to be seen in the company of Jesus of Nazareth, with the fishermen of Galilee. But what is the real value of this public opinion? What is the character of age or generation? “It is,” says the Lord, “an adulterous and sinful generation.” And in the presence of this company of adulterers and sinners it is, that a man is ashamed of Christ and his Gospel. Ashamed of being known as a follower of the Holy One of God! Here behold the amazing cowardice of man—afraid, ashamed to profess truth and holiness, virtue, godliness, Christ, lest he should be censured by a generation, adulterous and sinful. But in another light we marvel, not at the cowardice, but at the boldness and audacity of shame. For what is this but to expose ourselves to be disowned of Christ. For the scene will be changed. The Son of Man now appearing as the Man of Sorrows, and now crucified between two malefactors, shall appear again, the second time. He shall come in the glory of his Father, attended, worshipped, and heralded by the holy angels. The crucified One shall sit on the great white throne, to dispense judgment unto every man. What will the judg-

ment of man avail on that day? "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Let us consider this in time and say, with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

MARTHA AND MARY.*

“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”
Luke x. 41, 42.

MARTHA and Mary are thoroughly marked and developed types of character. Philosophers or psychologists might say that Martha represented the perceptive action of mind, and Mary the reflective; or that Martha represented the active and Mary the contemplative forms of mind and life. And in so saying, they would but express partial truth; for these forms of mental habit, although often interblended, are very distinct. They have shown themselves in human life and history from the time of Cain and Abel to the present day. Abel represented the more meditative and contemplative developments of mind, and Cain the more active and energetic. Mary might be also described as more taken up with principles, Martha with details. Martha lived more in the outward and objective world; Mary in the inward, subjective, and ideal. Martha must be primarily concerned about the actual doing of anything; Mary about how the thing might or ought to be best done. Mary puts more questions, Martha makes more experiments. Martha is practical, Mary is speculative. And, although they are apt and ready to quarrel among themselves, they are both necessary to the happiness and comfort of the houses of life

* PREFATORY NOTE.—The following fragment of a meditation on the character of Martha and Mary of Bethany, is inserted here at the request of the printer, and to suit his arrangements. It is introductory to a course of sermons on the family of Bethany. G. M.

OLD KILPATRICK, 27th January, 1872.

and of each other. Jesus loves them both; and although he will not lend himself as a partizan to either, yet he will commend, in the instance referred to him, the meditative and worshipping spirit and attitude of Mary rather than the bustling and fretful activity of Martha. One thing duly thought upon, pondered, chosen, if that be the good part, is better than all the activity, energy, and exceeding carefulness expended in relation about many things. Concentration of mind and heart is better than dissipation and dispersement of thought, affection, and energy. And yet the meditative, as meditative, thoughtful, contemplative, and speculative, or reflective habit of mind is not without its own peculiar temptations and perils. In relation to intellect, it may develop into an idealism altogether alien to living Christianity. It may, in fact, assume the form of ancient Gnosticism, or of modern Rationalism. In relation to sentiment, it may assume the dreamy form of a mystic admiration of beauty, and a poetic, if not pantheistic, religionism—an indolent, peevish, poetic homage to airy nothings. In relation to conscience, it may emerge in any form of superstition—ideal or more gross; or it may show itself in a feverishness and scrupulosity of conscientiousness which, while it is a perpetual torment to the individual, it exerts, at the same time, in proportion to its extent or power, a disqualifying, because a dispiriting, influence on the man and his action, when the problem of practical, decisive, and arduous duty is to be solved. The reflectiveness that disqualifies for practical activity is not to be commended. Scrupulosity of conscience may be another name for superstition: it is not to be confounded with enlightened and healthy conscientiousness. Disease and extreme nervousness in the body often show themselves together, and the one serves as the index of the other. The reflective meditateness of Mary shows itself in Mary's choice; and, because Mary has made choice of that good part which cannot be taken away from her, she sits at the feet of Jesus, hearing his word; while Martha is cumbered with much serving, and with excessive care about the many things. Mary has rightly judged that Jesus is more pleased by the disposition to catch

every word of gracious exhortation or instruction given by him, than by any amount of attention and care devoted and expended in preparing a dinner or a supper for the Lord. And yet on this very disposition there readily grows a parasite, that may eat out (unless its action and growth be checked) the life and heart of a faith humble and confiding—a faith in all things meek, obedient, submissive. There is a refined and exquisite pride which often weaves its delicate texture over a mind calm, contemplative, and given to retired meditation. This frequently indicates its existence and intensity by a secret, half-conscious, yet disdainful contempt for those who seem to be always engaged in the more practical activities of life.

Martha's much serving—the disposition that always tends to value work, visible and palpable products above speculation, or reasons, or theories—is not without its own very great and peculiar dangers and temptations. For abstracted from reflectiveness, this tends to reduce human action to the mechanical form, and man to a sort of automaton or self-acting machine. It loses itself and life in details. In religion it easily glides into the form of superstition that substitutes the work from the motive, and that exalts the work to a place of merit and a ground of justification and righteousness before God. The *opus operatum* is to it the grand, if not the only essential thing. Hence, Pharisaism in ancient times, and Romanism in the present day. These monstrous apostacies may be regarded as developed and embodied expressions of the much serving, or of the bodily and outward service of Martha, just as all forms of mysticism expressed in deteriorated form the sedative and musing forms of Mary's disposition to sit still and meditate, whatever may come of work, action, and practical duty, and life. In philosophy, or the doctrine of life and morals, Martha's disposition may degenerate into any form of materialism or secularism. Events or phenomena are looked at, and thought of apart from their hidden causes, roots, and springs; hence the varied forms of materialism in former ages; and hence, also, the materialism so prevalent under the forms of humanitarianism, secularism, communism, or Comptism in the present day. The depreciation of the ideal tends always to a

misinterpretation of the invisible, the spiritual, and the actual, till life be represented as another name for organization, till motives be all levelled to the category of utilitarianism, till the present be isolated from its roots in the past and its developments in the future, till Sadduceeism be set up in rivalry and opposition to Pharisaism, till communism take the place of rational and legitimate government, and atheism be the only recoil from the irrational and ungodly and really atheistic system of religion called Romanism. The disposition of Martha in the perverted forms now indicated ever tends to a denial of angel or spirit, to a denial of God and his moral government,—a denial of efficient causes and final ends. Yet, in Martha's disposition there is one ingredient which is indispensably necessary to the character that would leave by heroic deeds its weighty and beneficent impress on the page of human life and history. The man who will dare and do great and good deeds—deeds heroically great and good—must have two elements or forces at work within his own soul. He must be capable of mighty impulse; and he must, unencumbered by speculative doubts or reflective misgivings and possibilities, act out, give form, body, and practical expression in authentic deeds, to the imperious impulse acting itself within his soul. The decision and energy, with the impulse prompting, moving, and urging a man, as it were, irresistibly to go on with the work, and to go through with the work laid to his hand, while they may have their hidden roots in a disposition such as that of Mary, are more commonly seen to grow out of the disposition of Martha. Simon Peter is a masculine Martha, as Mary is a feminine John. Simon Peter is the man of heroic action among the apostles; John is the man of sublime contemplation. Expounding the loftiest truths, enforcing the most urgent duties, declaring all things necessary to life and godliness; exhorting men to be vigilant and be sober, because their adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; exhorting them all the more earnestly to be steadfast in the faith, because his own impulsiveness and timidity had occasioned to him not a few grievous falls, fearlessly facing the

many-headed multitudes, or the fewer but malignant leaders of apostacy and persecution, Simon Peter is an illustration of what Martha's disposition can dare and do when it has received, with the assurance of Christ's love, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Life in action, life in the highest and most heroic action, is that of the Martha or Peter-like disposition when it has received from heaven the baptism of light and of fire.

The Mary-like disposition that found its congenial sphere leaning, at the last Supper, on the breast of Jesus, as Mary is here seen sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his words, shows itself in the writings of the evangelist,—writings so profound, heavenly, and sublime, that they early secured for John the designation, *the divine*. Without limiting the operation and inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit of God, it may be said that Simon Peter's temperament of mind was not fitted for writing either the Gospel or the letters of John, and much less fitted for the reception of the marvellous visions recorded in the Apocalypse or book of the Revelation. But these writings and visions are in exact keeping with the contemplative, loving, and thoughtful, or Mary-like disposition of John. Even the brief, curt, and antithetic statements in John's letters, as well as the awful and mysterious scenery of his Patmos visions, reveal the meditative love of that apostle. But the practical, historical, and energetically doctrinal—rapid, fiery, impulsive sermons, addresses, and letters of Peter, indicate and express most faithfully the Martha-like disposition that was in him. But as among the family of the apostles Peter and John were necessary to each other, and clung to each other as with loving and brotherly tenacity, the one feeling that the other supplied what was lacking on his own part; so Martha, in her own sphere, and about her own work, and with her peculiar disposition, was as necessary in the house at Bethany as was Mary. But Mary was as necessary to Martha. The household economy would be sadly disordered were one or the other wanting. Mary's thoughtfulness was needed to direct and regulate Martha's impulsiveness and energy; and Martha's readiness and zest for work was needed to correct the too

speculative contemplativeness of Mary. Luther is the more heroic and active; but Melanchthon, in his study, is needed to temper and qualify the outgoing action and heroism of his brother, Martin Luther. And Luther's earnestness, when appealing to the Lord on behalf of Philip Melanchthon, and his threat to excommunicate him unless he would eat, so as to render his recovery to health possible, indicate how deeply Luther felt that he was not complete without Philip Melanchthon. No less significant is Simon Peter's question, after the Lord has intimated to him how he himself should die or be put to death—"And what shall this man (John) do?" The question is characteristic of the man, an index of his friendship for John; but it is no less indicative of Peter's feeling that John was, in a sense, a sort of necessity to him. For Simon could not think of his own life or death without at the same time thinking of the life and the death of his friend, brother, and fellow-apostle John.

As at the supper and feast, so in the time of grief, sorrow, and mourning, the dispositions and habits of these two sisters revealed themselves in a characteristic way. Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him. She was sorrowful and sad, not only because her brother had died, but because Jesus, according to the message sent him, had not come sooner,—had not come as the two sisters thought he might have come, and ought to have come sooner, and before Lazarus had died; but she does not so nurse her sorrow, indulge her grief, and keep up in her heart, as it were, a grudge against Jesus, as to be seemingly indifferent to the announcement that he had at length come, and was approaching near to the place of graves, where was the sepulchre, the family burying-place, outside the village of Bethany. As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him. But Mary sat still in the house. John says to Simon Peter, "It is the Lord;" but while Simon plunges into the sea, and swims ashore to join the Lord, John is more deliberative, and rows the boat to the land. Mary would nurse her sorrow and her grief in meditative solitude; Martha will go in her grief to meet the Lord. Sorrowful she will go

to work, and in her work and in her activity she shall meet with Jesus, and meeting him, sorrow is turned into joy. Her tears are wiped away; and, rising above her unworthy thoughts of Jesus, and her too great sorrow, she will be from Jesus an apostle or messenger to her sister, saying to her, "The master is come, and calleth for thee."

Character reveals itself whether we be at the feast of hospitality, or in the house of mourning. The habitual manner, word, action cannot be unrevealed.

On the occasion when the Lord Jesus spoke the words of the text, we are told by the evangelist that he had come to the village of Bethany. I am not concerned to inquire or to speculate at all as to whether this was the first visit of Jesus. He entered into the village, and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house. The form of the narrative favours the idea that this was the first visit of Jesus, and the first time that Martha felt herself honoured by being permitted to show hospitality to the Son of Man. The Saviour, with salvation, has come into the house. If there is a reward to those who receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, Martha, to whom the house in Bethany seems to have belonged, shall not be unrewarded when she receives Jesus into her house; for she surely is a daughter of Abraham.

Martha, as mistress of the house, and responsible for all the household order, economy, and arrangements, is fluttered with the thought that everything might not be as it ought to be, on such an occasion. And accordingly she cannot sit still. She is feverishly restless, nervous, agitated, excited; and, though very busy, yet her manner causes her to seem more busy than she was. She herself is conscious of this. And her consciousness of it is intensified every time she passes near where her sister Mary has seated herself. There, thinks she, is that sister of mine, quite indifferent to what may come of the supper arrangements; quite careless about the honour and fame of the house among the neighbouring villagers. She knows that I shall get all the blame if things are not as they ought to be. And, in her dreamy indolence and listless indifference, she has sat down at the feet of Jesus. There

she sits, not caring about how things in the house may go. She does not seem even to hear or to heed the noise of my coming and going, or of my moving and removing everything, so as to have everything as it ought to be. Not even a look will she turn to me. She is perfectly absorbed or entranced. A sort of fascination has acted itself on her. For there she is as indifferent to me, and supper, and house, as if she were already where neither supper nor house were at all necessary. But we are not yet in the angelic or disembodied state. So thought Martha; but she could not think long without speaking. Her thoughts soon found forms of outwardness and expression. But on this occasion the Lord seems to her to encourage her sister's indolence or supineness. Martha's temper is sorely tried. And at last getting the better of her reverence, courtesy, and politeness, she comes to Jesus and says to him, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" And as Martha thought, or at the moment felt, that no word of hers would avail to rouse her sister from her dreamy, meditative, and fascinated state of mind, Martha, with bluntness and no little temper, appeals to the Lord, urging him to interpose a word of authority. "Bid her therefore that she help me." How little did Martha understand or sympathize with her sister's habit of mind, and with her absorption of soul—her utter obliviousness of everything but of one thing at this moment? How much less did she know the mind of Christ? Like Simon Peter, she must speak, even when like him she really knows not what she says,—knows not what spirit she is of.

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL DECLENSION.

“Ye did run well: who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”—Gal. v. 7.

THE word “hinder,” as here used, denotes the arresting or retarding of progress, as by the breaking up of a road, or by digging trenches and pitfalls in the way. And here it seems to allude to the interruption caused to a runner in the course, by any one going across the path or racing ground, so as to stop or obstruct the progress of one that up to that part of the course had been running well.

The words before us are partly words of commendation, and partly words of reproof. “Ye did run well” is the sentence of commendation: “Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” is the language of reproof. The reproof is all the more insinuating and effective from the manner in which it is conveyed; not only is it set over against a former and better state of things, but it is expressed in the terms of wonder, and as if the Apostle blamed some others rather than those addressed. “Ye did run well: who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” The idea of the Christian life, underlying the words of the apostle, is that it consists in a course or career of obedience to the truth as it is in Jesus. And respecting those addressed, the apostle says, that they had entered on the course, and for a time had continued in it, with manifest diligence, effort, and zeal,—“Ye did run well,” but that after a time they stood still, drew back, or were driven back,—“Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” In this

view the text is suggestive of the causes of declension in religion, or the causes of spiritual declension.

There is a twofold declension, falling back, or apostacy. There is a partial and temporary apostacy, and there is a total and abiding apostacy from the truth and profession of the Gospel. Of the latter of these, or an entire departure from the truth, the Apostle to the Hebrews says, that it is a drawing back unto perdition, and that it is impossible to renew such persons again unto repentance, seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh and put him to open shame. And of the same persons the Apostle Peter says, it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. This total and final apostacy is to be distinguished from that which is partial and temporary: but, in treating of the causes, signs, and dangers of backsliding or declension it is not necessary that we should be very minute in stating and repeating this distinction,—for this reason, that the same causes that produce temporary backsliding, if not checked, are fitted to produce total and final apostacy.

What then are some of the causes of declension or backsliding? On the present occasion the following may be enumerated and attended to as prominent and powerful among those causes that drive men back from a course of obedience to the truth, viz.:—Ignorance or superficial knowledge of the truth, exposing the soul to the arts and wiles of false teachers; negligence or slothfulness, showing itself in respect to the neglect especially of watchfulness and prayer; the power of corruption in the heart, exposing the soul to the temptations of Satan and the world; double-mindedness, in respect to the truth and to other things; unexpected difficulties in the way of obedience; the example and influence of professors of religion; the cares of the world and anxieties about the many things; and, lastly, the attending to other matters in religion, to the exclusion of a due attention to the state of our own hearts and to the keeping of our own vineyard. These, among others, may be regarded as causes of declining from a course of obedience to the truth.

Among the signs of a withdrawing from the course of obedience the following may be attended to, viz.:—Meditation on the things of God becomes distasteful; the private exercises and duties of religion become burdensome, are either entirely omitted, or gone into without heart; the fellowship of the saints is not desired, and the company of worldly Christians and worldly men becomes congenial; the public duties of religion are but attended to as matters of custom or routine—the ways of Zion are not frequented as in other days; the reputation and characters of godly men are fond subjects of their raillery; and, lastly, if mercy prevent not, they take their seat in the chair and company of the scorner. On this occasion attention shall be restricted to some of the causes of spiritual declension.

IGNORANCE.

First among the causes of a departure from the obedience of the faith, we must mention ignorance, or a superficial knowledge of the truth, exposing the soul to the arts and wiles of false teachers.

“For the soul to be without knowledge,” says the wise man, “is not good.” And among ourselves there is a proverb that “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.” To be without the knowledge of God in Christ is to be dead in trespasses and sins; and experience proves that a superficial knowledge,—that is, a little knowledge in religion,—is often dangerous. But the danger is not so much in the littleness of the amount or quantity as in the badness or defectiveness of the quality of the knowledge. The smallest measure of spiritual knowledge will save the soul, but it is not wise or safe to rest contented with this rudimentary knowledge, when the means and opportunities of increasing in knowledge and wisdom are enjoyed. To this disposition many failures and many withdrawals from obedience to the truth are to be traced. And of many in this respect it may be said, “Ye did run well: who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” It is of infinite importance that we should have a deep, clear, and comprehensive know-

ledge of the fundamental truths of godliness. And this, so far from being common, is of much greater rarity than many imagine. Many here confound the means and facilities for knowing these truths with the personal and actual knowledge of them. But it is one thing to know where and how a desired object may be obtained, and another thing altogether to secure the possession of that object. It is one thing to know the names of an artist's instruments and to describe them in detail, and another thing altogether to have the skill and practised ability of the artist. So in religion, it is common enough to speak of and about certain truths, but to know them as they ought to be known is far from being a common attainment. Thus, for instance, it is common to hear men speak of sin and of themselves as sinners; to hear men speak of justification by faith in the righteousness of God imputed to believers; to hear men speak of the person and offices of Christ, and of the person and gracious operations of the Holy Ghost; but it is far from being common to know these things as they ought to be known,—to see them in the light of the Lord. Hence it is that many professing a knowledge of these things, and subjection to them, are found after a time practically denying them. Indeed, one of the most productive causes of error concerning the whole scope of the revealed will of God and the way of salvation by grace is to be traced to ignorance,—to ignorance of the nature, evil, and desert of sin,—to ignorance of men's state, character, and liabilities as sinners. Almost every heresy has grown from this root of ignorance. This ignorance among those that profess to be Christians exposes them to the arts of erroneous and seducing teachers. There have been in every age of the Church those who strive to lead away disciples after them,—those professing themselves the servants, apostles, or ministers of Christ, while they serve only their own ends to gain a name, to gain a living, or to make merchandize of the souls of men. To the insidious arts of those men they are most likely to be, as they always have been, a prey, who are not settled and grounded in the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness. Had these deluded victims possessed more knowledge, they should not have been ignorant of the

devices of Satan by which they were ensnared, through the plausible professions and high-wrought pretensions of the men who seduced them from the truth. In the Church in Galatia all that is here said was illustrated. So great and so sudden had been the havoc then wrought among those but partially instructed and enlightened, that Paul speaks of it at one time as a subject of marvel: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." (i. 6, 7.) Again, he speaks of this effect as a bewitchment, and upbraids the foolishness of the too easily deceived Galatians: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (ii. 1.) With reference to the arts of the false teachers, he says: "They zealously affect you, but not well." (iv. 17.) And in the text, in the language of wonder as well as reproof, he asks: "Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" "This" result, this back-drawing, "persuasion," he adds, "cometh not of him that calleth you." It proceeded not from God, not from knowledge, but from ignorance wrought upon by false teachers. Ignorance, therefore, or superficial knowledge, is a cause of departure from the truth.

SLOTH.

A second and very common cause of declension in religious profession is to be found in a spirit of negligence or slothfulness. This disposition manifests itself particularly and very specially with respect to watchfulness and prayer. Among those that hear the gospel of the grace of God, and who do not openly and professedly despise and reject it, negligence may be said to be the common and habitual sin. They are not, and would not that they were, reckoned among those that despise and contemn offered mercy,—they only neglect the great salvation. In these days, and in our congregations, it is neglect rather than deliberate unbelief that destroys the souls of men. They hear

the promises and threatenings of God; but the sound is familiar to them as that of a twice told tale. They make light of it. Habitual neglect, habitual sloth, is their ruin. They do not perish with deliberate and determined minds, resolved against Christ; but they perish in their thoughtlessness. Death comes upon them, and it finds them unprepared, because they took no thought of preparing for eternity. Time after time they let slip the opportunity, they neglected the calls and warnings of God, and their awful sin rises up before them when it is too late to retrieve the disaster and to obtain that mercy which they had not so much despised as neglected. Now, this negligence of spirit, which keeps so many back from entering on a course of obedience to the truth, shows itself in many after they have for a time made a profession of obedience to Christ. It is said of the wise as of the foolish virgins in the parable, that "while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." Negligence is a sort of sleep or sleepiness that diffuses itself as it were insensibly over the faculties and energies of a man. And as in sleep the activities of the body are suspended, being lock-fast in an invisible state and under invisible influence, so negligence, diffusing itself through the spiritual faculties, binds them fast as with invisible chains. The almost imperceptible manner in which this cause operates, the silence and stealthiness of its progress as it benumbs the activities of the inner man, renders this a most potent and dangerous adversary to the Christian in his course of obedience to the truth. At its first approaches and in its earlier influences it is not suspected, and frequently it happens that ere the suspicions of the soul are roused, this negligent and slothful power has, vampire-like, preyed on the life-blood, while it fanned its victim with its soft wings to sleep. Hence many are sickly, and many are faint. They are not as in other days; their strength is gone, their vigour failed, and they yet know not the cause. Another thing that tends to give power to this spirit of negligence is that the man over whom it prevails has concluded that the main work is done, and that the grand concern is settled. He was awakened—he found Christ—he enjoyed peace,—and, therefore, there can be no great danger in only neglecting

certain acts and exercises, fit it may be for babes and the inexperienced, but not absolutely necessary for a man in Christ, for a Christian of his stature, attainments, and experience. Hence, of many who did run well, we have to say, who or what did hinder you? Hence many soul-ruining departures from the ways of obedience. They left off taking heed to themselves; they left off to watch and be sober; they left off to watch and to pray. How different is this method of argument from that of the apostle when addressing and exhorting believers he says, "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." (Rom. xiii. 11, 12.) Nearness to heaven, according to the apostle, is an argument to redouble our diligence, to excite our wakefulness, and to have upon us and in active use the armour of light. Nearness to heaven, according to others, is an excuse for neglect of meetness for heaven,—an excuse for not following on to know the Lord,—an excuse for ceasing to run the course of obedience. Oh the deceitfulness of sin in the heart! Oh the danger arising from negligence! "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary, the Devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Stir up the gift that is in you. Stir up yourself to call upon the Lord; for negligence is the cause of apostacy from the truth.

UNMORTIFIED CORRUPTION.

A third cause of drawing back from a course of obedience to the truth is to be found in the power of corruption in the heart.

This inward corruption is commonly called indwelling sin, from an expression used by the apostle. When describing it he spoke of it as "sin that dwelleth in me." Although it is true of all believers that they have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, it is equally true that this crucifixion is a gradual and progressive process. They are accordingly ex-

horted to mortify their members which are on the earth,—to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness. All who profess obedience to the truth in Christ profess to have entered on a course of opposition to all sin, and to have devoted themselves to a life in the Spirit,—a life of continual struggle against the corrupt and depraved principles, desires, and works of the natural man. But of many who have entered on this course it may be said, “Ye did run well: who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?” Corruption hindered them,—a deceived and deceitful heart turned them aside from the way of righteousness. The short career of some who made a profession may be traced to uncrucified, unmortified corruption. For a time their corruptions were asleep, but not dead; and, recovering their power, they reduced into captivity, into the bondage of corruption, those who for a time had seemed to participate in spiritual life and liberty. In other cases, and these even true believers, although their corruptions received a deadly wound, yet, like a foeman wounded unto death, but not dead, who turns on his adversary, and with a spasm strikes him and wounds him, the corruption dwelling in the believer recovering a measure of strength so prevails, that in bitterness the man cries out, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.”

The corruption in the heart—the sin that is there is most tenacious of life. Naturalists tell us that trees may be killed, and their vital power destroyed by watching and cutting off every bud as it shows itself. But who can in this manner destroy the corruption that is in him? It has its root deep in every faculty and feeling, and its poison has spread over all the soul. It works in secret; it works in silence; it works deeply; it works constantly; it works with subtilty; it works with power; it works with the guise of friendship; it works in league with the spiritual wickednesses around us. It is confederate with Satan and the world. It extracts to itself nutriment from holiest services and objects. It wrests even the very Scriptures to a man’s destruction; and in the very garden and house of God it devises death for those that live. At one time it obscures the perceptions of the soul; at another

time it illumines the mind with a glare of false light,—a dazzling blaze of artificial light that shows all things, but nothing as they are. At one time it hardens, benumbs, petrifies the heart and sears the conscience; at another time it melts the heart into floods of tenderness, so that the soul deceived luxuriates and revels amid soft, sickly, and sentimental delights, in which it may be that there is nothing more than the fantastic creations of excited feeling, together with the meteor lights of an uninformed conscience. To the influence of inward corruption acting on the thoughts, affections, dispositions, and conduct of men, the backsliding, the declension of many from the good ways of the Lord is to be traced. “Exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Indwelling corruption is a powerful and prevalent cause of backsliding and of apostacy.

DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS.

A fourth cause of spiritual declension and withdrawing from obedience to the truth is found in double-mindedness.

“A double-minded man,” says the apostle James, “is unstable in all his ways.” “He is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.” And the patriarch Jacob, addressing his eldest son Reuben, says, “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” To this doubleness of mind the falling away of multitudes is to be traced. In some cases this double-mindedness is observable from the outset of their religious course and profession; in others it is manifested when in their progress the claims of God and the solicitations of corruption demand that a deliberate choice be made, and that action in accordance with that choice be taken. Some of God’s own children have been known to fall and, for a time, give back under the power, subtilty, suddenness, and violence of this temptation. But in multitudes who make a profession of obedience to the truth there is from the first a double mind. Their primary consecration of themselves was defective, divided, partial. They

devoted themselves to the Lord with some mental reserves and unexpressed conditions; with ifs, and buts, and yets, and various exceptions and stipulations of their own. It may have been that they entered on the profession of obedience very much in ignorance of what that profession involved. It may have been that the step was taken from a temporary and transient impulse, without a becoming seriousness and sedateness of spirit resulting from deep, anxious, thoughtful, and prayerful consideration. They did not lay the matter to heart. It may have been that they did not proceed in this weighty business with a due and determinate deliberation. They were impelled by feeling, but not determined by enlightened judgment. Their judgments and their habitual feelings were from the first in opposition to the impulses that obtained a temporary and evanescent ascendancy over them. It may have been that they acted from the first with irresolution, and not with the full bent of the heart and will. If so, it need not be wondered at that, when the excitement of feeling gradually subsided, they became languid, and their professed ardour of love waxed cold; when the impulse that had for a time prevailed gradually lost its power and became weaker and weaker, they manifested a growing aversion to the obedience of the faith and to the duties of religion, till, like those mentioned in the sixth chapter of John, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John vi. 66.)

It is to be feared that a flaw at the foundation, a rent or division there, is the cause of the fall and overthrow,—of the great *ruin* of many a seemingly stately and stable building. The entire superstructure of a religious profession falls in ruins, burying beneath them the foolish, the double-minded inmates. It is to be feared that double-mindedness, like a worm at the root, is the cause why many a tree of goodly foliage in the garden of God is seen to wither and to die. Because of this double-mindedness may it not be feared that what is said of Saul is true of not a few among us—"He turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." This was the judgment of the Lord; yet Saul professed obedience to the Lord, saying, "I have performed the commandment of

the Lord." But Samuel said (for the evidence of Saul's sinful and partial dealing was at hand): "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed." But even this pretext was of no avail. The work of the journey had been done with a double mind; and the judgment of the Lord was: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord also hath rejected thee from being king." A kingdom was lost because of a few sheep and cattle. The occasion was in itself a comparatively unimportant one; but it revealed the double-minded character of Saul. He had not obeyed the word of the Lord, as he himself was obliged to confess; but had "transgressed that commandment, because he feared the people and obeyed their voice." (1 Sam. xv.) But how many disobey the truth and turn from the ways of the Lord through doubleness of heart for far less than a few sheep and oxen. They give their souls in barter for the merest trifles; and when it is too late they discover their folly and their sin, and learn the tremendous significancy of that question—"What is a man profited though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or, What shall a man give in exchange for his own soul?" The description of those who, being delivered from Egypt, and were on their journey to the land of promise, is too applicable to multitudes who set out for the heavenly Canaan, but who perish by the way: "A generation that set not their heart aright, whose spirit was not steadfast with God." (Ps. lxxviii. 8.) These are distinguished from those spoken of in another psalm, where it is said that "Judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." (Ps. xciv. 15.) Worthy of being remembered here are the words of the Lord: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness? No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he

will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. vi. 22—24.) How suitable, therefore, the prayer of David, to the circumstances, wants, temptations, and dangers of all the travellers to Zion: "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name." (Ps. lxxxvi. 11.) Let us, therefore, beware of being found waverers,—men of a heart and a heart,—men of a double mind; for double-mindedness is a cause of drawing back and departing from the obedience of the faith.

UNEXPECTED DIFFICULTIES.

A fifth cause of being hindered, drawn back, or driven back in a course of professed obedience is that which arises out of unforeseen or unexpected difficulties in the way.

Because of the supposed or real difficulties in the ways of godliness, many never enter on a course of Christian pilgrimage and duty. The slothful man and the timorous man say that there is a lion in the way; and among many the way of godliness is evil spoken of,—false reports are spread among the people concerning the privations and trials and conflicts which are in the Christian's way, and concerning the power and resources of the enemies of the godly. That difficulties and dangers are in the way is not concealed from those invited to betake themselves to the manner of life among the faithful followers of the Lamb. They are called to a life of self-denial; to a life of daily cross-bearing; to a life of conflict; and, if need be, they are called to resist, even unto blood, striving against sin. The very echo of these things is a sound of terror to many. But others, hearing of the glorious reward and the everlasting rest awaiting the people of God, and foreseeing the destruction awaiting the ungodly, are attracted by the love of God in Christ Jesus, and, confiding in his mercy and promised grace,—“as thy days thy strength,”—flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, and run on the way to Zion. These latter persons, notwithstanding many falls and withdrawals, yet persevere in the way, they endure unto the end, they

are faithful unto death, and are saved. But, even of them, some have been known to be so far left as to say, "Our hope is perished," and the enemy hath prevailed. Their hearts may have fainted within them when they saw the battle; yet not one of them has ever been known to be utterly vanquished. Nay, out of weakness they are made strong, and have become more than conquerors.

Christ the Lord would have every man, that is about to make a profession of being one of his disciples, be prepared for difficulties; and accordingly he exhorts every man to count the cost, saying: "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 28—33.)

Heedless of these words and warnings, multitudes build up the beginnings of a profession, and go out into the warfare against the world and against Satan without counting the cost, without preparation for the difficulties before them. And their history, were it recorded, would be but chapters in the annals of disgrace. Persecution more open or more private drives them back. The reproach of Christ cannot be borne. They have not courage to be pointed at as singular, standing or acting alone as belonging to a people diverse from all other people. They cannot bear the brand of being counted bigots, fanatics, puritans,—men of narrow, illiberal, and unaccommodating principles, that refuse conformity to the passing fashion of this world. Or it may be, that, called in Providence to choose between the sacrifice of their status in society, between the sacrifice of worldly honour and worldly goods, and the sacrifice of conscience and Scriptural principles, they find it too hard to

give up what is so dear to the flesh as the favourable opinion of the world, and their coveted wealth, even when Christ demands this sacrifice,—and when refusing to make it, they practically cast off their allegiance to him. They did not count on sacrifices of this kind when they put on a profession of obedience to Christ. They draw back—they forsake the Lord,—“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”

On this whole matter, the following words of Bunyan are weighty and pointed:—“Though the consciences of such men are awakened, yet their minds are not changed. Therefore, when the power of guilt weareth away, that which provoked them to be religious ceaseth. Wherefore, they naturally turn to their old course again. . . . So then, though they seem to be hot for heaven so long as the flames of hell are about their ears, yet, when that terror is a little over, they betake themselves to second thoughts—namely, that it is good to be wise, and not to run (for they know not what) the hazard of losing all, or, at least, of bringing themselves into unavoidable and unnecessary troubles; and so they fall in with the world again.” Persons of this class are represented by him of whom the Lord said, “He heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” (Matt. xiii. 20, 21.) In their case the fear of man, the fear of the world, apprehensions of present pain, privation, and suffering expel the fear of God; and to escape the pains and sufferings which are but for a moment they forfeit the crown of glory—they fly blindfold into the horrors of a lost eternity. How different from the fearing Christian! “Difficulties, lions, Vanity Fair, he fears not at all; it is only sin, death, and hell that are a terror to him when he has some doubts about his interest in Christ and in the celestial country.” (Bunyan.)

The difficulties that pilgrims meet with in the way are to many causes not only of stumbling, but of apostacy. “Put on therefore the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day.” “Let us hold fast the profession of our

faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised." None can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good. "Unless the Lord had been my help my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." (Ps. xciv. 17). Being forewarned, let us be forearmed; let us be prepared for the difficulties, and so prepared as to overcome them. "For this is the victory even your faith." For greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

EXAMPLE.

A sixth cause of backsliding and declension is that furnished by the example of many who make a profession of obedience to the truth.

In the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews the apostle gives, as it were, a muster roll of worthies who, through faith, obtained righteousness, fought the good fight of faith, and entered into the rest of God. These all he represents as a cloud of witnesses compassing us round about. We are exhorted to run in the same race after them, encouraged by their example and success. But we are not to copy their example or to follow it implicitly. We are to run as they ran, looking unto Jesus. We are to copy his example, and to run in the footsteps of the author and finisher of our faith; to run as he ran, considering how he suffered, died, triumphed, and was glorified.

When, turning the eye away from Christ, we look to the example set us by the most eminent of his saints; there appear faults, blemishes, falls, sins in their lives. Some of them gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to reproach and to blaspheme. Their virtues, not their sins, are therefore to be imitated; nor is it safe or wise to plead their sins or infirmities as an extenuation of our sins. But they obtained repentance and mercy; they were in the main men right-hearted. If, however, we turn from them and look around us on the multitudes who profess to be the followers of Christ, what a scene of confusion, disorder, and inconsistency presents itself to the view. How

many have nothing more than a name among Christians. How many are as clouds without water, or as wild wandering stars, lost in eternal darkness. How many are cold, languid, dead. How many are active only in hindering the progress of true godliness; active in ensnaring, tempting, and destroying the souls of men; corrupt and corrupters, deceived and deceivers. Now, as there is in every neighbourhood a considerable proportion of this class, they spread around them an influence like a deleterious atmosphere, which men cannot breath without inhaling the poison, the moral plague with which it is infected. In one of the islands in the Indian Ocean there is a valley named the valley of death; so deadly is the air that no living thing can pass through it and live. Almost as fatal to spiritual life is the influence diffused around men by the example of many that have assumed the Christian name. Daily contact, frequent intercourse, the interchange of opinion with persons of this kind, almost necessarily has the effect of checking and hindering the growth of a vigorous and lively Christianity. It is a miracle in such circumstances to find a high toned and spiritually minded Christian. His aspirations after holiness are checked, his enterprises of Christian benevolence are thwarted, his purposes are frustrated, and after repeated and ineffectual efforts he is ready to fold his hands and to settle down into a sort of hopelessness and despair. The young Christian, and indeed every one who would live unto God, cannot be too much warned against this subtle and pernicious influence. For through it the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life do their work of death and destruction; and do it all the more effectually, because those who spread this influence are counted in the membership of Christian churches, and periodically take their places at the table of the Lord. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Beware of this corrupt influence, this leaven of example; for to this the apostacy of not a few is to be traced. They did run well; who hindered them? Cold, worldly, ungodly professors around them hindered them, so that they walked no more after Christ and in the ways of obedience. Remember
's wife. She had been in Sodom,—she was delivered out of

it,—she looked back,—she was almost saved: but she was turned into a pillar of salt. Beware of the plague that invisibly spreads itself in the atmosphere of example. Happy is he who shall escape this evil; of whom it may be said, “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.” (Ps. xci. 7.)

THE MANY THINGS.

A seventh cause of declension from the good ways of the Lord is to be found in the multitude of business. The Bible offers no encouragement to indolence in our lawful worldly callings, it holds out no premium to the neglect of lawful business any more than to the neglect of godliness. It commands industry, and threatens slothfulness. But it prescribes the order and method to be observed in adjusting the claims of the world and the claims of God. The first place in thought, desire, affection, endeavour,—the place to which all other interests must be subordinated, is demanded for the kingdom of God, for promoting that kingdom in our hearts and in the world. All diligence is demanded that we may make our calling and election sure. In subordination to this—the great and truly grand business of man—we are enjoined to be diligent in our several callings, diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. But, reversing this order of the Lord, the mass of mankind, the mass of professing Christians, give the first place to providing for the wants of the present time,—to the laying up of treasure on the earth,—to answering the question, What shall I eat, what shall I drink, wherewithal shall I be clothed? rather than to answering the infinitely more urgent and important question, What must I do to be saved? The cares of this world, the riches and pleasures of this life, and the lusts of other things in many, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. In these persons the Word brings no fruit unto perfection. They have been hindered by the multitude of business. They have been cumbered with their much serving, buying, selling, reading, writing, contriving, speaking,

rising up early, sitting up late, running to and fro, pursuing gain, pleasure, or a name. These are so occupied, so harassed, so driven hither and thither, that they have no time to spare for God, no thought to spare for their souls. No wonder that, if at one time they did run well, they should now be of those that have drawn back. And yet they practise on themselves a certain species of deceit. They acknowledge the comparative unimportance of all their business and pursuits, when the concerns of eternity are spoken of, and when in the few intervals of suspended business they devote a thought to heavenly things; and accordingly they will, in the meantime, give of their substance to the cause of Christ, and by a sort of proxy, a religion of contributed donations, munificent it may be, they will testify that they are not altogether indifferent to the progress of godliness, although they take no *personal*, no actively personal interest or share in the work of helping forward the kingdom of God by their own manifest example, in seeking first that kingdom and its righteousness. This is one device by which some over busy appease their consciences, although even this is far beyond the reach of others as busy as they. But this is not the only expedient of deceit which they practise on themselves. They make promises as well as present offerings, and accordingly they promise, and hope that by and by, when released from the bustle and whirl of business, they will give more heed to spiritual things than they now do, or as they think they can do. If promises of the same kind, without a fixed date, and with so many uncertainties, were endorsed by them to their money-changer, he would not honour their promises nor discount their bill, nor would they themselves count such vague promises binding or of any money worth were they made or offered to them in the course of their commercial transactions; yet, where interests of incalculable value and importance are in doubt and hazard, and these their own, they practise on themselves by promises which every passing year has falsified, and which every day serves only to render more and more likely that they shall never be observed. Hence the backsliding, hence the continued apostacy of many who with less

business on hand were better and happier men than since, with increasing care and business and wealth, they have proved to be.

Let none here be deceived. It is not the extent or the variety of business that constitutes the real snare, or that constitutes the multitude of cares which draw away the heart. He who ranks among merchant princes, whose merchant ships are a fleet, scouring many seas and carrying his merchandize and wares to the distant harbours and marts of the commercial world, may yet find time for his soul, time for prayer, time for the varied duties of practical and living godliness; while the humblest shopkeeper or artizan, or the domestic servant or housewife may be so immersed in the cares of the world, and so cumbered, as to neglect, omit, and forsake the duties and exercises of a real and active and devoted Christian. It is not to the over-busy merchant, to the ambitious lawyer, to the broad-shouldered statesman, or to the throned monarch whose sceptre sways over multitudes of peoples, that the warning against being cumbered with many cares is exclusively given; it is equally addressed to persons in every position, for who or where is he who is not in danger of being deceived and hindered in his way heavenward by the cares, riches, or pleasures of this world. Let us, therefore, lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us, remembering that many have been grievously hindered by the multitude of business bringing with it a multitude of cares. He that would run so as to obtain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus must endeavour to obey that word, "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thankfulness, let your requests be made known unto God." I would have ye be without carefulness. "Read," says the godly and martyred Hooper, writing to some that were apprehended at a meeting for prayer and cast into prison, in time of the bloody Mary, "Read the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and there ye shall see how the shepherds that watched upon their sheep all night, as soon as they heard that Christ was born at Bethlehem, by and by they went to see him. They did not reason or debate with

themselves who should keep the wolf from the sheep in the meantime, but did as they were commanded, and committed their sheep unto him whose pleasure they obeyed. So let us do now when we be called, and commit all other things unto him that calleth us. He will take heed that all things shall be well. He will help the husband, he will comfort the wife; he will guide the servants, he will keep the house; he will preserve the goods; yea, rather than it should be undone, he will wash the dishes and rock the cradle. Cast, therefore, all your care upon God, for he careth for you." It was by acting out these principles and views that Hooper, and others like him, kept the faith and sealed their testimony with their blood; and so they met, as he had said, in the palace of the heavenly joys after this short and transitory life was ended. Cultivate this spirit, and watch against that carefulness which has caused many to halt, many to fall, and many to draw back from following the Lord. Remember what the Lord said to Martha, who was cumbered about much serving: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful;" and beware lest your carefulness and trouble about the many things do not take off your heart entirely from Christ.

RELATIVE DUTIES.

An eighth cause of declension or of hindrance in the course of a religious profession is found within the sphere of religion itself, especially as we stand related to certain departments of religious duty. Those that are not immersed in the multitude of the world's business are nevertheless not out of danger. On the one hand, they are in danger of devoting an undue measure of attention and activity to the outward business of the house of God, or to service connected with and required by religion; on the other hand, they are in danger of being too much taken up, if they retire within themselves, with watching and nursing, inspecting and criticizing their own frames and feelings. One of the practical difficulties in a career of obedience consists in giving the right place and measure of

attention to both these departments of Christian duty. And in this adjustment Christian wisdom is manifested. He is not a sound, healthful, or vigorous Christian who, being so taken up with the outward and public duties of religion, neglects the inward and private duties and exercises of godliness. He will have occasion to say, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." His error was not in taking part in doing good to others, and in helping forward the business of the house of the Lord—this he ought to have done; but he erred in not attending also and duly to the state of his own soul—he ought not to have left this undone. On the other hand, he is not a healthy and thriving Christian who, involved amidst the mazes and intricacies of his own feelings and experiences, and scrupulously jealous over his own heart, refuses to take a becoming part in practical usefulness, and in the outward business of the sanctuary. No doubt he should keep his heart with all diligence, and look well to the state of his own vineyard, keeping it and dressing it; but he should also look to the things of others, he should remember that while it is said, "examine your own-selves whether ye be in the faith," one of the evidences of his being in the faith will be, must be, wanting in him so long as he does not give himself actively to the work of the Lord. He that will do the will of my Father shall know of the doctrine. Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord. From both of these extremes men have joined the enemy and gone back into the world. And even in cases where they have not finally apostatized, their graces have suffered as from a blight. In the one case, too much exposure to the public light and gaze has proved injurious, and in the other case too much retirement has been detrimental, and has induced a sickliness and languor disqualifying for the life in the cold and changeful and oftentimes severe weather of this world.

Intimately connected with these dangers is that of being taken up with speculative questions in religion. Many of the questions that give rise to protracted and angry controversies in religion, even if they were conclusively solved and finally settled by direct appeal to revelation, would yet be found to rank among

foolish questions and endless genealogies that minister strife rather than godly edifying. A specimen of them may be taken from the controversy that raged with such violence in the seventeenth century respecting the mystery of the Hebrew points. Scholar against scholar, and theologian against theologian, in fierce and earnest debate, took part and mingled in that controversy; and time, and temper, and talents, and gifts that might have been expended on all important matters were wasted in settling the question respecting the origin and authority, not so much of the very words of Scripture, as of the vowel points attached to the letters and words of the Hebrew Scriptures. It has been well said that we are to distinguish between points and principles, that we are to keep sacred every jot and tittle of the law—that is, every iota of the principles of the oracles of God; but this is altogether a different thing from disputing and contending about mere points. Instead of indulging in questions of abstract speculation, it is our wisdom to be taken up with a prayerful and reverential study of the Word of God, ever bearing in view the great end for which all Scripture is given: “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.”

In apostolic times there were men who lost themselves among the wandering mazes of religious speculation, and who made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and dragged down others with them into ruin. And in these days we are peculiarly liable to temptation of the same kind; for, through this itching after novelties in religion, and this love of speculation and dislike of practical godliness, many who seemed to run well have been hindered. The antidote to all this is in keeping the form of sound and wholesome words, in our being nourished in the words of faith and sound doctrine, in refusing profane and old wives' fables, in exercising ourselves unto godliness, in shunning profane and vain babblings, in warring a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, knowing that what is of the contrary sort will only increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker. “These have damnation, because they cast off their first faith; but, as for us, let us study to show ourselves approved unto God, avoiding the per-

verse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, —while we follow after righteousness, godliness; faith, love, patience, meekness, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. If ye do these things, ye shall never fail; but an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

In drawing these remarks to a conclusion, the following words of the pilgrim, Old Honest, are worthy of being remembered:—“I am, as you see, an old man, and have been a traveller on this road many a day, and I have taken notice of many things. I have seen some that have set out as if they would drive all the world before them, who yet have in a few days died as they in the wilderness, and so never got sight of the promised land. I have seen some that have promised nothing at first setting out to be pilgrims, and that one would have thought could not have lived a day, that have yet proved very good pilgrims. I have seen some that have run hardly forward that again have after a little time run just as fast back again. I have seen some who have spoken very well of a pilgrim’s life at first, that after a while have spoken as much against it. I have heard some, when they first set out for Paradise, say positively there is such a place, who, when they have been almost there, have come back again and said there is none. I have heard some vaunt what they would do in case they should be opposed, that have, even at a false alarm, fled faith, the pilgrim’s way, and all.”

If these things are so, should we not lay to heart the words spoken of old to the servant of the Lord—“Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, lest thou be consumed;” should we not ponder the words of the Lord Jesus—“Remember Lot’s wife,” as well as those of the apostle—“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Our safety, our comfort, our holiness, and our practical influence for good in the Church and the world are inseparable from daily progress in the heavenward way. Forgetting, therefore, the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before, let us press towards the mark

of perfection in Christ. "Seeing that we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, let us, laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us,"—and, entangling us in its coils or folds, doth so greatly hinder us,—“let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith.” If we would indeed so run as at length to finish our course with joy, and with the victor’s crown of righteousness and unfading, unwithering glory, to receive from the Lord, the righteous judge, the congratulatory words, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” we must not only make a good and lawful commencement in our Christian course, entering upon it according to the prescribed way of entrance by the strait gate of regeneration through the quickening grace of the Holy Ghost, evidenced in our cordial acceptance of Christ and submission to him, as revealed and offered in the Holy Scriptures: but we must also run continuously along the prescribed way,—not turning aside to by-paths, not falling asleep in indolence or presumption, not daunted by dangers, not cumbered with cares, not dejected by sorrow, not elated with joy, not tempted, seduced, allured by the pleasures of the world, or by the lusts of the flesh, aiming ever at higher and better and nobler attainments in holiness, and obedience, and conformity to Christ, till we be with him and be like him,—when we shall see him as he is. For “know ye not, that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” (1 Cor. ix. 24—27.) One false step may precipitate a man into the bottomless gulf. There is a way to the depths of hell from the gates of heaven. “He that endureth to the end,” and he only, “shall be saved.” Amen.

THE TRANSFORMING EFFICACY OF FAITH.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”—2 Cor. iii. 18.

THE words of the text present and afford scope for the exercise of critical acumen, skill, and ingenuity; and they may be rendered thus,—“But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit.” This rendering has been strongly contended for by able, devout, and learned men. The expression “unveiled face,” is a correct and literal translation of the words for which we read “open face,” and it preserves the feature of contrast on which the apostle insists in this place. So also the “Lord the Spirit” is perhaps a more faithful and literal rendering than “the Spirit of the Lord.” The great difficulty is how to render the original word which, in the text before us, represents “beholding as in a glass.” The word is used in no other place in the New Testament. And being in the middle, or self-reflective form, scholars and critics, with not a little ground, at least of a grammatical kind, urge the view that those spoken of as here unveiled in face, are themselves the glass or mirror at once receptive of the glory and reflective of it. And this is a thoroughly Scriptural idea; and is perhaps the idea or truth here figuratively indicated. In this case the glory from the face of Jesus, shining on the unveiled face of the believer, is reflected from the soul and character of the believer as from a mirror of polished steel;

and in proportion as the believer maintains communion with Christ this process goes on, and the whole inner man is progressively transfigured into the likeness of the glory of the Lord. I make these remarks at the commencement of this discourse because I have, for practical purposes, adhered to the rendering in our Authorized Version, and have throughout the sermon been guided by the words in the sixth verse of the fourth chapter, as furnishing the key to the full meaning of the words in the text before us,—“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Throughout this chapter the apostle had been exhibiting features of contrast between the dispensation by Moses and the Gospel by Christ Jesus, between the legal economy and the evangelical dispensation, between the Old Testament and the New.

Among the features of contrast brought to view in this part of the apostle's argument and description of the two economies the following appear:—the Old Testament was a ministration of death, the New is a ministration of life. The Old was a ministration of condemnation, the New a ministration of righteousness. The Old was a ministration engraven on stones, the New is a ministration in the tables of the heart. The Old was a ministration of the letter, the New is a ministration of the spirit. The Old was made from, or through a veil; the New is without a veil, the veil is taken away. The Old was temporary and introductory, ready to vanish away; the New is abiding and permanent. These are among the contrasted features of the two dispensations. The former dispensation had a glory of its own: it was glorious; but, as in all the aspects presented by the contrast, the New excelled the Old, so, “that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” Corresponding with the nature of the contrasted economies, are the position and privileges of those under these economies respectively. Under the former dispensation grace was given, faith was counted unto

men for righteousness, men were justified, sanctified, saved on the same grounds, and by the same Saviour, and through the same spirit of holiness as under the new dispensation. The gospel does not reveal another God, another Saviour, another Sanctifier, than the God and Saviour of men, since grace was first offered to men. But under the old dispensation there was a veil over much that is now clearly revealed. There was a veil over the character of God; over the way of approach to God; over the provision made for the taking away of sin by the incarnation and obedience unto death of the Son of God; over the nature and extent of the spiritual kingdom of God, and over many of the privileges and prospects of the people of God. No doubt, prophets and seers, with eager and keen-sighted vision, pierced through the veil, and, seeing the day of Christ, rejoiced and were glad. Abraham from afar beheld that day; but even he, and all the believers under the former dispensation, saw but darkly, though they trusted with a fixed faith in God who had given to them exceeding great and precious promises. But besides this veil that was thrown over the face of Moses, and that rested on all the types, ceremonies, and ritual of that former dispensation, there was over the hearts of many a veil of unbelief, a thick and many folded veil, covering the understanding, heart, and consciences of the people. The veil of ceremonies, the veil of Moses, is done away in Christ; that darkness has passed away, and the true light shineth. Yet over many there still hangs the thick dense veil of unbelief. "But," says the apostle, contrasting the privileges of believers under the gospel both with those of believers under the law, and unbelievers, whether under the law or the gospel, "we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Having adverted to the contrast here instituted by the apostle between the two economies, and the privileges of the Church under each respectively, we may regard the text as bringing before us a view of the transforming efficacy of Christian faith. The transformative power of faith as here

taught is the subject of this discourse. 1st. We are taught wherein this transformation consists—"We are changed into the same image." 2nd. We are taught that this transformation is gradual and progressive—"from glory to glory." 3rd. The reasons or causes of this transformation are here set before us, "we all beholding, are changed, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

THE CHANGE OR TRANSFORMATION.

The change or transformation here spoken of consists in the assimilation of the soul to the glory of the Lord, as that is seen and manifested in Christ Jesus. "We are changed into the same image," that is, into the likeness of the glory beheld, so that it is reflected from our souls, as formerly it was reflected from the face of Moses. This change is variously described in Scripture. It is sometimes said to be "the renewing of the spirit of our minds" (Eph. iv. 23), "the renewing of the mind" (Rom. xii. 2), "the renewing of the inward man" (2 Cor. iv. 16). At other times it is said to be a change as "from death to life" (John v. 24; Eph. ii. 1), a "being quickened together with Christ" (Eph. ii. 5), so that the life of Jesus is manifest in the believer. (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11). Sometimes it is spoken of as a transition from a state of "darkness unto God's marvellous light." (Eph. v. 8.) At other times as a building up of the soul in love, and as a growth into the stature of perfect manhood in Christ. (Eph. v.) And in one instance it is described as a participating of the divine nature,—“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter i. 2—4.)

From all this it is evident that the following are some of the elements and features of this image, and part of the transformation here spoken of. (1.) It is a transformation into spiritual

life; it is life in the spirit; it is "life because of righteousness." We are changed into the life of God. The image or likeness is not a mere dead picture; it is not a statuesque resemblance of Christ that is exhibited by the soul of the believer. It is a life-like likeness of the living Saviour. As Christ is the Life, and has life in himself, so he, out of his fulness, bestows life on his people. He lives in them; they live in and by him. Now they live. (2.) It is a transformation into spiritual light. For as Christ is light, the light of the world, so are his people "light in the Lord." "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Believers are accordingly exhorted to "shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." (Phil. ii. 15, 16.) They, as renewed after him in knowledge, are to spread abroad everywhere the knowledge of God, for the enlightenment of the darkened understandings of men; and by example, walking themselves in the light of the Lord, they are to attract the eyes of men towards him who is at once the life and light of the world, who is the way, the truth, the life. (3.) This transformation is into love; it is a change of enmity for love, even for the love of God in Christ. God is love; and that love is manifested in Christ. But believers dwell in love, for they abide in Christ. Born of the Spirit, they love their Father and their Father's house and family. They reflect the likeness or image of his love. The spirit that is given them is the spirit of life, of knowledge, of love; "the fruit of the Spirit is love." (4.) There is in this image into which they are changed true and spiritual freedom. "Where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Believers are no more slaves, but sons adopted into the family of God, introduced into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. They are no longer the slaves of the law; they are under grace, and freed from condemnation: no longer the slaves of corruption; they are under grace, and freed from the bondage of corruption: no longer the slaves of fear; they are under grace, and have received the spirit of adoption by which they cry "Abba, Father." (5.) There is power in this change into which

believers are transformed. From being without strength, they are changed, so that, in the Lord, they have righteousness and strength. For as Christ liveth by the power of God, so they live by him. The spirit given them is a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind in the fear of the Lord. They are strengthened with all might by his Spirit. (6.) In one word,—for that word includes all the other elements, ingredients, features, and lineaments of this change,—believers are made partakers of the holiness of God. They are holy, and hence the exhortation—“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. vii. 1.) When the image of the Lord’s holiness shall be perfect in the believer, then the blessedness of the believer shall also be perfect, for he shall be satisfied with the likeness of the Lord; and although in the present life the holiness of believers is not perfect, and it doth not yet appear what they shall be, yet they know that when Christ their life shall appear they shall be like him, and shall appear with him in glory, for they are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ,—to a conformity in heart and life, in soul and body, in obedience and sufferings, in reproach and glory, to the image of the Son of God, that he may be the first-born among many brethren. “We are changed into the same image from glory to glory.”

PROGRESSIVENESS.

The language here employed indicates to us the progressiveness of this transformation. It is a being changed from glory to glory. There is a glory in the first beginnings and least measures of this transformation; but as the change is being perfected, as the lineaments of holiness are more and more vividly manifested by the new creature, there is an increased manifestation of glory. It is seen to be a change, a progress from glory to glory. As in nature, the successive changes in the seasons have a succession of glory; so is it in grace. As in nature there is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; so is it in the spiritual growth and advance-

ment of the soul. And as in the natural day the first dawns of light in the grey morning have a glory of their own, and are the signs of approaching day ; so “the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” This progressive and progressively glorious character of the spiritual transformation of the soul into the image of Christ is taught, not only by figures taken from natural and organic changes, but by almost every reference made to the character and manifestations of the work of grace in the soul. The inward man is renewed day by day. Those that wait upon the Lord renew their strength, they grow in grace, and increase in wisdom and knowledge, they go from strength to strength. He that hath begun in them the good work will perfect it. Every one shall be perfected as his master. And if there is pleasure enjoyed while we observe in nature the earth,—which had been black, bleak, and desolate through the dreary winter,—begin to be covered with the green blades and to assume the gay and flowery aspect of summer,—if it is pleasant to watch the green crops as they put on the mellow aspect of autumnal fruitfulness, while waving in the wind they bend their graceful heads with the weight of rich and ripe ears, ready for the hand of the mower, and realizing the hopes of the joyful husbandman, who had waited for the precious fruit of the earth, and had long patience for it,—much more pleasant and delightful is it to observe the progressive changes and transformations of a soul as it is growing up into conformity in all things to Christ Jesus. If it is interesting to watch the development and growth, the successive changes in the life from infancy to manhood, and the successive changes in the mind, as it expands and puts forth its hidden powers through the successive stages of life,—much more interesting is it to mark the transitions and changes in the life of a soul that, under the operation of the Spirit, is being trained for immortality and for eternal glory. If the artist rejoices as he sees the progress of his work,—as the bust before him seems to take on the lineaments of life, or as the figures stand out and seem to act, live, and move on his canvas, or as in poetic numbers and measures thoughts of beauty group themselves, take shape

and place, and name and action,—surely much more should it be our joy to know and feel that in our souls the likeness of the light, life, love, liberty, holiness, and power—the likeness of the glory of Christ, is being produced, so that we are changed from glory to glory.

THE REASONS OR CAUSES OF THE CHANGE.

Having thus briefly stated in what this transformation consists, and having adverted to the progressive character of the change, it is necessary that we should now consider the reason or cause of this transformation. This progressive change, consisting in the assimilating of the soul to the glory of God, is here and in many other places ascribed to faith,—“Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” A subject of great interest is here before us, and our treatment of it will take the form of an inquiry into the reasons of the transformative efficacy here ascribed to faith. These reasons are all taken from the words of the text, and they range themselves naturally under the following heads, viz. :—

(1.) The nature of the object beheld—“the glory of the Lord.” (2.) The medium through which that object is seen—“As in a glass.” (3.) The nature of the action respecting the glory—“Beholding, we are changed.” And, (4.) The efficient operation of the Spirit—“even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

The efficacy of faith in transforming the soul, or in assimilating it to the glory of the Lord, results from the object beheld,—from the medium through which the object is seen,—from the nature of faith’s acting,—and from the effectual operation of the Spirit.

THE OBJECT.

The glory of the Lord is a brief expression to signify the sum and radiance of his attributes and perfections. As by his infinite being the Lord infinitely transcends and is removed

from all creatures; so by the glory of that being, and of all his attributes, he infinitely excels and surpasses all creatures in his glory. The glory of the Lord is the effulgence or out-shining, the lustre and splendour of his perfections. He is called the Father of Glory to indicate that all glory beheld in his creatures and in his works is derived from him, and is in some degree a resemblance of him, a reflection of his glory. He is the Father of lights and perfections, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. He only dwells in the light inaccessible and full of glory. A glorious and high throne is the place of his sanctuary, and he maketh the place of his feet glorious. The being and presence of God give glory to the universe, and the great end of all creatures is to make manifest his glory.

There are two aspects in which Scripture presents for our contemplation the glory of the Lord. It is described as inherent in God, and as exhibited or manifested. The glory of the Lord under the former of these aspects denotes the uncreated, underived, and infinite excellence, dignity, pre-eminence, and perfections necessarily inherent in the divine being and nature. This glory is incommunicable. No creature can share in it. "I am the Lord, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another." This is the excellent glory of the Lord; it is inherent essentially in God, because he is God. Of this glory, as of the greatness of the Lord, it may be said that it is unsearchable. It is infinite and incomprehensible. It must ever, amidst the blaze of its own light, remain at a distance that may not be passed from the gaze and apprehension of loftiest angels, even of those who stand, as it is said, "before the face of God." This is the light inaccessible and full of glory in the midst of which he, the King Eternal, immortal, and invisible dwells, whom "no eye hath seen, or can see." But there is a manifested glory of the Lord which may be seen. There is the appearance—not only unto seraphim around the throne, but unto men on earth—of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. The Lord hath made himself known and manifested his glory. "The earth hath shined with his glory." "The earth is full of his glory." "Arise, shine

forth, thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." "For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." This effulgency of the divine perfections is that which is said in our text to be beheld by believers, and into this they are changed. The object beheld has a transforming efficacy on the beholder; for just as the face of Moses was resplendent with glory when he came down from the mount, where he had been permitted to behold the glory of the Lord, and as that glory impressed its image on his countenance, so that the children of Israel "could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance;" so the glory of the Lord, beheld by believers, impresses upon their souls the image of itself; they "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." The outshining of the glory of the Lord has one of two effects; it either assimilates and transforms to its own likeness that on which it shines, or it burns up and consumes it. Believers, by the light of the Lord's glory, become light in the Lord, and are clothed with the beauties of holiness; they are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Unbelievers, or the impenitent, are consumed by this glorious light. "As wax melteth before the fire, so the wicked perish at the presence of the Lord." (Ps. lxxviii. 2.) "For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel." (Micah i. 3—5.) Of this twofold effect of the outshining of the glory of the Lord we have a type or emblem in the twofold effect produced by the light of the sun. For that light, diffused over the world, enlightens the face of all things, producing its own image and reflection in the bosom of the clear and deep water,—giving all its colour to the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, and painting the flowers of the earth with all their variegated, rich, or delicate beauties,—entering into, and

penetrating all living things, that light transmutes them into its own likeness, and clothes them with some of its own loveliness and beauty. Yet the same light, shining in direct or convergent rays, kindles a fire more powerful and devouring than that of a furnace heated seven times, before which the elements melt, as in fervent heat, and are consumed. This twofold effect of light is an emblem of that glory which, shining on Christ, transfigured his countenance when he was on the mount,—which, shining into the hearts of his people, renews them after his image; but which, shining on the ungodly and impenitent, consumes them. For “God is light,” “God is love;” yet, “our God is a consuming fire.” Who, then, can stand before this holy Lord God? “Who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

The observed tendency of the object of thought and contemplation, and especially of the object of religious worship and adoration, to stamp somewhat of its own likeness or image on the beholder and worshipper, may be stated in the proposition, that the worshipper will become conformed or assimilated to the character of the object worshipped. That character stands out continually before him, and presents itself as the measure and standard of excellence and perfection; and the sincere worshipper measures and estimates his own character by reference, comparison, or contrast with the character of his God. Accordingly, we find two facts in all idolatrous and superstitious worship. There is a profaning or lowering of the divine glory; and there is ever connected with this a progressive deterioration in the character of the worshippers. Idols and their worshippers are like each other. The worshipper’s idea of excellence is that which he conceives to be in his idol, and he is perfect as he resembles his idol—his god. So in the deterioration of sentiment that prepared and paved the way for the Roman

apostacy from the true knowledge and worship of God, we observe first a perverting and obscuring of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ, and consequent on this, a progressive deterioration or lowering of the character of professed Christians. When the glory of the Lord was no longer beheld, men were no more changed into the image of that glory. "Sad it is to think," says John Milton, "how that doctrine of the gospel, planted by teachers divinely inspired, and by them winnowed and sifted from the chaff of over-dated ceremonies, and refined to such a spiritual height and temper and purity and knowledge of the Creator, that the body, with all the circumstances of time and place, were purified by the affections of the regenerate soul, and nothing left impure but sin; faith needing not the weak and fallible office of the senses to be either the ushers or the interpreters of heavenly mysteries, save where our Lord himself in his sacraments ordained;—that such a doctrine should, through the grossness and blindness of her professors, and the fraud of deceivable traditions, drag so downwards, as to backslide one way into the Jewish beggary of old cast rudiments, and stumble forward another way into the new vomited paganism of sensual idolatry, attributing purity or impurity to things indifferent, that they might bring the inward acts of the spirit to the outward and customary eye service of the body,—as if they could make God earthly and fleshly, because they could not make themselves heavenly and spiritual: they began to draw down all the divine intercourse betwixt God and the soul, yea, the very shape of God himself into an exterior and bodily form, urgently pretending a necessity and obligation of joining the body in a formal reverence and worship circumscribed; they hallowed it, they fumed it, they sprinkled it, they bedecked it, not in robes of pure innocency, but of pure linen, with other deformed and fantastic dresses, in palls and mitres, gold and gew-gaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe or the Flamin's vestry. Then was the priest set to con his motions and his postures, his liturgies and his luries, till the soul, by this means of over-bodying herself, given up justly to fleshly delights, bated her

wing apace downward; and finding the ease she had from her visible and sensuous colleague the body in performance of religious duties, her pinions now broken and flagging, shifted off from herself the labour of high soaring any more, forgot her heavenly flight, and left the dull and droying carcase to plod on in the old road and drudging trade of outward conformity." In contrast with all this, and as illustrative of the principle being considered, we find that, as at the first promulgation of the gospel, so at the time of the Reformation, when the true doctrine concerning God was restored and proclaimed, when the light of the knowledge of this glory of God shined through the earth, men were transformed into the image of this glory. Spiritual life, light, liberty, love, power, holiness, all sprang up and flourished in the train of this glory, as it filled the temple and overspread the world. What then was conspicuous to a large degree, in contrast with what prevailed through the black and long night of antichristian ignorance and tyranny, is but a type and anticipation of what will yet become general and universal, when, according to the oath of the Lord, "The whole earth shall be filled with his glory, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

This transformation into the likeness of God is the effect then of the object of faith or of glory of the Lord as beheld by the believer.

THE MEDIUM.

We proceed now to consider the reason of this transformation obtained from the medium through which faith beholds this glory. "We all beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed." It is not an immediate and direct view that is here obtained of the glory of the Lord, but a vision of it indirect and through a medium. It is not by the radiance of that glory shining in direct beams upon us that we either behold it, or that we are changed into its likeness. In our present state we are incapable of the direct and immediate vision of the glory of God. And it may be questioned whether

the creature state, in its highest exaltation and purity, is capable of sustaining or receiving, without being consumed, the direct radiance of the divine glory. We know that when Isaiah in the Spirit beheld the glory of the Lord, he tells us, that in the presence of that glory, the seraphim,—those bright and burning and pure spirits round about the throne,—covered their faces with two of their wings, while Isaiah himself, overpowered with the weight and brightness of the glory, cried out, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” (Isaiah vi. 5.) And further, we know that in answer to the prayer of Moses, when he said unto the Lord, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory,” the Lord said unto him, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live. Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee into a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen.” It is then glory not direct, but reflected; not the glory itself absolutely considered, but the image of that glory that is beheld by believers; it is glory reflected, and seen as reflected, from a polished mirror: for as looking directly up to the sun itself our eyes are soon darkened and blinded through the directness and excess of light so that we cannot see the sun, yet, when the image of the sun is reflected from a pure, smooth, and untroubled lake, we can look upon it and see it clearly,—the rays that are reflected being tempered to our vision, so that, without injury—yea, even with pleasure and delight, we can look upon the object through this medium, and see the sun more clearly than by attempting, as with eagle’s piercing eye, to peer directly into the face of the glorious orb of light. True, the image is on earth and near, while the sun is

high in the heavens ; but it is because of this that we, standing on this earth and near the lake on whose bosom the image is reflected, can see the sun, can bear the brightness and clearness, the radiance of his beams, as they are thrown upon us from the gentle, still, and unruffled lake on whose shores we stand. Reflected from the glassy lake, the light is at once clear, mellow, and mild, so that "truly the light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun." All this may be taken as an emblem of what is in the text spoken of as the medium through which the glory of the Lord is beheld. It is not the direct radiance of that glory which reaches us and transforms us into its own likeness, but it is the reflection of that glory as from a glass. And this reflection is both clear and mild, while at the same time, shining upon us and beheld by us, it impresses its own image on our souls. For a creature, and more especially for a sinful creature, to come within the reach of the blaze of the direct glory of God, would be to perish and be consumed ; but that glory shining upon us as from a glass, with beam not direct but reflexive, instead of consuming us, serves only to give us life, beauty, and immortal strength ; it clothes us with the beauties of holiness, and transforms us into the image of the glory of the Lord.

What then, it may be asked, is this medium which reflects upon us the glory of the Lord with such a wondrous combination of light, warmth, power, and mellowness ? Is it that reflection of the divine glory which is thrown off from the works of God in creation and in providence, in the framework and movements of the world ? There is no doubt a glory, a manifestation of the glory of God, made by the works and creatures of God. "The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handywork." The prints and impress, the footmarks of wisdom, goodness, power are observable all over the works of God, so that the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead. But who, by merely looking at this glass, has ever been transformed into the image and likeness of the Lord's glory ? This vision is sufficient to render man inexcusable, because that

knowing God he does not glorify God, and give him thanks for that affluence of goodness with which he has filled the world; but this vision fails to gain the heart for God. The eye looking on this glass does not affect the heart, does not renew the spirit, does not transform the soul into the likeness of God. Man is guilty, lost, sinful, wretched, and depraved; and throughout all the provinces and realms of nature no sight is seen, no voice is heard, no power discoverable fitted to give purity, pardon, peace, salvation to man. Terrible majesty, unsearchable wisdom, illimitable power, reflect their image from the works of God: but conscience attests that God is just, and man would fain hide himself from the view and presence of this Holy God; for everywhere "a fire goeth before him, and burneth around about him." The way to God is seen guarded by the seraphim with flaming sword. It is not by the revelation made in the works of creation and providence that the glory of the Lord can be seen so as that the sight shall at once attract and transform the beholder. Grace and mercy do not there blend their sweet and mild and transforming rays with the beams of wisdom, goodness, and power. Nor is it within man himself that this glass is found. No doubt man is a little world, a sort of image of the great world; and once he bore within him and upon him the image of God. But the glass once so polished has been tarnished and sadly dimmed. It has been discoloured, disfigured, broken, so that no longer does it reflect the fair and beautiful image of God, although yet it bears traces of its former glory, and is yet capable, under the hand of the divine artificer, of being restored, and of being made to reflect with more than former brightness and perfection the image of the glory of God. The transforming medium is not in nature, it is not in man. Looking only around through nature, or within upon himself, man remains unchanged, or the view darkens his mind and hardens his heart. The veil hung over the face of creation, and the veil over the unbelieving heart because of sin, hides from view the glory that can alone captivate, delight, and renovate the soul.

The glass which is found neither in nature nor in man, is found in the God-man, Immanuel, Christ Jesus. The light of

the knowledge of the glory of God is beheld in the face of Jesus Christ. He is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person; so that he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And his disciples, testifying, said, "The Word was God; and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i.) The glory of God is in him, and shines through him. For it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell. And in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. For while no eye hath seen or can see God, the invisible One, it hath pleased God that we should be permitted and be invited to behold his glory in Immanuel. This is the perfect glass, the glorious medium through which the perfections of the great I AM are made visible to the eye of faith. The glory here is not directly but mediately beheld. It is the image of the glory reflected from the face of Christ that we see. And it is because he is at once God and man that we can see his face, behold his glory, live, and have increase of life through beholding it. Had he been God only, had he remained in the form of God, without throwing around his glory the veil of humanity, without becoming flesh, we could not have seen the glory of the Lord and lived. We could not look up with our blinded and weak eyes into the face of God. But having taken on him our nature, without taint of defilement or pollution in it, through it the glory of the Lord shines, so that by the light of it men are saved and sanctified—renewed, transformed, glorified. It is when standing near him, when standing or kneeling by his cross, or when sitting with devoutness and docility at his feet, and hearing his words or meditating on his person, character, offices, works, on all that he is and has done and has promised to do, it is then that we behold in him the glory of the Lord as in a glass, and beholding it are changed into the same image. It is in the

placid, tranquil, and pure lake itself, reposing on the bosom of its mother earth, that we see the mild and bright, yet perfect image of the sun, so that we can gaze steadfastly upon it; and it is through the incarnate Jesus, through him who, with more than a brother's tenderness, interest, and love, comes near to do more than a brother's part;—through him who himself is God over all, and who is yet our brother, who, while wielding almighty power, yet stretches out to us a brother's hand;—it is through him who cannot look upon sin, and yet who was made sin for us, who suffered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;—it is through him who one moment weeps beside sorrowful and bereaved sisters, and the next moment says to the brother four days dead, “Lazarus, Come forth;”—it is through him before whose glory John falls at his feet as dead, and yet on whose bosom he was permitted to lean, and who laid his right hand on John, saying, “Fear not; I am the first and the last: He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death;”—it is through him that is at once the Son of God, co-equal with the Father in essence, in glory, and in honour, and at the same time that loving brother who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all things as we are tempted, that the glory of the Lord shines upon us, so that instead of death we find life and healing under his beams. For in him is fulfilled the word of the prophet, “Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” (Mal. iv. 1, 2.)

PERFECTION OF THE MEDIUM.

The glory of the Lord reflected from Christ Jesus, or the image of that glory beheld in him, possessed a threefold perfection: for it is a reflection of the fulness of that glory; it is

a perfect reflection of that fulness; and it is perfectly adapted to the transforming of believers into its image or likeness.

The fulness of this glory is beheld; for in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead. Here the glory of the being of God is declared and the folly of atheism is exposed. No evidence,—although the universe from every province and department of its boundless extent is exuberant of evidence to this the grand and primal fact that God is,—no evidence was ever given to creature intelligences of the being of God at all to be compared with that afforded by the fact of the incarnation of the Son of God; no evidence comparable to this was ever given to man, although every grain of sand, every drop of water, every breath of air, every pencil of light, every blade and flower of earth, all creeping things, and all that lives or moves in water, earth, or air, although every planet, star, and system through immensity proclaimed the fact. From the manger of Bethlehem, from the workshop in Nazareth, from the marriage feast at Cana, from the bier on which was carried the widow's son of Nain, from the waters of the sea of Galilee, from the chamber in the house of Jairus, from the mountain side where Jesus taught and fed the multitudes, from the mountain top where Jesus was transfigured, as from the banks of the Jordan where he was baptized, from the wilderness, the mountain, and the temple, where he drove back the tempter, and where angels ministered to him, from the tomb near Bethany where Lazarus had lain dead for four days, from the multitudes healed of all manner of sickness and disease, from the slopes of Olivet and the gloomy shades of Gethsemane, from the hall of the high priest, from the cross on Calvary, from the tomb in the garden, empty on the morning of the first day of the week, from the throne of glory in the midst of which there is seen the Lamb as it had been slain,—there is a testimony to the reality that God is, such as attracts the eyes of angels, fills heaven with new radiance and joy, and hell with added horrors; while man, beholding the sight, confesses that God is in Christ the Saviour of the world.

Here the character of God is fully manifested. For all the perfections and attributes of God are in Christ. Here

all these are seen in sweetest harmony, all interblended and shining with united splendour. The goodness of God appears here as it is nowhere else visible. For if bountiful benevolence be the index of goodness, what bounty, even from God,—what good and perfect gift, even from the Father of Lights, is comparable to this unspeakable gift of the only begotten Son of God to be the redeemer of guilty men,—taking a servant's place, and dying reckoned among the transgressors,—made sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him? Who had known that God is love, if we could not say, "Herein is love: not that we loved God; but that he loved us, and gave his Son to die for us"? Behold and see if there be love like this—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." Who could have known the boundlessness of the mercy of God had we not seen the unsearchable riches of that mercy in Christ Jesus? and who could have known the grace of God had it not been seen in exceeding abundance in Christ,—grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, so that, where sin abounded, even there grace hath much more abounded,—even his glorious grace,—the grace coming by Christ, and by him bringing salvation? The goodness of God in love, mercy, grace, is beheld in Christ.

Here, too, the manifold wisdom of God appears. He appears here, indeed, as God only wise. If wisdom appears in choosing the best ends, and in the selection and use of the best means for the attainment of those ends, then behold here the highest and most glorious and benevolent ends and means adapted with infinite wisdom for accomplishing the work necessary to the ends in view. The glory of God and the salvation of man—these are the ends. The mediation, suretyship, incarnation, death, resurrection, and reign of Christ at the right hand of God, with all the preparatory institutions, with all the concomitant and attendant or subordinate instrumentalities, agencies, gifts, ministrations,—these are the means; and all these meet in the constitution of the person of the Mediator, and are seen in his cross. So that we behold here the wisdom of God unto the salvation of all that believe.

“O the depths of the riches and knowledge and wisdom of God!”

Here the holiness of God is exhibited to view as it is nowhere else displayed. If holiness consists in the abhorrence of sin, in the love of justice, truth, and all that is morally excellent and pure, then the holiness of God is nowhere exhibited in such characters, or with such glory, as in the person, character, teaching, obedience, works, life, and death of Christ Jesus. He is himself the Holy One and the Just: holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. His life was an exhibition of spotless holiness. All his words and works were holy; and in his cross the fire of the divine holiness, the severity of the divine justice, the terribleness of the divine wrath against sin appear as they were not manifested from amidst the thunders of Sinai, and as they are not manifested in the horrors of hell. The Lord's infinite abhorrence of sin, and the infinite demerit of sin, are exhibited in Christ crucified as they are nowhere else exhibited. For what must be that love of holiness, that regard to justice, that required in order to the taking away of sin, and to the saving of the sinner, that the sacrifice of atonement and propitiation should be no other than the Incarnate Son of God? “If these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” Behold here the holiness of God.

As the holiness of the Lord is reflected from the person and work of Christ, so by him is revealed the sovereignty and power of God. The glory of the Lord's sovereignty over all persons and creatures in the disposal of all events, in doing what he wills, in the bestowment of his mercies, or in the withholding of them, shines out from the person, words, and works of Christ; and he, in conjunction with that sovereignty, displays and wields the almighty power of God. He was crucified, and suffered through weakness; but in death he broke all the power of the enemy, destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; so that the cross, the symbol of weakness, is become the power of God. He rose, and he liveth and reigneth by almighty power. “All power in heaven and earth is in his hands, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him.”

Again, all these attributes and perfections are through this medium perfectly exhibited. The glass is large enough to reflect an entire image of the divine perfections; and it is so polished and perfect that there is no flaw in the image reflected: for Christ Jesus is the brightness, the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the express image, or *character*, of his person. The representation of the glory made in him and by him is perfect. And, further, it is perfectly adapted to the ends for which it is designed, and specially to the transforming of those who behold it, so that they are changed into the same image. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "By his knowledge," or by the knowledge of himself, "shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

Let us meditate for a little on the marvellous adaptation of this display of the character and perfections of God to accomplish the end in view—the transformation of those who behold it. It is fitted, as one says, to stir and to transform the whole being and nature of man. For the glory of the Lord is brought near to the view of men. When the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem, we are told that "the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid." That glory round about them was not that by which they were to be saved. The transforming glory was that announced by the angel when he said, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And when they, obedient to the heavenly message, went to Bethlehem, and there found the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, they beheld the glory of which the bright cloud was but the symbol. There, in that manger, there on that cross, and there on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens the glory of the Lord is seen, and it is there near to us. For even on the glorious and high throne he is wrapped in the swaddling clothes of our humanity; he appears in our nature. Say not then, Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep to reveal to us the glory of the Lord? for that glory is nigh, it is beheld in the face of Christ. The nearness of this reflection, and the mild

yet mighty effulgence of the glory adapts it to the transforming of the beholder into its own likeness. Just as in the image of the sun reflected from the lake near to you, you behold the sun, although he is in his tabernacle in the heavens, with his curtains and robes of light; so, although the Lord, by reason of his being and boundless perfections, is at infinite distance from all creatures, and dwells in the pavilion of unapproachable glory, yet in the man Christ Jesus, who tabernacled and dwelt among us, Immanuel, the glory of the Lord is brought near, so that we may look upon it, live, and be changed into the same likeness. "The idea of God," says one, "has been humanized, as it were, by the Christian religion, and has been brought near to us." "The word is nigh thee," says Paul, "even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."

This glory is fitted to transform the beholder, because of the clearness and vividness of the light which shines from it upon the beholder. No doubt there intervenes the veil of the human nature of Christ. It is only through that veil, as it were hung over the glory, that we can at all behold it. But that veil, while it tempers the rays that shine out to us and brings near the glory, does not obscure and darken that glory. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is clearly and vividly seen in the face of Jesus Christ. And as it is of the nature of light to impart its own likeness to the objects on which it shines; so is it the property of this light of glory to assimilate to itself those who behold it. For once they were darkness; but now, since the true light hath shined into their hearts, they are light in the Lord. A light which nature could not reflect, which the law with all its fiery brightness could not emit,—a light, clear and pure and vivifying, shines from him who is the light of the world, and who hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. By its clearness and brightness this glory is fitted to change the beholder into its own likeness.

This manifestation of the glory of the Lord is adapted to the end in view by the harmonies and unions which it reveals. For here the divine perfections are seen interblended in ineffable harmony. Justice, severe and inex-

orable, is here seen rejoicing with mercy compassionate and infinite. Truth, that cannot fail, with grace that pardons the guilty. Holiness, that cannot look on sin, with love bringing home the sinner to the bosom of God. Glory dwells in our land. For "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." There is glory in the highest, while there is peace on earth and good-will to men. Truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. And like the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, which, with graceful and benignant span, girdles the earth with beauty, and binds it, as it were, to heaven,—while it seals the covenant of peace, this light of glory, with its many colours and harmonies, reveals the secured harmony of things in heaven and things on earth; for it reveals God in Christ reconciling the guilty unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. My covenant is with him of life and peace, and he shall turn many to righteousness. "Behold, therefore, and see the glory that is here." It is the light as of heaven's Sabbath shining through the darkness and labours of time, so shining that multitudes find, even amidst the sins and cares and weariness of time, the pledge and the foretaste of that eternal Sabbath-keeping which remains for the people of God when they shall see the face of their Lord, and be like him, for they shall see him as he is.

Thus far respecting the transforming efficacy of faith, by reason of the glory beheld and the medium through which it is beheld.

ACTINGS OF FAITH.

Attention must now be turned to the reason of this transformation, taken from the nature and actings of faith, with respect to this glorious object. Here we must be guided by the words of the text, in which two things are observable as stated: We all beholding the glory; and, we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed. As the object beheld is unveiled, and the glory reflected as from a polished mirror in contrast with the veil spread over the face of Moses,

i.e., over the glory of the Lord, as manifested under the legal dispensation; so we are here also taught that, in contrast with the unbelievers, over whose hearts there is the veil of unbelief, believers are permitted, and it is their privilege, to behold with unveiled face the unveiled glory. A double privilege is theirs: first, as contrasted with all unbelievers; and secondly, as contrasted even with the privileges of believers under the former dispensation. And corresponding with their greater light and liberty in beholding the glory of the Lord should be the transforming effect of that glory on their souls. Let us then observe how it is that the view of this glory, as beheld by believers, transforms them into its own image or likeness. This will appear, if we consider faith, or the beholding here spoken of, as expressive of a threefold exercise of the soul in relation to this object; as an exercise of contemplation; as an exercise of reciprocity; and as an exercise of the various principles or graces of the renewed nature. Faith, as contemplative, as recipient, as active, transforms the soul into the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

1. The assimilation of the soul to the image of the glory of the Lord is effected by faith beholding or contemplating that glory. The tendency of thought to impress upon the mind the likeness or resemblance of the object thought upon is attested by universal experience; and this tendency, observable in the natural workings of the mind, is equally observable in the exercise of faith on its proper objects. "I consider," says Boyle, "that the devout contemplation of God, besides other great advantages that it brings the mind, in so much that the human understanding, like Moses in the mount, does by an assiduous converse with God acquire a lasting luminousness; besides this, I say, and the improving influence that this happy conversation may have upon the graces and virtues of the mind, I take it to be one of the most delightful exercises that the soul is capable of on this side heaven." "Mine eye," says the bride in the song, "affecteth my heart." The contemplation of great objects imparts a greatness to the mind; and habitual converse with trivial objects degrades and weakens the mind. The contemplation of infinite purity and excellence at once exalts and

purifies the soul, while at the same time it never fails to beget a habit of genuine humility and lowliness of mind. We accordingly find that those who are most distinguished for holiness and for conformity in all things to the image of God, are those who have most habitually and devoutly contemplated the glory of the Lord. "Show me thy glory," was the prayer of Moses, that meekest of men, who turned aside to see the great sight on the Mount Horeb, when the bush burned and was not consumed. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," were the words of David, that man after God's own heart. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," exclaimed Job, when he beheld the glory of the Lord. With all this agree such statements as those in which it is said, "They looked unto him and were lightened." "As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

The contemplation of the infinite majesty of the Lord begets in the soul a sense of its own littleness in his presence; the contemplation of his infinite authority and independence begets in the soul a sense of its own emptiness, dependence, and subjection, and, so to speak, puts the soul into a posture and frame for taking on the likeness of his glory. For, till the soul is laid low before the Lord, it is not in a posture to receive benefit from the manifested glory of the Lord. But humbled by the view of the divine glory, the soul, contemplating that glory, is changed into its likeness. Looking unto the Lord, we are quickened, healed, sanctified, saved; so that the whole process of salvation, as realized by the soul as actual in experience, is traced to a look—to looking—to beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord. For in this looking the soul is turned away from sin, and steadfastly fixes its attention and thought on the glory of the Lord. This becomes the object of devout and continued meditation; and while we meditate and muse, communing with the glory, the light not only spreads

itself over our souls, but the fire of love is kindled, and our hearts burn within us. The light infuses itself into the recesses of our hearts, so that the darkness is changed, and we become light in the Lord.

2. This will appear still more clearly if we consider that faith, exercised on beholding the glory of the Lord, is by its very nature recipient of that glory as manifested and communicated. Just as in natural vision the eye receives the light, and forms on the retina, or expansion of the optic nerve, an exact image of every object to which the eye is turned in the light, so that the likeness of all that we behold is photographed on the little canvas of the retina; so, in spiritual vision, while beholding the glory of the Lord, faith receives the light, and with that light there is formed on the tablet of the heart the image of the glory. With the open eye there is the opened heart; so that the light admitted by the eye of the understanding is received into the heart, and there working effectually, changes the whole inner man into its own likeness. Thus by faith is received into the heart the good-will of God, revealed in Christ; and the enmity of the carnal mind is displaced, removed, purged out by the light of the Lord. The love of God in Christ is received, and takes possession of the soul, so that "we love him because he first loved us." And with that the heart takes on the impression of the holiness of the Lord; and, as that holiness is diffused through the soul, its vileness and corruption are purged out as by fire, and this process of receiving progresses more and more; the soul thus receiving is not only enlarged in capacity and rendered capable of receiving more and more, but with this progressive enlargement there is always a progressive purity, a progressive congeniality, between the recipient and the object, so that the believers hold on their way, and, like him that hath clean hands, wax stronger and stronger, and can say, "Out of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." This reciprocity of grace for grace answers to the fact stated in our text respecting the change or transformation of the soul as from glory to glory.

3. But this further implies that faith is here not only passively recipient of this glory, but that it is spiritually

active in this transforming process. For, as this change is wrought in all the faculties, feelings, and dispositions of the soul, and as the whole of this transformation proceeds on the beholding of the glory, it must be that the beholding has reflex influence on all the powers and affections of the soul. And it is so: for looking excites admiration, desire, love, delight, hope; and these all operate, under the guidance and leading of faith, in effecting this change. Every new discovery of the glory excites new admiration in the soul. The soul is transported with the vision of the glory, and wonders and adores, while often exclaiming, "This is too wonderful for me! Lord, what is man!" With this admiration there is joined strong and active desire,—desire of being nearer and nearer to the Lord,—desire of being in all things conformed to the image of his glory in Christ. "With desire have I desired thee." "Our desires are towards thee." And in proportion as this positive desire after conformity to the Lord is exercised, in the same proportion is aversion to all sin felt; so that the soul, moving heavenwards in the ships of desire, recedes farther and farther from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." This desire is but the outgoing of the love that now reigns in the heart. The look of the soul to Christ, meeting with his look of love, brought into the heart the new and heavenly love that now can find no rest except in the enjoyment of Christ; and as he is seen by faith, he is more and more loved. Here the looking feeds love, and as that love is strengthened and deepened by continued looking, it grieves when Jesus is not seen; it mourns over the sins that obstruct perfect intercourse with him. It is steadfastly minded to be like Christ, and to be with Christ. His presence fills the soul with delight, and at times with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Faith works by love; and where this love is, hope is. The soul has good hope through grace; and although now the resemblance to Christ is not perfect and complete, yet the graces and the activities of the soul are invigorated by the hope that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Then shall the soul not only bear his likeness perfectly, but then even our vile bodies shall be

changed into the likeness of his glorious or glorified body. Meanwhile, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT.

Having treated of the transforming efficacy of faith because of the object beheld—"the glory of the Lord;" because of the medium through which that object is seen—"as in a glass;" and because of the nature and exercise of faith in relation to the glory—"we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory,"—we must now proceed to treat of the efficacy of faith in assimilating the soul to the glory of the Lord, because of the efficient operation of the Spirit,—“even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Hitherto, in all that has been said, we have assumed, when we have not expressly stated, this cause; for without it there is and there can be no transformation of the soul into the likeness or image of the glory of the Lord. For without the grace of the Spirit, there is no transforming manifestation of the glory,—there is no eye to see it, and no heart to desire or love it. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. But God hath revealed them unto us, and hath given to us (believers) the unction of the Holy One, by which we know the things that are freely given to us of God. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Without the gracious operation of the Spirit, there may be much knowledge of and about things spiritual and divine, about the glory of the Lord. Unsanctified men, like Balaam, may attain to high degrees and large measures of knowledge about the glory of the Lord; but without the gracious illumination of the Spirit, the knowledge is a dry light, and does not produce, or is not attended by, renovation of heart and life.

Without the gracious operation of the Spirit, there may be a professed subjection to the truth, there may be assent of the mind to the truth revealed, there may be a natural faith

or a natural belief of spiritual truths; but experience and Scripture bear witness that this natural belief, faith, or assent, may co-exist in the mind with a heart estranged from the love of God, and with a life according to the sinful course of this world.

Without the gracious operation of the Spirit of the Lord there may be vivid impressions produced on the mind, and in connection with these there may be felt and experienced even deep emotion. Who has not at some time or other been impressed and moved by the story of man's original bliss, and of his fall; by the announcement of the grace of God, and by the record of the life, character, sufferings, and death of Jesus of Nazareth? Yet, natural emotion, be it ever so deep, does not produce spiritual transformation. Without the gracious operation of the Spirit men may do many things, may engage in a course of amendment and reformation, and may even think themselves and seem to others to be changed and renewed men. They may, indeed, be in many things, in many habits and practices, different from what they once were. But there is no instance on record of any man having been changed into the likeness of the glory of the Lord, without being the subject of the gracious operation of the Spirit of the Lord. All Scripture and all experience are against the possibility of such a transformation apart from the grace of the Holy Spirit. For "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

If believers are partakers of a new life, a life after the image of God, they have by the Spirit been quickened to newness of life. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. To the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and bestowed by him, the spiritual life of the believer is to be traced. The new creature, the birth into new and spiritual life, is not of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.

If believers are light in the Lord, having been changed from darkness to light, and if they now see the glory of the Lord, and are luminous with that glory, it is because God by his Spirit hath shined in their hearts, giving them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. It is the Spirit that enlighteneth the eyes of the blind, as it is the same

Spirit, taking of the things that are Christ's, that showeth them unto those whose understandings he has opened to see these things in the light of the Lord. If believers, from being enemies to God in their hearts, now feel and exercise love towards God, if they are changed into the likeness of glorious love, it is because the Spirit has shed abroad in their hearts the love of God, and has, in response to that love, begotten love in them. The Spirit, as the Spirit of love, has been given to them.

If believers, from being slaves, are the Lord's freemen, and enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God, it is because God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts. Therefore they are no more bondmen, but children crying, Abba, Father. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. If believers are endued with power to overcome the world and the wicked one, it is because they have received the Spirit of power; and he being in them, is greater than all that is in the world. They are strengthened with all might by the Spirit of the Lord.

If believers are enabled to perfect holiness in the fear of God, it is because the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of holiness—has been given to them and abideth in them. If they are enabled to go from strength to strength, ever pressing towards the mark for the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus, forgetting always the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before; going on unto that perfection with a view to which Christ Jesus the Lord apprehended them and called them unto the fellowship of the gospel: if they renew their strength, and mount up with wings like eagles, run and are not weary, walk and are not faint, it is—and they are ever forward devoutly and thankfully to acknowledge it—because the Lord hath bestowed upon them and put within them his own Spirit of life, power, love, and holiness. The secret of their life, and of their progressive conformity to the image of the Son of God, is to be found in this, that according to the intercessory prayer of Christ, the Father is sanctifying them through his Word of truth, by the supply of the grace, and by the effectual operation of the Spirit of Christ. The world knows not, receives not, and does not even confess its need of this Spirit of God. But

believers know him. He is in them, and shall abide for ever with them. For he that hath begun in them the good work will carry it on and complete it. He will fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power. For he will not fail, nor be discouraged, till he set forth judgment unto victory, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified.

In the economy of grace the efficient, or practical and effectual administration of the kingdom of God is in the hand of the Holy Spirit, through the mediatorial intervention, sacrifice, and intercession of Christ Jesus. It belongs to the office of the Holy Spirit to take of the things that are Christ's, and show them unto men. He is accordingly a convincing or convicting Spirit to the world,—convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And in the believer he is the Spirit of truth, grace, and consolation. He opens the understanding that we may understand the Scriptures, the heart that we may receive the truth in the love of it, and he renews and bends the will, so that we become obedient to the truth and to the faith. It is his, as he formed and prepared the natural body of Jesus, so to work within the believers that Christ be formed in them the hope of glory. The regenerating act is his; for believers are born of the Spirit. The enlightening, purifying, consoling, establishing acts are all his; for he seals and sanctifies the souls of the children of God.

If faith exercises itself in contemplating the glory of the Lord, it is the Spirit that quickens faith and illumines the object beheld. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." If faith is a recipient act, taking in and appropriating to the soul the things revealed in Christ Jesus and in the Word of his truth, then it is the Spirit that hath revealed, or unveiled, and made known, and presented these things to the mind—"For God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit," and "the deep things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;" and not only so, but it is by the grace and indwelling and working of the Spirit of God in the mind and heart, that faith is capable of

receiving the spiritual things revealed. "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; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Spiritual reciprocity and affinity between the mind and the object, between the heart and the glory of the Lord, result from the grace and efficacious operation of the Holy Spirit. Yet once more, if faith exercises itself on its object by evoking all the activities and graces of the soul, so that the Word of God is, as it were, chemically mixed with the inner being, faculties, feelings, and affections of the hidden man of the heart, and the very likeness of the glory of the Lord is not merely photographed on the surface of the mind, but actually wrought into the very texture and moral tissues of our nature, so as to become an ineradicable and indestructible part of our inner life; then this operation of faith, by which the heart is progressively purified, sin purged out, and the soul inwardly transfigured into the likeness of Christ, is of the Spirit of God. "For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." And "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and in these graces, and such as these, consists the image of the glory of the Lord. Have ye then, brethren, yet received the Holy Ghost? or are ye yet sensual, or carnal, or natural? I ask not, Are ye living in known sin, more secret and hidden, or more manifest and public? I ask not if you wear before men a character of acknowledged probity, integrity, and honour, as distinguished from a reputation for double dealing, unrelia- bleness, profaneness, or sensuality? I ask not whether your name is on the communion roll of the church of Christ? or whether you are regular in discharging the outward duties of piety? But this I ask, Do you know aught of godliness beyond the mere form of it? Do you know the practical and transforming power of the truth as it is in Jesus? Have you or have you not the mind and Spirit of Christ? If not, no matter what you have, or what reputation among men and in the visible church you enjoy, in the sight of God you are yet in

your sins,—a stranger and an alien from the commonwealth of his true Israel and the household of God. For he is not a Christian who is one outwardly, neither is that Christian baptism which is outward in the putting away of bodily pollution; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and that is Christian baptism which is the washing away of sin, by the grace and blood of Christ in the heart and in the spirit, with the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, effectually dispensed and administered by the Holy Ghost. Whatever be our condition, experience, character, or prospects, let us unite in the prayer of the apostle, when he prays “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding (in the original, “the eyes of your heart”) being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him, the head over all things, to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Amen.

THE BEAUTY, SHADOW, AND FRUIT OF CHRIST:

OR,

THE ROSE OF SHARON; THE LILY OF THE VALLEYS; THE
APPLE TREE AMONG THE TREES OF THE WOOD.

“I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”—Cantls. ii. 1—3.

WRITINGS AND CHARACTER OF SOLOMON.

SOLOMON wrote three books of Scripture,—the book of Proverbs, the book of Ecclesiastes, and the book of the Song of Songs. These three are so diverse from each other that many a battle has been fought over their authenticity. But they are not more diverse from each other than were the phases and aspects of Solomon's own life and character. To him might the word be applied that he was “the wisest and yet the weakest of men.” He surpassed his fellow-men in wisdom, and he fell beneath multitudes in weakness and in sin. Yet through his whole life there ran a thread, a vein of real godliness. At times that was conspicuous and visible to the eyes of all men,—as when he presided and prayed at the opening and consecration of the temple. At other times, such were his infirmities and sins, so far and so grievously did he depart from the good ways of the Lord, that his character was not only liable to suspicion, but his conduct, like that of David, his father, on one occasion, gave great cause to the enemy to reproach and blaspheme the name

of the Lord, and to the friends of godliness to mourn sore and weep. His sins are not to be palliated; yet is he not to be sweepingly condemned, as if there was not the root of wisdom in him. His splendid endowments and splendid graces were set over against most flagrant sins. Yet grace ultimately prevailed. The flesh lusted against the Spirit, but the Spirit triumphed over the opposition of the flesh.

His character verged to opposite extremes. In one direction it reached to the confines of angelic sanctity, rapture, and elevation; in another, it touched almost the borders of all evil. Hence the apparently contradictory style and character of the books which Solomon wrote. The book of the Song of Songs is of so sublimely spiritual an order that, misinterpreting its mystic contents, not a few have rejected its title to a place in the canon of inspired Scripture. The book of Ecclesiastes, on the other hand, wears an aspect so secular, and speaks so much according to the wisdom of this world, that many interpreters, taking particular statements in it apart from the grand scope of the whole book, the grand conclusion of the whole matter, have displaced it from the canon of Scripture, and have even affirmed that it was written by a free thinker or sceptic. Intermediate between these is the book of Proverbs,—a book which may be regarded as a treasure store of wisdom—of wisdom from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits. That book may be taken as by the Spirit giving expression to what may be said to have been the normal state and character of Solomon. It does not descend to the low level indicated by some parts of Ecclesiastes, nor does it throughout—and only occasionally—rise to the heights of spiritual contemplation and converse that mark the Song of Songs.

These observations having been made respecting Solomon and his three books, it may here, as our text occurs in the book of the Songs, be added that three orders of mind are in peculiar danger of erring in the study of this book: the merely rationalistic mind, the sensual mind, and the merely poetic and sentimental mind are each and all peculiarly liable to misconstrue and misinterpret the statements and contents of this

book of sacred mysteries. That we may understand this Scripture, as indeed all other Scripture, we need the unction of the Holy One. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

The book consists of a collection of songs,—songs of love, expressive of the love of Christ to the church, and of the love of the church to Christ. It is throughout the utterance of mutual and reciprocal admiration, desire, delight, and love.

In the passage before us Christ compares himself to the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys. And compares his bride, the church, to the lily among thorns. Then the church says of Christ the Lord, "As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST JESUS.

1. We have here an assertion or declaration of the beauty of Christ. He is the Rose of Sharon. He is the Lily of the valleys. Corresponding with this, there is on the part of the church, his bride, the exercise towards him of admiration and love.

Such is the manifold excellency of Christ that it is set forth in Scripture by similitudes taken from natural objects of the most varied and diversified kind. Heaven and earth are laid under contribution to declare the glory of Immanuel. If we look upward at the dawning of day,—he is the bright and morning star; if we look again when the orb of light has risen,—he is the Sun of righteousness risen upon us with healing in his wings. If we welcome the light after the darkness,—he is the light of the world. If a cloud covers us from the direct beams of the burning sun,—he is as the shadow of a cloud; and if, in the day of rain, we rejoice when we see the bow of many colours with graceful span athwart the sky,—he is the bow set in the cloud, or, there is a rainbow round about his throne. If we admire the stable and majestic mountains and

castellated rocks,—he is the rock—the everlasting rock. If we delight to trace the mighty river as it makes glad the regions through which it flows, pouring floods of blessing along its course and pathway,—he is the river of the water of life. If we stand still to gaze on the goodly trees that grow beside the waters, or that wave their mighty boughs on the mountain side,—he is the tree of life—the plant of renown—the apple tree among the trees of the wood. If we walk along the prepared highway,—he is the way—the way of life. If we go aside into garden, valley, or field, to see and cull flowers, and inhale their sweet, their delicious fragrance,—he is the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys. Beauty is his, and from him a sweet perfume spreads itself around, so that all who see him are regaled as with the smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia. The beauty of the rose, and the gracefulness in which the lily is arrayed, are emblems of the exquisite beauty and gracefulness of Christ. His name is as ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love him. The rose and the lily have in every age and country been admired and praised. They have been the emblems of beauty, love, modesty, and gracefulness. Among the roses of Palestine it would seem that the rose of Sharon was noted for its beauty—“the excellency of Sharon;” and among lilies the lily of the valleys seems also to have had a glory all its own. One has said of the rose, “If a king were set over flowers, it would be the rose that should reign over them, being the ornament of the earth, the splendour of plants, the eye of flowers, the beauty of the field.” And of the lilies Jesus himself has said that “even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

The Arabians say of one of their most beautiful flowers, that when Adam was sent out from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken, he took with him that flower and planted it. It is, according to them, the only flower of paradise that blooms in this sin-blighted world. The idea itself is beautiful; Adam did carry out of Eden a flower of most exquisite loveliness,—a rosebud given from above to be planted in this world, so that it might blossom, and shed forth a fragrance unknown in the earthly paradise. Yes, when Adam

went out from Eden, with downcast eye, and sad at heart with bitter recollection of sin, and with trembling hesitating step, he carried in his hand the flower of promise, and as his weeping eye looked to that little flower even he might be made glad. If, as we are told, a traveller in the pathless desert was taught to remember God, and strengthened to go forward in his lonely, dreary journey, by observing in one place the merest rudiments of vegetation—sign to him of the presence and power of God,—surely the sight of that precious rosebud was fitted to beget faith and hope even in our fallen first parents. That rosebud has been transplanted into many lands, and the sight of it has cheered and gladdened the hearts of many, to whom without that little flower the world were indeed a waste howling wilderness. Jesus in the promise was that rosebud. Jesus known in Judah's land was the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valleys. Jesus now in glory is known and seen and loved here on earth as "the Rose and the Lily." "My beloved is white and ruddy. He is altogether lovely."

These emblems present before us the beauty of Christ Jesus, more particularly in his lowliness, in his purity, and in his accessibleness. Both the rose and the lily are what we may call meek, lowly flowers, fit emblems of him who is meek and lowly in heart. Meekness and gentleness find their home in the heart of Jesus, and in his life find perfect expression. More beautiful than the children of men, he excels them all in meekness, gentleness, and lowliness of heart. Let pride and frowardness be for ever humbled and restrained in the presence and view of this Rose and this Lily, in the presence of the infinite worth and infinite modesty of Jesus, the Son of God. His voice is not heard on the street amidst the clamouring voices of men. It is the still small voice speaking to the heart, the voice of the beloved. He is gentle towards his people. His gentleness makes them great. "The bruised reed he will not break, the smoking flax he will not quench." Oh, that gentle look of his. What power is there in it to attract and win the heart, and even to awe, subdue, and break it? Ask those who have known and felt that look. Ask Simon Peter, when Jesus looked on him, when he went out to weep bitterly. Ask the

trembling sinner what is in the gentle look of Jesus, and he will tell you that pity and love and beauty, grace and mercy, are in that infinitely benignant look. In disposition, in words, in acts, in sufferings, Jesus is the meek and lowly one. He bore patiently the contradiction of sinners against himself. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." He rendered not evil for evil, railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing. He did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. When he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Behold this lovely Rose, this lowly beauteous Lily.

The purity of Christ is here represented to us. Not more lowly than pure, not more meek than spotless and holy is this Saviour of men, this Bridegroom and Husband of the Church. Of all natural things flowers—roses and lilies—appear the purest. As they spread out their leaves and petals in the bright light of day they are pure and bathed in purity. Whatever dust may settle upon them enters not into them. Light and purity are their elements; and beauty is their dress, their glory. This Rose of Sharon, this Lily of the valleys is pure within, and is robed in purity and beauty. Jesus is the Holy One of God. We see sometimes flowers, as in our great smoking city, struggling, as it were, to preserve their beauty, their purity. Their beauty seems to languish, and they droop and pine away. They have neither congenial soil nor congenial air. How different is it with the flowers in free and open fields, or in the delightful gardens far away from the dust and smoke of the city. At other times, as in yonder Botanic garden, we find exotics carefully covered in from the cold wintry air and variable weather of this climate. In their proper home they need no such culture, no such care. Behold now this Rose, this Lily! Its proper home, its native place is in the light and ineffable purity of heaven. Yet planted here under the care of the Father, here in a world accursed, in the midst of sin and

pollution, where the air is charged with impurity and poison, in scorching drought, in frost and rain, in light and darkness, this Rose, this Lily retains all its purity, sweetness, beauty. Among sinners, not of them, yea, rather separate from sinners was Jesus, the Son of God. True, his visage was more marred than any man, his form more than the sons of men; true, to the eye of unbelief he is without comeliness, without beauty, a root out of a dry ground; but beneath that marred visage and form, beneath that exterior of homely plainness, beneath the dust wherewith he was covered, beneath all this, and visible to the eye of faith, there is the pure and beautiful Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valleys, the undefiled Son of God, in whom the Father taketh constant and ineffable delight.

Again, the accessibleness of Christ is here represented to us. Some flowers grow on boughs so lofty that they cannot be reached by the hand; high in air they bloom, untouched by human hands, and shed their perfume far on the fields of space. But the rose and the lily spread their beauties and their fragrance beside us. They are near to eye and hand and smell. They spring up at our feet. He that wishes may crop them, and wear them. So is it with Christ Jesus the Lord. He is the Son of God; but as the Son of Man he has taken bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. He has come near to us. He is approachable. In some cases we find a purity and holiness so severe and stern that we are awed and frowned away from it. The sternly just man seems to walk along a pathway far removed, having, or supposed to have, in his severe isolation, little, if any, sympathy with the infirmities and sins of other men. Such a man commands respect, but he does not beget love in his fellows. For love is attracted, rather than forced or compelled. But Jesus is accessible; he draws men to him with the cords of love, with the bands of a man. "Christ," says Matthew Henry, "is the Rose of Sharon, denoting that the gospel salvation lies open to all. Whoever will may come and gather the rosebuds of privileges and comforts that grow in the covenant of grace. He is not a rose locked up in a garden; but all may come and receive benefit by him and

comfort in him." His majesty, as the Son of God, commands the adoration and homage of angels before the throne; but his lowliness and gentleness attract to him the weary, trembling, and guilty children of men. He receives sinners, welcomes them, loves them, and invites them to lean upon his breast. To old and young, rich and poor, Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, Jesus is accessible as the rose or lily that blossoms beside us. Nay, he calls with entreating voice, saying, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

But why does Christ say of himself, "I am the Rose of Sharon, I am the Lily of the valleys?" Why, but to attract towards himself the admiration and love of his church. The rose and the lily beautify the earth, and are designed to illustrate the beauties of the Lord, while they give pleasure to the sense of the beautiful in the mind of man. Man, intelligent and self-conscious, man only among dwellers on earth is capable of admiring these and all other flowers. And what sight on earth more lovely than the sight of fields, meadows, gardens, and hill-slopes, plains and valleys, when in opening summer they throw out the many and varied forms of beauty that had been veiled through the night of winter. The sight tends to becalm the troubled heart, to sweeten the embittered heart, and to shed a delicious fragrance round the soul of the spectator. Yet fairer than all this fair expanse of beauty is the beauty of Christ. And he commends himself to our admiration and love. Let the eye, then, be turned to him, the Rose of Sharon; let us delight in him, the lily of the valleys. Let us pray that his Spirit may unveil and open his glories to our view, and may open our eyes to behold him in his beauty, that we may, ravished with the sight, delight for ever in his love. Let us take this Rose and this Lily, and wear it near our hearts, the token that we belong to Christ, and that he is ours. "Put ye on the Lord Christ." "For," as Matthew Henry says, "he calls himself the 'Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys,' to teach

his people to adorn themselves with him, as shepherds and shepherdesses, when they appeared gay, were decked with roses and lilies, garlands, and chaplets of flowers." In vain does the rose blossom, in vain does the lily put on its modest beauty, if men admire not and delight not. In vain does Christ commend himself, in vain do we strive to commend him, if you do not look to him, love him, and appropriate him, delighting, rejoicing in him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Hearken, therefore, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." (Psalm xlv.) This must always be the exhortation after setting forth any of the beauty of Christ. Come then and say, "One thing have I desired, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord." This will produce conformity, likeness to his image, to his beauty; so that he will say of you, as he says of his church, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." This will be to your advantage; for then shall the word be fulfilled,—"The Lord thy God will save thee; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. iii. 17.)

THE SHADOW OF CHRIST.

2. We have here the excellence of Christ set forth by a similitude taken from the shadow of the apple tree; and corresponding with this there is the feeling of delightful repose enjoyed by the believer, by the church under his shadow.

Hitherto through the emblems of the rose and lily we have been contemplating somewhat of the manifold *beauty* of Christ. But now from another emblem we are led to meditate on other aspects of the Lord in his relations to his people. The church, his bride, says of him, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight." Here, as in the former case, some distinguishing excellence of Christ is exhibited to us. In

the former case it was his beauty; here and now it is the shadow thrown from him, the protection, rest, and comfort, the sense of safety which he imparts to his people. The rose and lily serve to declare and manifest some aspects and features of his glory. The apple tree also serves as a symbol of his excellence.

A singular and marked place belongs to the apple tree among the trees of the wood. A place altogether singular belongs to Christ. Distinguished from the rose and lily by its stateliness, the apple tree is distinguished from the trees of the wood by its shadow and by its fruit. The apple tree here described by its shadow and by its fruit, and used as an emblem of Christ, is not the common apple tree of this country, but the citron apple tree. This citron tree is remarkable for its handsome appearance, for its ample shadow, for its beautiful foliage, for its rich colour, for the fragrance diffused by it, and for its delicious fruit. It is thus described by one writer: "It bears fruit at all times; some of the apples are falling, some are forming in the fruit bud, and some are advancing to maturity or ripeness."

THE MAJESTY OF JESUS.

The stateliness, as well as symmetrical appearance of the citron or apple tree, is suggestive of the majesty of Jesus the Son of God. His lofty majesty is blended with meekness, gentleness, and every lovely and lowly grace. In his gracefulness the rose and lily are his emblems and letters of commendation, strewn thick, and scattered far and wide, around the habitations and hamlets of men, if by any means Christ's beauty may attract the eye and affect the heart. In his majesty, the stateliness of the apple tree as here, or the loftiness of the cedar, and the strength of the oak, are his emblems. For in him beauty is not dissociated or separated from strength and glory. And if we would receive right and spiritual impressions of his wonderful character, and of his singular personality as the Incarnate and Divine Saviour, as we must be filled with admiration, love, and delight as we contemplate his lowliness,

purity, and accessibleness, so must we be filled with holy awe and reverence as we behold the glory of his majesty and power. His beauty reposes on his everlasting strength, as the rose and the lily, and the snowdrops and daisies spring out of, and repose on, the earth that abideth ever. Beauty and comely grace, disjoined from stateliness and strength, may be lovely to the eye, but if they are beautiful they are weak, and their weakness indicates imperfection. But Christ Jesus is altogether lovely. And his grace and beauty are all the more graceful and fair, because seen in contrast with his strength, power, and greatness. This interblending and commingling of seemingly opposite qualities and perfections is that which renders Christ Jesus singular and alone among the historic millions of mankind. It is this that gives emphasis to the question, "To whom will ye liken me, and shall I be equal?" There are none among the mightiest or the fairest that can rival him, or be likened to him. "Such an high priest became us," said the apostle to the Hebrews, "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens." "Jesus wept," and onlookers wondered at his love and tenderness and sympathy. Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth;" and "he that was dead came forth" from the sepulchre and state of death; and "many of the Jews that had seen the things Jesus did, believed on him." He that sat weary by the well of Jacob, and asked for water to drink, said unto her of whom he asked this favour, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." He that agonized in Gethsemane, that suffered himself to be bound and led into the judgment hall, and meekly bore all indignity, being spat upon, maliciously ridiculed, invested with the insignia of mock royalty, crowned with thorns, scourged, and that died in weakness on the cross, carried with him from that cross a trophy of his victorious grace and power; and entering into the grave and death, destroyed him that had the power of death, destroyed the dominion of both death and the grave; rose again, and in triumph leading captivity captive, ascended to the throne of

God, entering as the forerunner of his people into the holiest of all, there to appear in the presence of God, the priest upon his throne, our intercessor and advocate with the Father, able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. It is because in him are united two distinct natures,—the human and the divine,—in his one personality that he can be compared with the lily and rose in gracefulness and beauty, and that the apple tree, with its stateliness of form and its ampleness of shade and its abundance of fruit, is a fit emblem of his grace, majesty, and glory. It is because he is divine that his shadow, projected through time and eternity, is as a covering of glory and protection and refreshment, beneath which all who lie down find a sure and safe resting-place for their souls. It is because he is both God and man, that he could say, “My flesh is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.” (John vi.)

Beneath the shadow of this tree, that is, beneath the shadow of Christ the Bridegroom, the Bride here says, “I sat down under his shadow with great delight.”

This emblem is significant of the protection, shelter, or covering which Christ offers to all who will betake themselves to him; and the language of the Bride is expressive of her actual enjoyment of that protecting and covering shade—“I delighted and sat down under his shadow.”

THE PROTECTING AND COMFORTING GRACE OF CHRIST.

Christ is a protecting shadow against the heat and storm of the wrath of God. Against sinners there is wrath. God is

angry with the wicked every day, and his wrath against the impenitent is the wrath to come. Now there is anger, now there is the holy displeasure of God against transgressors. But he has provided and he now offers in Christ a shadow from his hot displeasure,—from present wrath and wrath to come. For on this apple tree, on Christ, came down the lightning of his anger; the storm of his wrath arose and beat violently against him. These things were done in the green tree, done in Christ. Let us therefore flee to Christ, and knowing that there is wrath, let us hide ourselves beneath his shadow. “I trembled in myself that I might be hid in the day of trouble.” (See Job xxxvi. 18.) Flee to this covert till the indignation be past, then you shall be able to say, I will praise thee, O Lord, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Christ throws out his shadow over those who are labouring as in the fires,—labouring and heavy laden with a sense of guilt and sin. To such there is no tree among all the trees of earth that can afford shelter and repose but this apple tree, this plant of renown. Is there then a single soul here oppressed, borne down, and weary with the labour and burden of his sin? Is there one who feels as if the burning rays of justice were scorching his parched soul,—consuming his very heart? Do you feel as the psalmist when he said, “My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer” (Psalm xxxii.); or as when again he said, “I am in trouble, mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. . . . I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.” (Psalm xxxi. 9, 12.) If this be your state or your feeling, look, I beseech you, to this goodly tree; come and sit down under its shadow, and you will find rest to your weary soul. For the shade of this apple tree covers the sins of those that come to lodge and abide under it, so that they cannot be found. For he, Christ Jesus, is “a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of

refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." (Isaiah iv. 6.)

Christ throws out his shadow for the protection and comfort of his people when they are pursued by their enemies. The shadow which is safety to them, to his own people, is death to their foes. Where this shadow falls there is a consecrated and enclosed spot. Within that boundary no real evil can befall the children of God. Satan there cannot vanquish them or wound them unto death. The rage of persecutors there is stayed. This shadow falling on a believer enables him to say, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. The Lord is on my side, I shall not be moved." Reposing there, and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, as in the pavilion of the Lord, the believer finds a refuge, a shadow, "when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." (Isaiah xxv. 4.) "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day. . . . A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. . . . Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and dragon shalt thou trample under feet." (Psalm xci.)

Christ throws his shadow over his people in their afflictions. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Under the strokes that fall upon him he is ready to faint. Even the child of God is heard to say, "My soul is weary of my life: I will leave my complaint upon myself: I will speak in the bitterness of my soul." (Job x. i.) "All these things are against me." (Gen. xlii.) Varied and unexpected are the forms in which our afflicting trials come upon us. Sometimes they proceed from the weakening of our strength in the midst

of our years; sometimes from disappointed worldly prospects—failure in business; sometimes from the infirmities, sicknesses, and distress of those dear to us as our own souls; sometimes from the burying of our early dead; sometimes from the perversity and ungodliness of those that live; and sometimes all these meet together, and with them is joined the heaviest and sorest trial of being obliged to walk under the hidings of the countenance of the Lord. In these and similar trials, whither shall we betake ourselves for refuge, rest, and consolation? Whither shall we flee, as with the wings of a dove, but to this plant of renown, this apple tree, there to lodge under its benignant and blissful shade. “I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me: no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O God: I said thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” In Christ the afflicted and tossed with tempest find shelter, quietness, and peace. His shadow tempers the heat, so that it does not smite them with a deadly wound: his shadow sheds tranquillity over their otherwise tumultuous thoughts: his shadow changes the bitterness of their hearts—*Marah*—into sweetness and pleasantness. Beneath that shadow they hear the voice of his lovingkindness; they are still, knowing that he is the Lord, and that all things work together for good to them that love God, and are so called according to his purpose, so that they can say, “Though my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation and all my desire.”

Christ throws his shadow of protection and comfort over his people at the time of their death. Through fear of death many are all their lifetime subject to bondage. They dread to walk down that path to the grave. They dread to meet the king of terrors. Even when they feel and confess that they would not live away,—when they even long and desire to depart and be with Christ at home, yet they dread the way that leads to their Father’s house. The shadow of Christ upon the dying believer enlightens his darkness, dispels his fears,—causes him to say, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod, and thy staff,

comfort me. "If this is death," said a timid one,—one long afraid to die,—"If this is death, it is pleasant to die."

"Jesus can make a dying bed
 Feel soft as downy pillows are;
 While on his breast I lay my head,
 And breathe my soul out sweetly there."

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Thy dead shall live. Together with my dead body shall they arise. The shadow of Christ thrown upon the place of graves quickens the dead to life. What is sown beneath that shadow in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; what is sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv.)

In the text we have the believer's actual experience of the benefit and delight of abiding, sitting, resting, under the shadow of Christ.

It is the delight of knowing that the Lord is gracious and will be angry no more. It is the delight of resting from guilty fear, from harassing doubt, from the accusations of conscience—the delight of resting, knowing that there is no condemnation to those abiding under the shadow of Christ. It is the delightful rest after weariness, and toil, and labour, and pain. It is the delightful feeling of security of having a place of defence in the munitions of rocks, of having comfort and consolation in all adversity,—the delight of knowing that nothing, not even death itself, shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Surely, blessed is the man who abides under the shadow of the Almighty. "He will not," said the psalmist, contemplating the blessedness of this man, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold he that keepeth Israel shall not slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy

right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for ever more." "Happy the people in such a case, yea, blessed the people whose God is the Lord." A recompense shall be given them, and a full reward of the Lord under whose wings they have come to trust. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste."

THE FRUIT OF CHRIST.

We have here another aspect of the glorious excellency of Christ. He is not only as the rose and lily in beauty pleasant to the eye. He is not only as the citron spreading a graceful broad and heavy shadow; but as the citron, within the foliage of which there grows the golden and delicious fruit,—from the boughs of which the ripe fruit falls into the hands of him who sits under the shadow of the goodly tree. "His fruit was sweet unto my taste." Having treated of the beauty of Christ, of the shadow of Christ, we now treat of the fruit of Christ, and corresponding with this of the joyful refreshment, vigour, and strength, received by the believer through partaking of this pleasant fruit.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden seemed to Eve good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. But the beauty became as rottenness, the wisdom became folly, the food became deadly poison. The banquet was like that of which it is said, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell." The eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil "brought death into the world and all our woe." By eating of the fruit of another tree,—even this apple tree, this plant of renown, this tree of life,—we live and are nourished

into immortal vigour. And as in the former case desire and participation followed the looking at the tempting beauty of the tree and fruit; so now beholding the beauty, the grace, meekness, mercy, and love of Christ, we desire to eat of his pleasant fruits,—and eating we live,—for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. He that eateth of this fruit shall never hunger, but shall live for ever.

What then is this fruit? It is, in one word, himself in all his grace, and in all the benefits which he bestows upon his people. Through him we get the true knowledge of the good, and the true knowledge of the evil. We learn to love the good, and to refuse the evil. Through him we get the wisdom which enlightens the eyes, which makes us not ashamed, which makes us wise unto salvation. For he gives us the true and saving knowledge of God. All our delight, under the shadow of Christ, proceeds from the revelation which is made to us of the being, character, and perfections, purposes, and ways of God. This is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. This is the first fruit of which the believer eats; and eats, having it given to him by Christ. It is only under the shadow of the Mediator, and taught by his Spirit, that the knowledge of God can be pleasant to us.

Christ gives to us to partake of the grace of God. Not only does he reveal that there is grace in God, but he brings that grace into the very heart of the sinner. The good-will of God, in its various aspects and features, as mercy, compassion, pity, faithfulness, is not only preached to us—it is actually bestowed upon us, so that we feast upon it, we eat of this pleasant fruit. “Out of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

“ We surely shall be satisfied
With thy abundant grace,
And with the goodness of thy house,
Even of thy holy place.”

“How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy

pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light."

The very justice of God becomes pleasant fruit to the taste of the believer. Mercy is no mercy apart from justice; and to deny the justice of God, is to deny God: a God all mercy is a God unjust—that is, no God. But the glory of Christ is, that in him God is just, even when he justifieth the ungodly. Justice, associated with wisdom and grace, is the ground of our acceptance with God. The justice of God in Christ become what is termed the righteousness of God unto the salvation of every one that believeth. Here, truly it may be said, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." On the Lamb of God, on the slain lion of the tribe of Judah, we feast,—we feast upon the justice, the righteousness of God. This justice has become the matter of perpetual feasting, of perpetual joy to the believer, and he goes continually in the strength of it.

"Justice, to set us in his steps,
Shall go before his face."

"Blessed," therefore, "are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Christ, in permitting us to have fellowship most intimate and endearing with himself through the Spirit, gives us most pleasant fruit. All the promises are spread out on the table before us, and he says, "Eat, O friends. Drink, O beloved." For here "the Lord hath made a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." (Isaiah xxv.) Come, therefore, is the gospel invitation; come, eat of this bread, and drink of this wine; for how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty!

I shall not enter into further details. This tree bears all kinds of pleasant fruit, and all the fruit is free to every one who will repose,—who will sit down under the shadow of this tree. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," was the word respecting a tree in the garden of Eden. But with respect to this tree and the fruit of it, the word is, "Eat, and your soul shall live." "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt

surely live." Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life. And what are these his commandments? They are summed up in this word, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Believers have at different periods, and in the varied circumstances of their spiritual life, varied experiences under the shadow of Christ, and in beholding his beauty and partaking of his fruit. Sometimes they have a feeling of bitterness in tasting of his fruit; but the bitterness is only temporary, it works abiding pleasantness. When under rebukes and chastisements the feeling often is anything but joyful and sweet, it is grievous; but afterwards there is the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Medicinal and corrective fruit grows on this apple tree, and this to the taste is not sweet, but it produces wholesome effects. This is generally followed by the comforting apples—when we are enabled to trace in our afflictions the will, the hand, the love of Jesus, who afflicteth not willingly any of the children of men; when we behold him weeping with us beside the grave where our dead lies buried out of sight. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." Sometimes, as when first after a long and dark and dreary night of law work, of convictions, hopelessness, and despair, the soul first gets sight of Jesus and is under his shadow and tastes his love, the joy is such that, as John Bunyan says, a man could call on the very crows on the field to rejoice with him. At other times, in waiting on the Lord under the shadow of his ordinances, the soul is surprised with joy, feels it good to be there, and can say in the retrospect, "This was none other than the house of God, the gate of heaven." "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste." There are times when this fruit is so sweet, felt, and known, that heaven seems to have come down to earth,—times when we almost forget that we are in the body. These are blessed seasons; they are, however, through our unbelief and waywardness, through our carnality of heart, transient and rare. Nevertheless they are foretastes of that joy and delight unspeakable

which shall be theirs who, after passing through this wilderness, shall at length sit beneath the shadow, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life in the paradise of God, where the Lamb shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. "When Christ and ye shall meet about the utmost march and borders of time, and the entry into eternity, ye shall see heaven in his face at the first look, and salvation and glory sitting in his countenance and betwixt his eyes. Faint not: the miles to heaven are but few and short; he is making a green bed (as the word speaketh, Cant. i.) of love for himself and you. There are many heads lying on Christ's bosom, but there is room for yours among the rest; and therefore go on, and let hope go before you. Sin not in your trials, and the victory is yours. Pray, wrestle, and believe, and ye shall overcome and prevail with God, as Jacob did. No windle straws, no bits of straw, no temptations, which are of no longer life than an hour, will then be able to withstand you, when once ye have prevailed with God." (Rutherford, *Lett.* 88.) "Your strength even now is to sit still." "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste." Amen.

THE UNTRODDEN AND UNKNOWN WAY :

OR,

A SERMON FOR THE NEW YEAR.

*Preached on the First Sabbath of January, 1866.**

“Ye have not passed this way heretofore.”—Josh. iii. 4.

THESE words occur in the instructions given by the officers of Israel to the people, when they had arrived at the banks of the river Jordan, and before they had passed over to take possession of the promised land—the land of Canaan. The instructions given to the people were intended to prepare them for the passage across the river, that they might know the way by which they must go, for they had not passed this way heretofore. They were to be led in a way along which neither they nor their fathers had trodden,—a new, an untrodden way, which the Lord was about to open and cast up for them.

The Israelites had, at the time referred to in the context, entered on a period of marked and grave transition in their eventful history. For forty years they had wandered in the

* PREFATORY NOTE.—This sermon was preached on the first Sabbath of the *Annus Mirabilis*, 1866. In the light of events that have since transpired, that year,—as the commencement of a new development of the providence of God, signalized to the world by the Seven Days' Campaign of Prussia, followed as it has been by the events of 1870, and of this year, 1871—events unparalleled in history for rapidity and grandeur of achievement,—will always mark the beginning of a grand epoch in the history of the church of God, and of the world.

wilderness, till all above twenty years of age who had come out of Egypt had died, except Joshua and Caleb. Moses also had died, after being permitted from the top of Pisgah to survey the good land of promise. But to him the Lord said, "I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither."

Under the leadership of Joshua, the successor of Moses, the people were now about to take possession of the long promised and long waited-for inheritance. And that the people might know that the Lord who dried up the waters of the Red Sea for their fathers was still with them and among them,—that they might have confidence in Joshua their leader and appointed captain,—and that they might be filled with holy courage to fight bravely the enemies that should come against them, the Lord was about to give them a signal illustration of his grace and power. "To-morrow," said Joshua, "the Lord will do wonders among you." These words were designed to excite the minds of the people to expect a display of the glory of the Lord. And the words of the text were intended to quicken them to attend to the instructions given them with respect to their making due preparation for beholding the wonderful works of God; and also with respect to the manner and order of their conduct when the Lord should do wonders among them. "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore."

In addressing you on this occasion from the words before us, I shall, depending on the promised grace of the Spirit, consider, with special reference to our present position, as entering on the days of another and new year, the statement, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." And I shall indicate what are some of the duties or lessons that may be learned from this statement, or that are in keeping with our circumstances, when it is said of us, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore."

THE STATEMENT ITSELF.

The statement in the text admits of being applied to a great variety of stages in the journey of human life. To early childhood, to youthful manhood, to the emigrant leaving his native land for a foreign country, and to each one as he draws near to death,—to men in thousands of steps or stages in life, the words may be addressed, “Ye have not passed this way heretofore.” But it is to our present circumstances, as we are entering on the days of another year, that I intend to apply them on this occasion. We enter on the year not knowing what the year may bring forth. The year that has passed away was marked by signal events in the history of the world and of the churches of Christ. And it has left its impression on individuals and on families. Throughout the year we all enjoyed many mercies; some of us more than others may have been subjected to the correcting and chastening hand of the Lord. Because of all these things let us devoutly acknowledge the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord. For surely goodness and mercy followed us in the days of the past year.

The year has gone, with its record of mercies and chastisements; it has also gone, with its record of sin, of iniquity, and transgression. That record is now before the Lord: our secret sin is set in the light of his countenance. Let us ponder this fact, let us remember and confess our sin. For “he that covereth his sin, shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin, shall obtain mercy.” For, “if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?” When we call up the days of the past year, have we not great cause for acknowledging our iniquity? Let us take a view of that year in relation, not to our actual transgressions,—and these have been many and aggravated,—but in relation to our sins of omission, in relation to duties neglected or left undone, or to duties perfunctorily discharged. When we reflect on the little place that was given to God in our life, to his glory in our aim, and to his love in

our motives, and the extent to which we were actuated, even when engaged in directly religious exercises and duties, by selfish and worldly motives,—when we think of the much precious time wasted, of many golden opportunities for prayer, for reading the Word, for serving the Lord, unimproved, lost,—when we consider that our characters and example, instead of diffusing a sweet savour of Christ, fitted to excite others to seek and praise the Lord, have frequently, on the other hand, given occasion of doubt to the godly, and have told, with hurtful impression, on those with whom we have more or less associated, whether in the family circle, or in the church, or amidst the business and occupations of life in the world,—we have cause to abase ourselves before the throne of grace, and to say, “Lord, pardon our iniquity, for it is great. For there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.”

A retrospect of the former year is an exercise befitting our circumstances, as entering on the days of this new year. For the suitable remembrance of mercies and sins in the days that have passed away is fitted to exercise a salutary influence on our minds and hearts as we go forward to meet the duties, temptations, trials, or conflicts of the future.

The statement, “Ye have not passed this way heretofore,” applied to the year on which we are entering, is one reminding us of our ignorance. We see not and know not what is in the way along which we must go. We may speculate and conjecture about what is to befall us, or to befall the church and the world in the course of this year; but the sagacity of the wisest statesman cannot forecast the events of the near future. Neither can the knowledge of the most learned inform us what shall be on the morrow. “For we know not what a day may bring forth.” Our power of vision is indeed limited—we know but in part. This is a thought that may humble our intellectual pride, and may prevent us from being puffed up by the little knowledge to which we have attained.

But the statement is not inconsistent with the fact that we are not in absolute ignorance of what will probably be the nature and character of some of the events of the future.

We know that as the present leaves us, the future will find

us. We enter into this year with the character, principles, and habits that marked our life in the past. No chasm divides the new year from the old, the future from the past. Days and years follow each other with unbroken continuity. At no part of its course does the great river of time form itself as into a great inland lake. Without stagnation, pause, or cessation, onward, onward flows the mighty river, bearing upon its bosom vessels of all sizes and of all kinds,—empires, kingdoms, nations, churches, tribes, families, individuals, bound for the shores of the eternal world.

No chasm divides our past from our present, or our present from our future. Life is a continuous thing. Character becomes a continuous thing. The tendency of every thought, word, or act, is to give the stamp of permanency,—the stamp as of eternity to the character of man. Did we, without being converted unto God, leave the days of the past year? Then we have entered on the new year without faith in Christ, without love to God, without the grace of the Spirit. Old things have not passed away from us with the old year, and all things have not, with the new year, become new to us. We, in that case, are still in our sins, and while wishing for ourselves and others a happy new year, we have brought with us from the past that which embittered our happiness in the past, that which must render it impossible for us to have true happiness in this year. For there is no peace, no happiness, and there can be none to those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ. The curse that pressed upon them in the past, and the conscience that stung them with remorse in the past, will not be separated from them now. That curse will lay its burden on them, and that evil conscience will bite them as a serpent this year as in former years. This, brethren, is a solemn and an awful thought, because it indicates to us, that not only do we enter on the new year with the character and principles of the past year, and that if we enter on the year without the love of God in our hearts, we cannot be happy; but it also indicates to us that as we pass from the days of time, so shall we enter on the ever revolving and endless ages of eternity. And if we die without God, without Christ, without hope, we cannot have happiness

in eternity; but must, under the burden of unpardoned guilt, under the pressure of the curse, sink down into the depths of hell, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched. These shall go away into everlasting punishment. No moral chasm divides eternity from time,—divides the character of the dying man from the character of the same entering the portals of eternity. Death divides between the soul and the body. But death introduces the soul to God, the judge of all; but what soul? The soul that here had manifested itself in hatred to God; the soul corrupted by sin and laden with guilt. Death does not destroy either personal or moral identity. As the tree falls, so shall it lie. The man that dies under guilt must abide for ever under the wrath of God. For that which is crooked cannot then be made straight; that which is wanting cannot then be numbered. Let us give due consideration to this thought, and it may, through the grace of God, by destroying a most prevalent and fatal delusion,—the delusion by which multitudes deceive and ruin their souls, that somehow or other to-morrow, or at least the time of death, will work a grand transformation of their state and character,—awaken us *now* in the precious passing present to give heed to the things of our peace, that they may not at length be hid from our eyes.

The statement, “Ye have not passed this way heretofore,” is not inconsistent with our knowledge thus far of the future that it will, to a great extent, take its colour, complexion, and character from the present. This implies that it is extremely probable that, as we have lived and acted in the past, we shall live and act in the time to come. This is rendered all but certain by the fact that there is no moral chasm between present, past, or future. But not only so. There is implied more than this; there is implied that the future will, like the past, be a development of that which went before it. The connection between years as measurements of men’s lives is not that merely of antecedence and succession. It is more. It is a connection as between cause and consequence or effect, as between seed and fruit. Time is given, not merely to be a term

of probation to men. It is a probationary period. But because of this, it is for the development and making manifest of what is in men. Hence the proverbial saying, "Time will show." Yes, the time to come will show what is in us, what were the principles and motives that determined our conduct and gave complexion to our characters in the past. How often has time in this way disappointed the hopes and belied the expectations of men! How often has it developed a so-called generosity into wastefulness and prodigality! How often has it developed a so-called prudence into that covetousness which is idolatry! How often has it developed a so-called self-respect into haughtiness and pride! How often has it developed the zeal of the professed convert into hatefulness, bitterness, and all uncharitableness! How often has it torn the mask from the face of the hypocrite and vindicated the real character of the humble man of God! Under the presiding and directing hand of God in daily Providence over men, the thoughts of many hearts are being constantly revealed. We may therefore expect that in the days to come *our* characters shall receive development. Yes, "time will show." It will show that there is a difference between the man that serveth God and the man that serveth him not; and between the spiritual Christian, who knows and feels the power of godliness, and the man who has only the form, show, or outward appearance of godliness, while he is ignorant of or denies the power of the truth. "Time will show." Time, that develops the germ in the acorn into the stately oak,—time, that developeth tares from their seeds, will gradually evolve what are the seeds from which our words and actions grow. The tree of character will be known by its fruits.

But from the moral connection between past, present, and future, as related to our lives and characters, not only will the future be a developing time, but it will also be, because of this, a time of reaping, a sort of harvest time. It is not in eternity alone that men reap as they have sowed. Time is at once a sowing time and a harvest time. If in the past year we have been sowing to the flesh, we may most certainly in the year to come expect to reap corruption. And if in the past we have

been sowing to the Spirit, we may expect to reap in this year some of the fruits of the Spirit in love, joy, and peace. We are all to-day sowing and reaping; spring time, or seed time and harvest time, are synchronous in our lives. And we may expect that the year on which we have entered will partake in this respect of the character of former times. Individuals, families, churches, nations, will in the future years reap as they have sowed in the past. Let none be deceived. God is not mocked. What men sow they shall reap. Sterling scriptural principles sown in the past will yield a harvest of peace and strength and comfort in the time to come. Compromises between principle and carnal policy, between the spirit and the flesh, in the past, will yield a harvest of discord and anarchy and trouble in the future. Families that have formed their order and style after the maxims and fashions of the world, will in the future reap the harvest according to what they have sowed. Gaiety, godlessness, worldliness, will yield their proper harvest of vanity and misery. Churches, that in the past have trimmed between Christ and the world, may expect in the future to reap disorder, confusion, and divisions,—divisions, as those of old, causing great searchings of heart. Nations that have not regulated their policy, legislation, diplomacy, and government by the maxims and laws of eternal righteousness, but according to the maxims of a temporary and time-serving expediency,—nations that have given their force, their wealth, their laws to countenance and support that grand anachronism, that grand enemy of God and man, full of all subtilty and all mischief, that child of the devil and enemy of all righteousness, perverting the ways of the Lord, the man of sin and son of perdition, the apostate church of Rome—may expect to be partakers and sharers in the plagues that must come upon that guilty and doomed system, and upon those who have given their strength unto it.

What in this respect may be evolved by this year on which we have entered I do not presume to forecast. It has been marked out by not a few, who have given serious study to the prophecies in Scripture, as like to be a notable year in the annals of time. It may be so; but of the times and the seasons I cannot speak

with the certainty that marks the writings and statements of some, or rather of very many, of many interpreters. That we are approaching an era of grand and almost unprecedented change and upheaval of all that is not founded on the Rock of eternal truth and righteousness,—the time spoken of in the words, “Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also the heavens,” signifying “the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that the things that cannot be shaken may remain,”—cannot, I think, be questioned or disputed by any man who devoutly contemplates the phenomena of the age, and who at the same time compares them with the sure words of prophecy in inspired Scripture. But without pronouncing in terms dogmatical on these things, knowing that “It is not for us to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power,” I may be allowed to say that it cannot be well with this nation, or with any other, that does not have supreme regard and respect in its legislative and national action to the principles and maxims of that righteousness which exalteth a nation. Nations, as well as churches, families, and individuals, are bound by the law of God. And nations, like individuals, must reap what they have sowed.

I may remark that the words, “Ye have not passed this way heretofore,” are not inconsistent with our certain knowledge that the days of the new year will introduce us to duties, trials, temptations, and, it may be, sufferings similar to those, if indeed not greater than those of the past year.

We have not gone this way before. It is to us an untrodden path. But in this way we may expect to be called to duties similar to those to which we were called in the former stages of our pilgrimage. As in the past, so in the future, we shall be called to serve and glorify the Lord—to love the Lord with all our heart, strength, soul, and mind, and our neighbours as ourselves. We shall be called to work the work of God, to believe in Jesus, and to walk as he also walked. We shall be called to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Duties such as these are not changed, are not affected by the changes of time, by the

revolutions of years, except, indeed, that the knowledge that our relation to time is fast passing away should stimulate us to "be up and doing while it is day, seeing that the night cometh, in which no man can work." The voice of the word of God, as well as the voice of the age in which we live, shouts in our ears, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." The new year will bring duties similar to those of the old. It will also bring its own proper duties. "Up, therefore, and be doing," is the word for us; "Up and be doing, and the Lord be with thee." Men speak of making their "lives sublime;" the poets of the world sing and tell us that "we may make our lives sublime." Be it so; but how may this be? They tell us not; they cannot tell us. The Word of God alone instructs us in this. For it teaches us that true sublimity in character and life is resemblance to the Son of God. But he said, "It is my meat and drink to do the will of him that sent me." Conformity to this is moral sublimity. Arise, therefore, brother, and be doing, for this matter belongeth unto thee. Life in all its details, in all its ordinary routine,—life planned and laid out with a view to the glory of God, and in conformity to the example of Christ,—life schemed and lived according to the sacred rule of the law of the Lord,—life thus lived under a sense of duty will be sublime. And the new year will bring with it manifold occasions on which we may exhibit that we are governed and determined in our conduct, not by regard to the opinions, favour, or censure of our fellows, but by regard and respect to the will and approval of God, who trieth the hearts. "Study," therefore, my brother, "to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

The new year will bring with it new trials, new afflictions. We need no prophet's vision, and no prophet's tongue to make this statement and affirmation. Although we have not passed this way heretofore, yet we know this way will lead us into new trials, into new afflictions. The traveller meets with new and previously unknown incidents in his journey. Each successive stage conducts him to something different, and yet in some respects similar to that which he had previously seen in

the course of his journey. Even so may we, as we march along the pathway of duty prescribed for us by the Lord, expect to meet something new and different from those formerly observed. And among these, a prominent and conspicuous place must be given to the afflictions and trials to which the Zionward travellers are subjected.

In what forms we may be visited with these we cannot tell; but that we shall be visited with them in form, manner, degree, and time, dictated by infinite wisdom, we may feel well assured. The past is in this respect index of the future. And besides this we know the Word that says, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The past year brought with it its own freight of trials and chastisements. The coming year will also have its own cargo. But as in the past, so in the future, the child of God may appropriate for his comfort the words, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called, according to his purpose." Nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We know that the new year will bring with it new temptations. I distinguish here between temptations and afflictions or trials adapted to chasten us and to bring us near to God. Afflictions may no doubt be the occasion of temptations; but, as proceeding from a gracious and loving Father in heaven, they are not designed to be temptations to evil. They are rather designed to be helps in the process of our sanctification, that we may not be condemned with the world, but may be made partakers of his holiness. As in the past, so in the coming year, our own lusts will tempt us, Satan will tempt us, the world will tempt us. The passions that war in our members have not become extinct, have not passed away with the old year. They go with us into the new year. And as in the past, so in the future, they will entice us into sin. Satan has not ceased with the days of the former year. He enters with us into the days of this year. And into this year he carries all his subtilty, all his malice, all his guile. We know, therefore, that new temptations, new seducements to sin, will be laid in our path. We have not indeed passed this way

before, but our enemy knows this also, and will not fail to meet us by the way. And considering the times in which we live, we may expect that he will put forth more than ordinary efforts, and practise more than ordinary craft, if, by any means, he may deceive us and destroy us. For surely the times are come when he will deceive, if it be possible, even the very elect.

The world has lost none of its many powers,—none of its many arts of deception. We may, therefore, expect that the world will attempt to ensnare us in the future, just as it attempted to allure us in the past. But we must listen to the word that admonishes us, “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds.” “For the fashion of this world passeth away; and if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The friendship of the world is enmity against God. “Let him, therefore, that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” “For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Marvel not if the world hate you, and if hating it tempt to seduce you. But greater is he who is with the believers in Christ than he that is in the world.

The new year may bring with it new forms of trial, unexpected sufferings and bereavements. It may bear to us the summons, “The master is come, and calleth for thee.” We cannot tell. But this we know, that preparedness to meet that summons,—preparedness to meet the Lord, is a most blessed state of soul. The years that are past have left with many of us sad and solemn memorials of those with whom we lived, whom we loved, and whose familiar faces we must no more see on earth. The coming year will, no doubt, when it has passed away, leave impressions of a similar kind; and children will be asking as of old, “Our fathers, where are they?” And congregations will be asking concerning the prophets, “Do they live for ever?” Yes, beloved friends, the days of the new year will witness changes amongst us; they will record that some of us have suffered and died; they will behold our funeral, and look upon and read our epitaph. But be it so. All things are ours—life and death; and “blessed are the dead that die in

the Lord." The Lord will care for them, and will not forsake those left in the vale of tears. For he is the God of his people, and of their seed after them. "Ye are the blessed of the Lord, and your offspring with you." "Abraham, my friend,"—Abraham, the friend of God, was remembered by the Lord; and if David showed kindness to Mephibosheth for the sake of Jonathan, David's friend, the Lord will show kindness to your children for Jesus' sake,—to your widows and orphans, for the sake of his friend, the believer in Jesus.

But a fourth idea is involved in the words, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore," it is, that we may expect to witness or behold in this new way, in this untrodden path, new displays of the grace and power of the Lord, the leader and commander of his people. Whether we may be called to new duties, new trials, new temptations, or new sufferings, we may be assured that the Lord, who presides over all these, will not fail to give to his own people new manifestations of his grace and power. Therefore, may we say, "The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us." The Israelites were led to the banks of the Jordan at a time when the Jordan overflowed its banks. But it was there and then that they were to have a signal display of the grace and power of the Lord. So the children of God may be led into circumstances, duties, trials, temptations, sufferings, most fitted to shake their trust, or prove their faith in God; but they must not therefore conclude that the Lord is not with them, or that he is against them. They must not say, with Jacob, "all these things are against me." Nay, rather must they hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Only believe;" and, "Said I not unto thee that if thou shouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God." The way is unknown to us, but it is known to the Lord. And we are sure that he "leadeth his people by the right way, that they may go to the city of habitation,—to that city whose founder and builder is God." "This is the way, saith the Lord, walk ye in it." And along with this word he gives another, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." We may therefore expect that the Lord will open up the way and lead us out, that he will lead

us like the blind by a way that we know not, that he will make darkness light before us, and crooked places straight, and that he will not forsake us. For his name is "The Leader," as well as "The Commander." Having indicated some of the truths and facts involved in the statement, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore," I must now treat of the lessons and duties that may be learned from this statement considered in relation to our present circumstances.

LESSONS AND DUTIES.

A GUIDE NEEDED.

The first lesson taught us by the statement, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore," is that we need a guide to lead us in this new and untrodden way. Travellers in strange countries are careful not only to furnish themselves with a chart or map of the country through which they may be travelling, but to employ a guide who knows the country. At every station at which travellers are wont to halt in Switzerland, guides are waiting to conduct strangers along the way by which they wish to go. From motives of economy or self-confidence, some travellers have been known to dispense with the help of a guide, and have lost their way, missed their step, and perished. In the journey of life, and at a stage such as this at which we have arrived to-day, we are reminded that we need one to go before us and lead us in the way. We have in the Word of the Lord, in the holy Scriptures, what may be called a map or chart, exhibiting the general outlines and prominent features of the country through which we are to pass, and indicating the direction of the path and way along which we are to walk. But we need more than this, we need a living guide. And that living guide is not a fallible man, or company of men, but is the Lord himself. From fellow-travellers we may learn much; but it is true of them as of ourselves, that they have not passed this way heretofore. The Lord alone by his Spirit must be our guide in this new way.

And is it not to each of us a cheering thought that the Lord offers himself to be our leader in the way? His knowledge of the way is perfect; and no one that committed himself to his guidance ever perished by the way. Many pilgrims have been by him conducted to the heavenly Jerusalem; and of those given to him, and giving themselves to him, to be led by him, not one has failed to appear before the Lord in Zion. For all his resources of knowledge, wisdom, grace, righteousness, and power, all are pledged to conduct in safety to the bliss of heaven those who by faith follow him.

OBEDIENCE NECESSARY.

The second lesson taught us by what is involved in this statement is, that we must be obedient to the instructions of the Heavenly Guide. In order to this we must be distrustful of our own knowledge and wisdom. Many a traveller, amidst Alpine passes and heights, has fallen and perished, the victim of self-confidence. And many, who for a season seemed to be obedient unto Christ, have departed from him and perished, because they preferred their own wisdom to his. But it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. In order to a faithful adherence to the guidance of the Lord, we must beware of false and deceitful guides. Of these there are many nowadays, as there were many in former times. They meet pilgrims at every stage in the journey, and they offer their services with fluent oily tongues, with the enticing words of man's wisdom. They profess to conduct the traveller by a shorter and easier path than that along which the Lord leads his people. But let us not be deceived; there is but one road to glory, up the hill Difficulty. There are many ways and by-paths that end in shame and everlasting contempt.

If we are among the obedient followers of Christ, we shall watch for the intimations of his will. With what eager eyes must the wise men from the east have watched the movements of that singular star, till they observed it stand still over the place where the child Jesus was. From a far country they

walked in a way by which they had not passed before, guided by the light and movements of that wonderful star, till, with hearts exceeding joyful, they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him, and opening their treasures, presented him gifts—gold and frankincense and myrrh.

As we now journey towards the heavenly house where Jesus is enthroned amidst eternal glories, it becomes us to turn eager and inquiring eyes towards the sure Word of the Lord. That Word shineth in this dark world that it may be to us what the star was to the eastern sages, a light to guide our steps to the heavenly palace, the house where Jesus now reigns. Yes, if we would follow Christ in the way, his Word must be “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.”

As obedient followers of Christ we must be not only earnest and humble students of his Word, but thoughtful observers of his works in providence and in grace. Many who profess to be the followers of the Lord seem to be culpably neglectful, not only of his written and inspired Word, but also of his working in daily providence. Indeed, not a few seem to disjoin or separate the workings of God from the revealed words of God. Hence they are frequently in doubt or in error about present duty. They study not the signs of the times, and they are not like the men of Issachar, wise, knowing the times, and what Israel ought to do. Others, in love with a lofty or sublimated and artificial spiritualism, profess to rise above the times, and to be occupied with interests grander and more important by far than those of the present or passing hours. These profess to be so engaged in contemplating eternity that they cannot and do not devote attention to the events, interests, or questions of the present. I would earnestly remind such persons, if any of them are here, that the due regard to eternity is not incompatible with the due observation of the works of the Lord in the present time and age. Nay, more, I would remind them of what the Lord, speaking by his prophet Hosea, says, “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.”

And to these words may be added those of the prophet Daniel, "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." God in his providence speaks to men, as well as in his Word, with this qualification, that we are to bring the voice in providence to the test of the Word, and not the Word to the test of the sign in providence. The voice of the one sign is not opposed to the voice of the other; but the voice of the providential sign must be interpreted by the sure Word. Only let us ever remember that he who administers the affairs of daily providence is the same glorious Lord who has spoken to us by his Word. The diligent and devout study of the works of God in providence is so far from being incompatible with the reverential study of the Word of God, that, on the contrary, it is required of all those who would be approved before God; for "the works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious." Let us, then, observe both the doings and the words of the Lord, that we may know to follow our Leader and Guide in the way to Zion.

PREPARATION CALLED FOR.

The third lesson taught us by the text, or by what is involved in it, is, that we should prepare ourselves for following our heavenly Guide and Leader in the way heretofore untrodden by us. "Sanctify yourselves," said Joshua to the people, "for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you." This involves separation from all that is unholy, or that is inconsistent with the undivided and entire consecration of ourselves in heart, purpose, and life to the Lord. And it requires that we dedicate ourselves, soul, body, and spirit, unto the Lord. When the Lord said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother"—we are told that, in obedience to that word, "Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel."

Even so when we are now called to follow the Lord, and to sanctify ourselves, we are called to "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset us, that we may run with patience the race set before us."

Extraordinary times and duties or prospects call for more than ordinary preparation. We need for these preventing or prevenient grace—that is, we need grace that shall enable us to set the Lord before us. For then, whatever may befall, we shall be able to say, "We shall not be moved, for the Lord is with us, and is at our right hand." And when we take a retrospect, having passed through the trial, or having borne the chastisement and affliction, having, in the strength of God, done the work or duty laid to our hand, we shall each, with the Psalmist, say, "Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation." But it was having strong and firm faith and confidence in God, in his grace, mercy, and power, in his sure word of promise, revealing that mercy and grace and power, that the Psalmist went out to meet those that were against him. "I called," says he, "upon the Lord in my distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. . . . I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." (Psalm cxviii.) "At my first answer," writes Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, his beloved and genuine son in the faith, "no man stood by me, but all men forsook me." Nor did he count this desertion a light trial or a trivial offence before God on the part of these, from all of whom other and better things might reasonably have been expected. For although it brought him into nearer fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, reminding him how the Master himself must have felt when his disciples forsook him and fled,—although it shut him up entirely to dependence on the word, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness;" and the word, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee," it illustrated

the unreliableness of his friends, and the weakness of their faith; hence he says, "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." But though thus forsaken by his friends, he was not forsaken by the Lord. And the constancy of the love and care of the Lord is all the more signal and conspicuous when contrasted with the fickleness and inconstancy of the love of his friends. "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." And to Paul, this gracious interposition of the Lord, at a critical time, was an argument for the confirmation of his faith, and for the enlivening and strengthening of his hope in God for the time and trials to come. "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." Therefore, "none of these things move me;" and illustrating his own words in another place, "In every thing give thanks: be without carefulness; casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you," he gives praise unto the Lord, saying, "To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (2 Tim. iv.)

A becoming preparation for whatever is before us in the new year, or in any day of it, is the unreserved dedication of our souls and life—spirit, soul, and body—unto the Lord. Oh to feel the joy and the sense of freedom so paradoxical to the world, connected with the realizing in fact, and in actual experience, sealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, "Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price, and that not silver and gold, or any such corruptible thing, but with the precious blood of Christ; therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are his." The slave of Christ is the only free man, and never does he enjoy more consciously the sense of his freedom, than when he most vividly realizes that he belongs to Christ, and is not his own. With heart enlarged he then runs in the way of the divine commandments, going from strength to strength, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. No duty is then irksome or arduous; no trial is then too great; no burden too heavy; no cross too bitter, for the joy of the Lord is then his strength. And "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh

for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv.) "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. xii.)

Where there is the unreserved consecration of the soul to God in the exercise of a living and confiding faith in Christ Jesus,—a faith giving all over to Christ, and receiving Christ for all, and in all, and to be all,—an undivided Christ, Prophet, Priest, King, for enlightenment and quickening, for righteousness and sanctification, for strength and for consolation, for wisdom and for redemption, for time and its duties, and temptations, and sufferings, and for eternity, with its revelation of the blessedness of the righteous, its hallowed and everlasting rest in the full enjoyment of God,—there will be, as the index of all this, a prayerful and humble spirit, ever waiting upon God, ever depending on his grace, ever solicitous above all to have his presence and fellowship in the way that we go, in the duties we perform, in the temptations we encounter, and in the afflictions and trials we are called to endure. Where there is this prayerful and dependent spirit, that commits the way of a man unto the Lord, and that trusts also in him, the feelings and workings of the heart will find frequent expression in such words as those of Moses, the man of God and servant of the Lord, "Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight;" and as certainly as to Moses was the word of the Lord given, so certainly to every praying and trustful believer in Christ will the same word of promise be sealed and made sure, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Nor will the earnest and dependent child of God be a stranger to the words that were spoken by Moses in response to the gracious assurance of the Lord's presence with him, given in the answer to his prayer, "If thy presence go not *with us*, carry us not up hence."

Light and truth, goodness and mercy, grace and salvation, are prepared for those that trust in the Lord, they are laid up in store for them. Let us then draw largely and abundantly out of the fulness that is in Christ, for he giveth liberally and upbraideth not. "I am the Lord thy God that redeemed thee. Open wide thy mouth and I will fill it." Let our faith enlarge itself into correspondency with the promises of grace, then shall doubt, darkness, fears, and misgivings vanish away.

"Ye feeble saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercies, and shall break
In blessings on your head."

SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

If at all times it is seemly and becoming, it is both our interest and duty to prepare our hearts, to seek grace that we may be prepared to meet what is before us in the way, it is very specially our interest and duty, and exceedingly great are our encouragements to do this in the prospect of death, or as we enter into the valley of the shadow of death, or are about to touch the brink of the waters of Jordan, and to go over to the other side. At this solemn time our eye should be fixed on the Ark of the covenant. We should look to the Great High Priest who is the captain of our salvation. The eye looking to him will affect the heart, and faith will prevail, even amidst the swellings of Jordan, although our passage through the river should be at the time when its waters overflow their banks; for thus saith the Lord, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, O Israel, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." (Is. xliii. 1, 2.) Faithful is he who hath said it. He also will do it till all the hosts of the Israel of God, all the faithful in Christ Jesus, shall have clean passed over Jordan, including the young, tender, and weak, the timid and the doubting, and those ready to halt, who with the help of crutches have walked thus far, as well as the young, the strong, the manly, and the bold and great of heart,

with the aged and infirm, bent down under the weight of years, and, like the barley grain, fully ripe, bowing low their head because of their ripeness and fruitfulness,—the infant of days, and the aged pilgrim leaning on his staff, saying, with Jacob, “I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord;” or with Simeon, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy Word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

With the message, “Set thy house in order, for thou must die;” or, “The Master is come and calleth for thee;” “Prepare to meet thy God,” there will be sent to the believer the grace needed for walking in this way, not trodden by him heretofore. The Lord will be his guide even unto death. “If this is death,” said one that long had been in bondage through fear of death, “If this is death, it is pleasant to die.” Not unlike her experience was that of another gentle, meek, and loving sister, both in the flesh and in the Lord, who, for some time before the approach of death, was in much darkness and fear and doubt, but unto whose heart the faithful and compassionate Redeemer, the Brother born for adversity, shortly before the time when, in the bloom of youth, in a far distant land, she was by him called to leave to his care and keeping the surviving infant of twins, to which she had given birth,—drew near, and, speaking to her heart, sealed to her the assurance of his love and grace, and gave her such light that, instead of allowing the verses sung beside her, as she lay on her death-bed, to be concluded at the usual place, she said, in feeble but triumphant accents, “Sing on, for now I can sing with you what follows.” And what follows? May the Lord by his grace enable you and me to sing here and now these words, for this is what follows:—

“And now, even at this present time,
 Mine head shall lifted be
 Above all those that are my foes,
 And round encompass me.

“Therefore unto his tabernacle
 I'll sacrifices bring
 Of joyfulness; I'll sing, yea, I
 To God will praises sing.”

It is not without reason that the Christian may invite the sceptic and unbeliever to come and see how a believer in Christ can die, or is enabled by grace to die. The record of Christian triumphs on the death-bed, and not merely at the stake of what is commonly called martyrdom, could it be written, would be one of the most signal demonstrations of the truth of Christianity ever given to the world. In ordinary pastoral work it is our privilege to witness not a few of these, while it is also our sad lot to witness the collapse of worldly hope, and the fearfulness and horror that sometimes fill the minds of the dying, who, when it is too late, discover that, as they have lived without God, they must die without hope. In such cases what can we do? We can weep and pray, and whisper a word about Jesus and his love, Jesus and his grace, Jesus and his blood and righteousness,—about Jesus, the life and the light of men. But “Give me your hand, mother; it is getting dark, very dark,” have I heard the dying young man say as he was leaving earth and time, mother and kindred, with life in the present, for the immediate future of an eternity, from which no light streamed in upon his dark and benighted soul. “There lies another hypocrite buried in A——l kirkyard, will be said by them,” meaning his surviving fellow-sceptics, was among the words of a man of considerable intelligence, reading, and thoughtfulness, who had for years been a confirmed sceptic and secularist, but who in his last illness, in the midst of his days, when his strength was weakened in the way, and the hand of God was upon him, professed to me, in the presence of witnesses, that he died believing that Jesus was the Christ, and hoping for mercy through his blood and righteousness; and who, by my advice, left it as an injunction and charge—his last will and testament—that his only little son should be “trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;” and not bound down by the peculiarities of the denomination to which his grandfather belonged. “There lies another hypocrite,” but “they will come to the trial by and by,” added the converted sceptic, on his death-bed. Yes, death is fitted to test our principles. And the testimony of the dying is, that to die as becomes a man—and so to acquit ourselves in that last conflict and adventure as

to vindicate our sense of the grandeur of the transition from evanescent time to abiding eternity—we must die as Christians. But, to die as Christians we must live as Christians, who live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them, and gave himself for them. It is sheerest folly, as it is most sinful and hazardous, to delay preparing for death and judgment till we be laid on a bed of sickness. “Always ready,” should be the maxim of our life, if we would die in peace, and dying, be for ever with the Lord. He, and he only, who can say, “For me to live is Christ,” may warrantably add, “and to die is gain.” “I am keeping my eye on the ark of the covenant, and on the great High Priest, as I am going down to the passage of the Jordan,” said a devout Christian man to me when I visited him a short time before he died. “Don’t hide that from me,” said a simple-hearted young Christian woman to the friend in whose house she was a-dying, and who was carrying in her hand, and endeavouring to conceal, the prepared winding sheet and grave clothes; “Don’t hide that from me; I am soon to be clothed with a different and far more beautiful dress, even with the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints.” Is not this a hope to be envied by thousands who profess themselves Christians, but to whose apprehensions death is still armed with its sting, or regarded as the king of terrors? It is a hope which neither the apathetic, the lukewarm, the formalist, or the hypocrite can have, cherish, or entertain. “I see the pearly gates opening for me, mother, and Jesus waiting to welcome me home,” said a little child, not more than three years old, as she took farewell of her mother whom she was soon to meet at home. For that mother having given birth to twins, the sorrowing father presented the dear little ones for baptism among us, in this place of worship, with their white dresses and little caps trimmed and traced with fringes and bands of black ribbons. Their mother had joined her other little one, and gone in by the “pearly gates,” into the Father’s house and home.

Habitual preparation for this last part of the untrodden way will not be in vain. There may be no ecstacy, no transport of joy, no singular elevation, as if expressing contempt of death;

but if, with genuine humility and holy resignation to the will of God, there be unshaken and firm confidence, with good hope, in Christ, the mind and heart will be kept in peace by the God of peace, and calmly will the man fall asleep in Jesus. He dies, a sinner saved, through grace forgiven :—

“ Redeemed from earth to reign in heaven,
His labours of unwearied love,
By him forgot, are crown'd above—
Crown'd, through the mercy of his Lord,
With a free, full, immense reward.”

Blessed are all those who thus die in the Lord. But the Lord may be pleased to give even more grace. At the advanced age of nearly eighty-eight years, fifty-two of which were spent as an itinerant preacher, while sixty-five in all were spent in the labours of the ministry, John Wesley, shortly before his death, made an effort to speak; but finding that the friends present could not understand him, he paused a little, and then with all his remaining strength cried out, “*The best of all is, God is with us!*” Lifting up his withered, worn-out, and dying arm, in token of victory, and raising his now feeble and faltering voice in a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again said, “*The best of all is, God is with us!*”

Fear not, O weak, trembling, timid, and disquieted disciple. Not only is the way marked by the footsteps of the flock of Christ, but it is imprinted with his own footmarks. He walked in the way unknown to you, and as yet by you untrodden. He opened for you the way. He is himself to you even in the Jordan the way to the Father. “Follow me” is his voice; “Fear not, only believe,” and, believing, sing—

“ Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale
Yet will I fear none ill :
For thou art with me ; and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

“ Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me ;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.”

Amen. Be it so, Lord Jesus !

STRONG RODS BROKEN AND WITHERED:

A SERMON

ON

THE DEATH OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE
ALBERT, THE BELOVED CONSORT OF HER
MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

*Preached on Sabbath, the 22nd of December, 1861.**

“Her strong rods were broken and withered.”—Ezek. xix. 12.

IN the context, as in many other places in Scripture, Israel is compared to a vine. “Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood.

* PREFATORY NOTE.—This sermon, like most of the others, is given *verbatim* as it was written at the time of the universal sorrow caused by the death of His Royal Highness the Prince Albert. Loyalty becomes all those who profess true godliness. “Honour to whom honour is due. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King.” And in the case of all right-hearted British subjects, of whatever degree they be, their loyalty is not only given willingly to Her Majesty as the supreme earthly sovereign of the realm and empire, but it is given as blended with a feeling of almost sacred veneration and esteem for the character and virtues of the wife, the mother, the widow, the woman, as well as the queen. May God from his glorious throne abundantly bless her and all the royal house, and hear the prayers offered in behalf of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, that, restored to health, he may long live in the fear of God, in whose hands is the breath of princes and kings, as well as of subjects and people. By righteousness and the fear of God may the throne be established, and may God bless this people with prosperity and peace!

G. M.

OLD KILPATRICK, *December, 1871.*

planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters. And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches." This figurative language gives a most graphic and vivid representation of the progressive advancement of Israel to that prosperous and powerful state which excited the admiration and the envy of surrounding nations. From small and inconsiderable beginnings, from a condition feeble and helpless as that of an infant in its blood cast out into the open field, Israel, under the care and blessing of God, became a nation great, populous, and strong. The boughs of this vine were like the goodly cedars; the branches like royal sceptres, the symbols of eminence, authority, and dominion, were exalted in height and seen from afar. The hills were covered with their shadow. This vine became strong as the oaks of Bashan, and lofty as the cedars of Lebanon; so that it yielded strong rods for the sceptres of those that bare rule. Her judges and kings, her prophets and priests were renowned through all lands by reason of their integrity and their power, their faithfulness and their sanctity; for they were a holy nation, a peculiar people. Happy were they as a people; happy, because Jehovah was their God. From him all their prosperity proceeded. "From me is thy fruit found."

In contrast with all this the text before us presents to our view a scene of ruin and desolation. The goodly vine is plucked up in fury, cast to the ground, and the east wind has dried up her fruit; her strong rods are broken and withered, consumed by the fire. The vine itself is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground. Fire out of a rod of her own branches hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. In all this we have vividly described the fall and overthrow of Israel's prosperity. "This," says the prophet, "is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation." Contemplating Israel's deep and protracted adversity as here delineated, and as realized and actual, through a long series of ages, with another prophet, we may raise the lament,

“Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down. There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.” (Zech. xi. 2, 3.) Nor will any Christian and devout man, while wailing over fallen Israel, refuse to offer up the prayer, “Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch thou madest strong for thyself. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” (Ps. lxxx. 14, 15, 19.)

But without dwelling any longer on the direct bearing and relations of the passage before us, the following remarks will prepare us for applying the words of the text to the solemn event in our history, which has covered this land with gloom, robed the throne in sackcloth, made our august and beloved Queen a widow, left her children—princes and princesses—fatherless, changed the palace into a house of mourning, and filled all hearts with deepest sorrow, with profound and loyal sympathy for that sovereign lady, Victoria, who reigns enthroned in the affections of the loyal millions of her subjects.

A national and a church state is signified by the emblem here used of a vine. By the growth and stature, strength and fruitfulness of that vine, we are taught that prosperity in civil and in religious affairs, in church and in state, is from God; and that to him must be ascribed the praise and the glory. By the strong rods of the vine—sceptres for them that rule—is signified men of wisdom, prudence, and skill,—men of judgment and ability, fitted for official place and station, qualified of God for his work given them to do whether in the church or in the state. These are God’s gifts to the nation and to the church. When these strong rods, or rods of strength, are, as in the text, said to be broken and withered, we are to understand that the removal from among a people of men wise and weighty in counsel, skilful and prudent in action, virtuous in character, godly in principle, and of large and wide-spreading influence, is a sign that

the hand of God is lifted up against that people, and is cause of lamentation. "For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator." (Isaiah iii. 1—3.)

A double lamentation is this day ours; for it is ours to bewail, in common with all our fellow-citizens and subjects, the death of the illustrious and most beloved Consort of the Queen—the Prince Albert. In his death a rod of strength—a stay and support of the throne, a husband, and more than a husband, of the Queen has been taken away—a rod of strength has been broken and withered. At evening time he died, on Saturday, the 14th of this month. But the first hour of that day witnessed the death of one of the princes of the sanctuary, William Cunningham, Principal of the New College, and Professor of Theology, who entered into his rest in the morning hour of that eventful day. In his death and removal from us we have to lament over a rod of strength broken and withered. As a student of his, who sat at his feet and enjoyed the inestimable privilege of his prelections in theology, as a minister of this church, and of the gospel of the grace of God, I mingle unfeigned sorrow with the grief of those who mourn over the death of Dr. William Cunningham. The position and character, as well as the services to the state and nation rendered by the late illustrious Consort of Her Majesty, demand from us the tribute of a profound sorrow. And the position, and character, and services to the church rendered by the late revered Principal entitle his memory to lasting respect. And in the removal of the one from the station next to royalty, and of the other from the place of influence in the visible church, we see rods of strength broken and withered. When but a few weeks ago I saw these two princely men, they stood and walked side by side in the city of Edinburgh. They had the mien and gait of princes, and with their princeliness,

they both were adorned and robed with the becoming and most graceful vesture of unfeigned yet dignified humility. The noble German and British prince, His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, looked then a worthy representative of that good Duke, his ancestor, renowned for his friendship to men of science, and his zeal and wisdom in promoting the cause of Evangelical and Protestant truth and religion in his dukedom; and the Scottish theologian, like the royal prince, concealing the heart of a little child beneath the shadow of a great and manly intellect, looked a not unworthy representative of the princes of the sanctuary of God, whether in Germany or Great Britain. Little did I forecast or foresee, that having that day seen them associated as for a moment in life, I should have to-day and always henceforth to think and speak of them as associated in death: "they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

On the present occasion I shall limit the observations about to be made to the lessons which we may learn from the death of the Prince Consort, and to the duties proper to us as citizens and as professing Christians in connection with that mournful event.

Among the many thoughts that arise in connection with this solemn event, and with this mournful bereavement, these are prominent—the distinguished and exalted position of him who has been taken away; the suddenness of the calamity; and the critical and momentous period or juncture in our affairs as a nation when this stroke has fallen. These, and similar reflections, are fitted to remind us of what the wise man says, that "no man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war." And, again, "man knoweth not his time: as the fishes are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." The strong rod, broken and withered, is as one that grew from the topmost bough of society; it was a rod of strength for the hand of her that bears rule over this great and far-spreading empire. Death, it has often been said, knocks with undistinguishing

impartiality at the door of the cottage and at the gates of the palace. Though we are more familiar with the ravages and havoc of death amidst our cottage homes, yet, even there, when death enters, there is awful and mysterious silence. There is the grief of those who refuse to be comforted. In vain you tell the widowed one, in vain you tell the orphan and the fatherless, that theirs is no singular bereavement or calamity; that others every day suffer as they suffer, and mourn as they mourn. Give me back my husband—give us back our father, is the burden of their cry. Accustomed, as we are, to witness the havoc which death makes in its visits among our households and homes, yet when we look to the loftier places of society, to the mansions of nobility and the palaces of royalty, associating with elevated station, immunity from the many evils incident to those who occupy the lower spheres of the social system, where the multitudes toil and struggle for mere subsistence, we are unconsciously oblivious of the evils incident to those in the loftier ranks, and we almost forget that they too are mortal,—that “Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” But when, as on this occasion, death has entered the queen’s own palace, laying his pale, cold, and ruthless hand on him who was as a stay and support, a rod of strength, to our beloved monarch, we are with most solemn emphasis reminded that “death reigns,”—that “it is appointed unto all once to die,”—that the grave is the lowly and lonely house prepared for all the living. Rank, royalty itself, secures no immunity from death. In liability to death all are on one platform, one level. Death reigns over the crowned and sceptred monarch as over the meanest subject. But while this is so, the death of one in a place so conspicuous and elevated,—that place now to know its occupant no more,—the blank beside the throne,—the blank in the palace,—the vacant seat beside the queen,—that place of the husband unoccupied beside his royal spouse,—that place deserted of the father, and that father the Prince Consort, beside and among his children,—that home in mourning,—all reminds us that the arm of death has broken, and its touch has withered, a rod of strength in this nation. From yonder palace, now clothed in gloom and now so silent, or where only the voice

of mourners is heard, a voice comes, and a lesson is taught to all the princes and to all the peoples of the world, saying, "Ye, too, must die." Death, that knows no distinctions among men, but that treats them all as mortal because all are sinful,—death must have you. The loftiest and the meanest must bow before this all-conquering yet conquered king.

Besides the thought of the rank of the illustrious deceased, which, in our obliviousness of the universal empire of death, we might be tempted to think might seem to forbid the approach of the king of terrors, we cannot but meditate on the suddenness of the stroke that has broken and withered one of the strong rods of this nation. The stroke fell, in this case, not on one who had passed the zenith of his greatness, or who had been tottering to the grave under the load of years. It could not be said of his strength that it was "labour and sorrow." His mind was in maturity, all his intellectual faculties disciplined by systematic study and strengthened by masculine exercise, and, practised in weighty affairs, were never more capable of arduous achievement. His body, never weakened by that intemperance which in various forms imprints its stamp of imbecility on its victim, was the vigorous and graceful companion of a vigorous and noble mind. His eye was not dim, his natural force was not abated. Undertakings for the good of this nation, and for adding to the comforts, conveniences, and amenities of men's estate,—undertakings illustrative of the truth that "peace hath her victories no less than war," and prognostics of the time most sure to come, when "the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, when they shall not learn war any more,"—schemes such as these, in harmony with the principles of Christian philanthropy, were amidst his thoughts, and their progress to realization was receiving his deeply interested and watchful attention, when suddenly the message reached him, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." But yesterday and with yonder palace we associated all that was brilliant and splendid, all that was joyous. For there was highest rank; there was all the grandeur of the seat of the greatest monarch of the

world; and better far, there was a home which could be pointed to as a model for every household in the land. There were father and mother with their children, like olive plants, round about their table; there were the young princes, the children of youth, as arrows in the hand of a mighty man. Happy did we often think that home,—happy that man having his quiver full, for they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. “The Lord bless thee out of Zion,” was our constant prayer for that house and home. But to-day, and, ah, how suddenly the stay and support, the rod of strength, has been broken and withered! For “the Lord hath hid his face and we are troubled.” Our harp is turned to mourning, and our organ to the voice of them that weep. For suddenly the hand of death hath fallen upon him who was so young, so accomplished, so useful, so beloved. Suddenly was his countenance changed, suddenly was he taken away. “His sons come to honour,—he knoweth it not;” or, which may the Lord prevent in his grace, “they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.” To princes and great ones of the earth, with their schemes of policy, power, war, or philanthropy,—to parents, with their hopes building themselves on their children,—to every soul, the voice from yonder palace, now hung with the black insignia of mourning, is “Prepare to meet thy God.” “Boast not of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” “Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

A strong rod has been broken and withered. And this event, so sudden and appalling, has occurred at a period most momentous in our history, at a most critical juncture in our relations and affairs as a nation. But recently,—and since the date when, at the suggestion, and under the active superintendence of the illustrious deceased, the world beheld that great wonder of modern science, the Great Exhibition of 1851,—this nation has passed through a series of events which, for their grandeur, their rapidity of occurrence, their terribleness, and their concomitant disasters, although by the good hand of God followed by triumphant success, must be confessed to have been without parallel within the same brief period throughout

our history as a people. It is now known that in all these momentous matters, in decisions to be come to, in action to be taken, much confidence was justly reposed by Her Majesty in the judgment and advice of His late Royal Highness the Prince Consort. Through the horrors of the Crimean war God brought us; through the yet greater horrors of the Indian mutiny God brought us with victory, yet after much tribulation. And now when an army created under God by the instinctive apprehensions of this great people,—apprehensions of insecurity,—when that army is being trained to guard ourselves against feared if not threatened invasion,—when events of mightiest moment seem to be near,—when fire from a rod of one of our own branches threatens us,—when a fit of blind fury or madness urges on a great people to insult our forbearance, and to invite us, as well as their own nearer kinsmen and countrymen, to the dread arbitrament of war,—when the answer to our most righteous demand is already on its way to our shores—the answer that must determine whether it be peace, or whether again it must be war,—at a time so critical as this, when complications may thicken and multiply which may endanger our prestige and dominion, or threaten our existence as a nation, one of our strong rods has been broken and withered. The voice surely of this stroke that has fallen so heavily on the royal house and on the nation is, “Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of.”

If, at an eventful period in Israel's history, when there fell under a murderous hand a man regarded long as the mainstay and support of an opposing faction—one who had recently before pledged his allegiance and support to David and his house—David, the king, said unto his servants, “Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness:” it is not to be wondered at if that noblest of women, and now the widowed Queen of this great realm, should feel as David felt, and should say, Know ye not that a prince and a great man is this day fallen; and I am this day weak, though wear-

ing the crown of England. And, as it is recorded, that on that occasion whatsoever the king did pleased all the people; so history will record that on this occasion whatsoever the Queen did pleased all the people. For surely in all this realm, and in all the dependencies of this far-reaching empire, there is not a home, there is not one, amidst the many millions over whom the sceptre of Victoria is wielded, who does not participate in the sorrow of the most beloved of sovereigns, now bereaved of the guide, companion, and husband of her youth. Yes, all feel the smart, all share the grief, and all desire to remove the burden of that too weighty sorrow from the heart that is, and must be, by it most heavily oppressed. For if heretofore the hearts of the people were knit to the throne—if heretofore our Queen had a place in the hearts and affections of her subjects such as no monarch on earth but herself has in the hearts and affections of subjects—that due loyalty is now more than ever deepened and strengthened by the sad and sorrowful bereavement sustained by the Queen. There is a majesty in royalty that keeps the dutiful subject in restraint, and at a distance. To this majesty is now added the majesty of a sorrow with which strangers may not intermeddle; but this august spectacle of grief, instead of repelling, attracts, as it now most powerfully does, the hearts, the homage, the sympathies of millions. In this grief the throne, the Queen, is brought near to every household, and to all the citizens of the empire; and all vie with each other, not only in expressions of allegiance, but in expressions and tributes of a profound and loyal sympathy. To some it is permitted to tender more direct consolation, to offer more immediate condolence; but all, of every grade, sect, and name, willingly offer the tribute of deep and sincere sympathy to the widowed Queen, and to the royal children now orphans, fatherless. On all former occasions that Queen acquitted herself as became her royal state; and when bereft of her rod of strength, it was not the least noble and becoming action in her life, that, calling her royal orphans apart, she solemnly and affectionately admonished them, and expressed the hope that they would all help her in the discharge of the duty she owed to this nation. We trust that this was of God,

and that He will acknowledge it. We trust that the magnanimity displayed by Her Majesty on this occasion is founded on the grace of God, and is sustained by the promises of that grace—that the Word of the Lord is for her comfort in this the hour of her sore affliction. If, indeed, it be so, then may she, from her royal seat, and all the people from their respective stations and places, look forward with calmness to those events that may be near. Seeing that the Lord has taught us that our dependence must not be on the strong rod, for it is broken and withered, but on his arm which is not shortened, and in his unerring wisdom,—seeing that he has ranked our Queen and her children among those who are the peculiar objects of his guardianship and care, saying, “Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me,”—we may confidently and calmly await the issues of futurity, while we offer up the prayer, “The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee, send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.”

But it is fitting that we should make more personal and direct application home to ourselves of the thoughts suggested by this event.

We learn and are reminded of the certainty of our own death. Beginning to live, we begin to die; death is at work, for sin is in us. We are corrupt; the body must return to the earth, the spirit to God that gave it. And that certain death which takes the sceptre from the hand of royalty, the crown from the head of the monarch, and all the habiliments and appendages, however splendid, from highest officers of state, will unrobe the soul of every covering which it can put on. Unclothed—naked—must the spirit appear before God to receive according to the deeds done in the body. And yet we must not absolutely make this statement. There is one enrobement of which death doth not divest the spirit: it is the pure, the spotless, the imputed righteousness of Christ Jesus. See, therefore, that ye put on

the Lord Christ. Behold the Lamb of God, and say, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." He that believeth shall never come into condemnation, but hath everlasting life. To him certain death is certain admission into the presence of his Lord. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

As already indicated, we may learn from the strong rod so suddenly broken and withered the necessity of immediate preparation for the time of our change and departure, and we ought to learn the danger of delay in a matter of such transcendent importance as the salvation of the soul. *To-day*, if ye will hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts, for *now* is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. The Spirit of the Lord now waiteth to be gracious. Invite his gracious operation. See that ye resist not that Spirit of grace, for he will not always strive with men. The wise man is he who is always prepared for death, who, having his lamp burning and his loins girded, expects the coming of his Lord. And, as already indicated, we may learn the folly of putting our trust in man, in an arm of flesh. "Cursed is he, saith the Lord, that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." We are to regard the strong rods, whether in the state or in the church, as gifts from God, not as idols to be substituted for God. For these gifts we are to give thanks unto Him, the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good gift. But let us beware of putting the gift enjoyed in the room and place of the Gracious Giver; for his glory he will not give to another. He is a jealous God. Trust not in the strong rod: it may soon be broken and withered, and with it broken will be your hope and withered will be your joy; but trust in the Lord, for with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. When the great and good President Edwards, the distinguished preacher and theologian of America, lay on his death-bed, "just at the close of his life, as some persons who stood by expecting he would breathe his last in a few minutes, were lamenting his death, not only as a great blow to the college, but as having a dark aspect on the interest of religion in general, to their surprise, not imagining

that he heard or ever would speak another word, he said, *'Trust in God, and ye need not fear.'*" So now we say to you—we would say it to this nation, could the voice reach the people—"Trust in God, and ye need not fear."

Yet some other lessons are taught us at this time. Of these, the *first* is the necessity of our humbling ourselves before the Lord, confessing before him our sins as individuals and our sins as a people. For, whatever be the verdict of a philosophy, falsely so called, the Word of God—the exponent of the will and way of that God, who doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth, who bringeth princes to nothing, who maketh the judges of the earth as vanity—assures us that there is a connection between his judgments in the breaking down and withering of strong rods and the sins of a people. Our iniquities testify against us, as our sins keep many good things from us. Far be from us that presumptuousness which, as if admitted into the councils of the Most High, whose way is in the deep and whose footsteps are not known, would trace that particular judgment to that particular sin; but though we presume not thus to vindicate the ways of God and assert his eternal providence, yet we know, and by his Word are assured, that when he afflicts it is not willingly—there is sin which draws down his rebuke; there is sin, therefore he leaves not even his chosen and peculiar people altogether unpunished. It becomes us, therefore, at this solemn time to humble ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God, and to confess with the Prime Minister of a great king—not the less devout, not the less patriotic, though in the court of that great Monarch—"O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and thy judgments: therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth; for we obeyed not his voice." (See the whole Confession, Dan. ix.) *Secondly*, We are taught the necessity of prayer and supplication for ourselves, for all in authority over us, for the Queen and her orphan family. When we look

on the broken and withered rod of strength, and when our anxious forebodings anticipate yet more of manifested judgment, surely it becomes us to look up with earnest desire, and to offer up earnest and persevering prayer that the Lord may spare this people, may strengthen the foundations of the throne, may establish it in righteousness, and send to the nation and the church of God prosperity and peace. Great is our encouragement here—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Pray ye therefore the Lord that he may strengthen those that remain, that the Queen may be long spared and much blessed; that Albert, the Prince of Wales, may prove the worthy son of a noble and now lamented father; and that righteousness and peace established in the royal house may be established in this realm and throughout all the earth. The Lord raise up and send out labourers into his harvest. *Thirdly*, and finally, the lesson taught us is that of working the work of God now while it is day, for soon the shadows of evening, or the deep shade of death, may be spread over us. "Up and be doing, and the Lord be with thee," is the message this day to every man. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Acquaint now thyself with God, thereby shall good come unto thee. Let us, therefore, lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty; for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ourselves all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With firm faith in God by Jesus Christ,—with his Spirit dwelling in us, quickening us and sanctifying us,—with that pledge and earnest of the promised possession, with his word of precept for our rule, his promises for our comfort and support,—working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, watching and praying that we may not enter into temptation,—looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, we may adopt the language

of the Prophet and say, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation;" with David, the sweet singer of Israel, in his last words, we may say—"Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation and all my desire;" and with Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ—the Apostle to the Gentiles—we may say, in the contemplation of any trials or troubles that may come or may be near—"None of these things move me." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Amen." The Lord bless and comfort the Queen and all the royal family! The Lord bless this nation and his church with peace! "God save the Queen!"

.. Rock of Ages! cleft for me,
 Let me hide myself in Thee;
 Let the water and the blood,
 From Thy riven side which flow'd,
 Be of sin the double cure—
 Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

“ Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law’s demands :
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow :
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

“ Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling ;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace,
Foul, I to the Fountain fly—
Wash me, SAVIOUR, or I die !

“ While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eye-lids close in death ;
When I soar to worlds unknown ;
See Thee on Thy judgment-throne ;
Rock of Ages ! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

Amen and amen.

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH; OR, THE LORD IS THERE.

THE NAME OF THE CITY OF GOD.



“The name of the city from that day shall be, THE LORD IS THERE.”

—Ezek. xlviii. 35.



CHARACTER, DESIGN, AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL.

THESE are the closing words of one of the most remarkable books of Holy Scripture — the book of the Prophet Ezekiel. In this book there are many “things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.” It is a book of the visions of God; hence the difficulties in the way of a true and just interpretation of its contents. For by the number of the visions, by the minuteness of the descriptions, and by the sustained and continuous exhibition of details, the interpreter is tempted to forget what may be termed the symbolic idealism of the composition. In other words, as we read the record of what the prophet beheld in the visions of God, we are tempted to regard the narrative as a record of actual events,—of events in historical fact either accomplished at the time, or to be accomplished in the future. An historico-literal interpretation of this book must necessarily be erroneous, and for this reason, that the book is one in which events and realities are described, not in the language of history, but in the language of symbol and hieroglyph. Each vision corresponds

with something real; but the reality is exhibited in the ideal or pictorial form in the vision. This characteristic of the book must never be lost sight of in any interpretation of its contents.

Akin to this the ideal character of the book, is the fact observable in the series of visions recorded in it, that the scenery of the visions is for the most part taken from actual objects and events. The history of the Jewish people, and objects familiar to the eyes of the Jews, furnish, as it were, the platform and machinery of the visions of this prophet. This fact imparts an air and aspect of historical reality to the visions themselves. But this very circumstance should tend to guide us into a right interpretation of the writings of this prophet. In this light, whatever interpretation be right, that must be wrong which teaches on grounds given in this prophecy that there is to be, in the latter days, the restoration of a state of things similar to that instituted by Moses. The age of shadows and figures has for ever passed away. The Mosaic ritual was an acted vision of gospel realities. The writings of our prophet are a descriptive and pictorial representation of gospel realities.

But, besides these considerations, we find added or appended to the visions of this book words so plain, unequivocal, and direct, that they serve as the cypher or key by which we may, when we read, know the sense of the things written, and attain to a correct and just interpretation of these otherwise mysterious and unintelligible visions.

The book divides itself into two parts, and answering to these are the visions of the prophet. The first part of the book is mainly taken up with narrating the procession of the judgments of God in punishing the people because of their transgressions. In the visions of God, the prophet is sent to destroy the city. Corresponding with this mission of wrath are the materials of the visions. The second part of the Book consists of promises of mercy. The prophet is sent to restore the city; and in harmony with this mission of mercy are the visions with which the prophet is favoured. In the first part of the book there is mercy, but it is only to a few, to a small

remnant. Judgment, or the severity of God, is grandly, awfully conspicuous in this first part of the book. The visions are visions of terror, even although a rainbow is seen in the heavens. The voice of the thunders of the Almighty is so terrible and so loud, that although the still small voice speaks, it is but faintly heard.

It is otherwise in the second division of the book. Here there is judgment; but it is against the enemies of Israel. Here mercy rejoices against judgment. It is, after the dark night, a morning without clouds. It is the clear shining after rain. "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; . . . the time of the singing of birds has come;" for the Lord hath visited and redeemed his people. He shall dwell among them, "and the name of the city from that day forward shall be, Jehovah-Shammah—The Lord is there."

THE CITY—ITS SITUATION.

The first thing to which our attention is directed by the prophet in his description of this city is the site of it. He tells us that in the visions of God he was brought into the land of Israel, and set upon a very high mountain, by which, or upon which, was the frame of a city on the south. The high mountain here mentioned is the same as that spoken of in other places of this book, as "a high mountain and eminent—the mountain of the height of Israel;" "Mine holy mountain." (See xvii. 22, 23; xx. 40.) This is none other than the Mount Zion, which, in itself, was but a little hill; anything but a very high mountain if compared with the great mountains of the world. But as the little and otherwise inconsiderable town of Bethlehem became renowned among the cities of the world, because out of it came the Lord Jesus, whose goings forth were from everlasting; so the little hill of Zion towers in majestic elevation above all the mountains of the earth, because there stood the temple of God—because the law should go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The city of God has its foundations on the holy

and high mountain. The *stability* of the city is thus represented to us. The Highest himself shall establish it. The foundation of God standeth sure. "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever." Stable and unmoved as the everlasting mountains is this noble city. Unmoved and immovable amidst the heaving and revolution of all things in heaven and earth is the city of the Great King. The situation of this city is suggestive of the *conspicuous and eminent glory* of the city. It shall not only remain unmoved amidst all change, unshaken by all the power of the enemy; but out of all change and tumult and war it will rise with a glory surpassing that of all the cities of the world. Why leap ye, ye high hills? This is the hill of God, where he dwells. This is that city set on a hill which cannot be hid. This is that city, the Mount Zion, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

THE CITY—ITS TEMPLE-LIKE ASPECT.

The second thing to which attention is turned is the temple-like aspect of the city. The prophet, beholding the city-like framework, sees rise before him a stately and magnificent temple,—a temple which, with its adjacent and connected buildings, covered an area much larger than the entire site of the ancient city of Jerusalem. The vision is obviously one concerning the enlargement, beauty, and glory of the church of God. As David received from God the model or pattern of the temple built by Solomon, so in this vision of Ezekiel there is given an ideal picture or framework of the New Testament

temple, which is built for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

In the description here given, that which impresses the observer or reader is that everything in or about this temple is determined by divine measurement. All must be according to the divine plan. Here we have, in the fortieth chapter, the measurement of the outer wall, of the east gate, of the north gate, of the south gate, with the chambers and other things attached to the gates; of the inner court; of the tables; of the apartments for the singers and the priests; of the porch of the house. In the forty-first chapter we have a description and measurement of the house, the posts, the door, the wall, and the side chambers, the foundations and wall of the chambers, their doors, and the house itself, the most holy place; of another building over against the separate place toward the west. A description is given of the manner of the building, of the ornaments of it, of the altar of incense, and of the table, and of the doors between the temple and the oracle, or most holy place. All this is followed, in the forty-second chapter, by a description of the chambers about the courts, their situation, structure, and uses; and the whole is concluded by a survey and measurement of the whole compass of ground occupied by the house and the courts belonging to it.

What, it may be asked, is the meaning of all this? By all this we are taught that a separation is made between what is sacred and profane. The temple or city of God is a holy city. Holiness becometh the house of God. A wall measured by the divine rod bounds off this house and its courts from all that is round about it. Into it there may not enter anything that defileth, that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie.

Again, we are taught by all this that everything in the house of God must be ordered according to the divine will. The order of the house must be according to the word and law of the Lord and Proprietor. Nothing is left to the dictates of the wisdom of man. Nothing to human fancy or caprice. As it is a proverb that every man should bear rule in his own house, so it is right and seemly that we should have respect to the will of Christ in all things pertaining to his church, which is the

house of God. Only in this way can the church attain to the perfection to which it is ordained. Only in this way can the church be a fit and suitable dwelling-place for the Lord.

The plan and measurement of this temple, as contrasted with the temple of Solomon, indicate also that in the gospel age the kingdom of God should be greatly enlarged. "This temple was greatly to surpass the old in the extent of its territory, and in the number of its worshippers, and in the purity of its worship. And the square appearance of the entire buildings, as in John's city (Rev. xxi. 17), betokened the strength and solidity of the whole. A perfect cube, it was the emblem of a kingdom that could not be shaken or removed. Thus every way it exhibits to the eye of faith the true ideal of that pure and glorious temple which, resting on the foundation of the eternal Son, and girt round by all the perfections of Godhead, shall shine forth the best and noblest workmanship of heaven."—(Principal Fairbairn.)

THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

The third object to which attention is invited is the vision of the glory of the Lord, as beheld by the prophet after the temple was set up and framed according to the divinely revealed model or plan. The glory of the Lord had been formerly seen by the prophet departing from the house and city of God. (Chap. xi.) Over the porches might then be written, *Ichabod*; for the glory had departed. The house was then left desolate indeed. And judgment upon judgment overtook the guilty people who had by their sin provoked the Lord to withdraw his presence, protection, and glory from the midst of them. "But now," says the prophet, "behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. . . . And I fell upon my face. And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. . . . And, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house." This vision, as interpreted by the words spoken to the prophet, is designed to

be the seal and sure pledge of the gracious promise that the Lord should return to his people, and that his presence should again and for ever be enjoyed by them. In a little wrath he smote them, but with everlasting kindness he will have mercy upon them. The prophet, standing as a priest in the inner court, hears the word out of the oracle or house, saying, "Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile." "And I will dwell in the midst of them for ever." This promise of the presence of God is connected with the repentance and humiliation before God of the people. And this repentance is made sure by the grace promised. He promises to be to them such as they would have him to be, by making it sure that they shall repent and turn from all their iniquities. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God."

It must be very specially noted that the Lord returns to dwell among his people as their only king. His must be the only throne in Israel. His law must be the only law in his city and kingdom.

As their king he instructs the prophet to lay down and publish the law of his house. "This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain the whole limit (or boundary) thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, (it is repeated), this is the law of the house." In keeping with this law, not only must the sins of former times be repented of, and the evils, defilements, and abominations of former times be put far from the temple, but the ordinances of divine worship must be observed according to the direct appointment and institution of the king in Jeshurun. The message of this prophet, in connection with the promised return of the Lord to his temple, resembles that of the prophet Jeremiah when, instructed by the Lord, he said, "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the

strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a tribe, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered together unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." (Jer. iii. 12—17.)

THE CITY LAWS AND STATUTES.

The fourth thing to which, as connected with this house and city of God, attention is called is the series of statutes enjoined concerning the worship of the Lord and the honour of the Great King. The altar and its ordinances are first described, with the promise that the worship offered according to the law of the house should be accepted—"I will accept you, saith the Lord God." In the forty-fourth chapter are enjoined ordinances concerning the prince and the priesthood. The eastern gate is to be shut; no man is to enter in by it except the prince who is to eat bread in it before the Lord. The prince or ruler is thus reminded of the sanctity of the place, and of the sanctity required of him who as God's vicegerent or deputy held rule under the Great King over the people. The unfaithful priests are degraded, and the priesthood is restricted to the house of Zadok. This evidently points forward to the times when the Lord should raise up for himself a faithful priesthood who should offer unto God spiritual sacrifices. The holiness required of those who draw near to God is indicated by the regulations concerning

their dress—they were to put on linen garments in their holy ministry; their hair—they were neither to shave their heads as mourners, nor to let their hair grow long; their diet—they were not to drink wine in their service, nor to eat anything dead of itself; their marriage—they were not permitted to marry a woman divorced, nor a widow unless the widow of a priest. In a word, the priests were required to be holy as those set apart for God.

To the Great King it belongs to prescribe the laws regarding the distribution of the land. In the forty-fifth chapter the proportion of territory to be given to sacred purposes, to the prince, and to the people is indicated; and laws are prescribed regarding the offerings of the prince and people, and regarding the great festivals. In the forty-sixth chapter are contained a few additional rules to regulate the conduct of prince, priests, and people. All these regulations evidently have respect to a city, and temple, and land, and priesthood, and people, different from the ancient city and temple of Jerusalem, and from the land, and priesthood, and people of Israel. They belong to the order of things introduced in connection with the city bearing the glorious name, Jehovah-Shammah.

THE CITY: THE RIVER OF GOD.

The fifth object attracting the attention of him who looks towards this city of God is the vision of the waters that issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward, that came down from under the right side of the house at the south side of the altar. At the distance of a thousand cubits from the threshold the waters reached to the ankles; at the distance of another thousand cubits they reached to the knees; at the distance of another thousand cubits they reached the loins. "Afterward," says the prophet, "he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

This is that fountain of which Joel writes that "it shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." (Joel iii. 18.) It is that river of which David says, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." (Psalm xlv. 4.) It is that river which John the beloved disciple beheld, "a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii. 1, 2. See also Zech. xiv. 8.)

The name of the city signifies not only that the Lord is there, but that he shall be known from out of this city. In a former vision his glory filled the temple; but it so filled it that the whole earth did shine with the glory of the Lord. Is he

the God of the Jews only? He is also the God of the Gentiles. And of old he had said to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That blessing is now seen to flow forth with ever swelling fulness from the house of God towards all the tribes and nations of mankind. And in the progressive flow of the waters of this river of life, we see not only the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham, but also the answer to the prayer of the Old Testament church. "God be merciful unto us and bless us; cause his face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. . . . Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us." (Psalm lxxvii.)

Let it then be noted here that the flowing forth of the river of blessing is connected with the gracious presence of God in his temple. But in Christ he hath come into his temple. The throne of grace is set up. The river of blessing flows from under the throne of God and of the Lamb. "Ye shall receive power," said the Lord, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

Jesus the King, having taken his place on the throne, being exalted to the right hand of God in the holiest of all, shed forth his Spirit upon his disciples, and they went everywhere preaching the word. In the days when Jesus himself tabernacled on earth, the numbers were few of those who believed in his name, and fewer still of those who preached the good news of the kingdom. But after the ascension of the Lord and the descent of the Spirit, the numbers rapidly increased of those who believed, and of those who went everywhere proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those who published it." The waters rose till they became a river that could not be forded; and, blessed be the Lord, the volume of that river is daily increasing, and will increase till the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

The progressiveness of this river, or of the sanctuary waters,

is nothing else than the extension of the kingdom of God. It is grace expanding itself to bless all the nations of the world. By another and different figure, in the seventeenth chapter of his prophecy, Ezekiel foretells the same blessed development of the gospel. "Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." This is none other than a description of that kingdom of heaven of which Jesus said, "It is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." (Matt. xiii. 31, 32.)

In what has been said we must include the idea of the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace, suggested by the progressive rise, flow, and swell of the river. Instead of exhausting the blessings of the gospel by spreading them among all people, we only make it evident that these blessings flow from an inexhaustible fountain. In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. His glory is that of the only begotten Son of God. His gospel is the gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The effects ascribed to these waters of the sanctuary are two: they produce life, and they produce health. They quicken what is dead, and they heal what is sickly or diseased. "Everything shall live whither the waters come." Places that before were a waste and barren wilderness, become now clothed with rich vegetation, become like a fruitful field, or as the garden of the Lord. The otherwise bitter and noxious waters of the Dead Sea are healed. On the rocks of Engedi, and on the rocks of Eglaim, the fishermen spread their nets, for the waters of this river have healed the waters of the salt sea. Where the gospel has free course, there

the dead are quickened unto newness of life; there righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are established or diffused; light, order, life, all are found where the Word of the Lord comes in the power of the Spirit. All this might be illustrated at great length, by reference to the influence of the Word and grace of God on individuals, on families, on communities, nations, and empires. By the blessing of God on the labours of his servants in this land, and in other regions, all this is daily receiving fresh illustration. The idolater forsakes his idol; the savage becomes humane and civilized; the wild roving Indian warrior lays aside his tomahawk, learns the arts of peace, and sings the songs of Zion; the sensualist becomes chaste; the covetous becomes liberal; the selfish becomes benevolent; the profane man fears God; the proud becomes humble; the sorrowful is comforted; and those once without hope have Christ in them—the hope of glory. The jealousies, rivalries, and feuds of individuals, families, kingdoms, are healed. And, from what has been effected by the blessed gospel, we have the promise confirmed to us, that the time is approaching when they shall neither “hurt nor destroy in all God’s holy mountain,” when the nations “shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, when they shall not learn war any more.” Who does not pray, who will not labour, for the diffusion of the blessings of the gospel? Who does not desire that purity, peace, mercy, goodness, love, and joy, may everywhere prevail? Flow on, then, thou mighty river, on thy mission of life and health and prosperity! Flow on till there be no more sickness, no more death; till there be no more curse; till that word be fulfilled, “Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. . . . Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah xxxiii. and xxxv.)

Signal as are the benefits produced where the waters of the sanctuary flow, there is a statement in the narrative that reminds us that even in places much favoured, there will be those who come short of the blessings of the great salvation. "The miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof, shall not be healed: they shall be given to salt." The gospel, which is to some the savour of life unto life, is unto others the savour of death unto death. "Where the waters of the sanctuary come," says John Owen, "and the land is not healed, that land is given up of the Lord to salt or to barrenness for ever; or where the gospel is, by the infinitely wise disposal of God, preached unto a place or persons, and they receive it not, so as to have their sinful distempers healed by it, they are usually, after a season, given up by the righteous judgment of God unto barrenness and everlasting ruin." These miry places and marishes present a painful contrast to the other parts of the scene. The blessing is on all around, but the curse is on these places. Sad, sad, indeed, is the lot of those who perish in the very midst of the fulness of gospel privileges. Concerning such the Lord may say, as concerning his unfruitful vineyard, What could have been done for you that I have not done? And over them the weeping Saviour may lament as over doomed Jerusalem. "If

thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." "The miry places and the marishes shall not be healed: they shall be given to salt."

In contrast with these miry places and marishes—these unblessed places that are nigh unto cursing, the prophet exhibits the blissful results of the temple waters by the statement, that on the bank of the river, on this side and that, grow all manner of trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade—the fruit being for meat, and the leaf for medicine. The growth, bloom, and fruitfulness of these trees are traced to the influence of the sanctuary waters. There can be no difficulty in interpreting the figure here used. These trees are the righteous that flourish in the days of the Messiah—the King. They are the trees of righteousness spoken of by Isaiah. And in harmony with this view are the words of David in the first psalm, and the words of the prophet Jeremiah in the seventeenth chapter of his book. Of the righteous man David says, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Describing the same man, Jeremiah says, "He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." In keeping with these figurative descriptions are the words of the Lord Jesus when he tells us that men are known as trees are known by their fruits. To the same effect are the statements of Paul when he describes the righteous as rooted in Christ, and when he says that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These are the fruits of righteousness to the praise of God that grow upon those planted in the house of God, or beside the river of the water of life. "There is," says Matthew Henry, "a great variety of these trees, through the diversity of gifts with which are endued by that one Spirit who works all in all. They grow on the bank of the river, for they keep close to

holy ordinances, and through them derive from Christ sap and virtue. They are fruit trees designed, as the fig tree and the olive, with their fruits to honour God and man. (Judges ix. 9.) The fruit thereof shall be for meat, for the lips of the righteous feed many. The fruits of their righteousness are one way or other beneficial. The very leaves of these trees are for medicine, for bruises and sores. (Margin.) Good Christians, with their good discourses, which are as their leaves, as well as with their charitable actions, which are as their fruits, do good to those about them; they strengthen the weak, and bind up the broken-hearted. Their cheerfulness does good, like a medicine, not only to themselves, but to others also. They shall be enabled by the grace of God to persevere in their goodness and usefulness; their leaf shall not fade, or lose its medicinal virtue, having not only life in their root, but sap in all their branches. Their profession shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed—that is, they shall not lose the principle of their fruitfulness, but shall still bring forth fruit in old age to show that the Lord is upright (Psalm xcii. 14), or the reward of their fruitfulness shall abide for ever; they bring forth fruit that shall abound to their account in the great day,—fruit to life eternal, that is indeed fruit that shall not be consumed.”

I might continue this description of the city of God, as beheld in the visions of Ezekiel, by referring more particularly to the citizens, their numbers, their sacred character, and their service; for the city is served by men from all the tribes of Israel, and provision is made for admitting strangers to the rights and privileges of citizenship in this great city. The gates, too, deserve attention, for they are, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, twelve gates. The entire plan, platform, constitution, order, and laws,—the walls, gates, with everything connected with the city, would furnish us with ample matter for thoughtful and profitable meditation. And the more we should meditate, the more should we be confirmed in the truth that this city was an *ideal city*,—a city typical and symbolical—prophetic of the city of God in the ages of the gospel.

THE CITY OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

For the confirmation of this, let us turn now for a little to contemplate the evangelical city or kingdom of God. This city bears the same name as that seen in the visions of Ezekiel. Its name is "Jehovah-Shammah," or, "The Lord is there." This glory is common to the New Testament city with that revealed to Ezekiel. For Jesus Christ the Lord has associated his name, his presence, and his glory with his church or kingdom. "Where two or three," said he, "are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) Of this little company it can with reality and in truth be said, "Jehovah-Shammah"—"The Lord is there." This is the glory in the midst of the living church of God, and this is the wall of fire round about it. That which was only seen in vision by Ezekiel is now seen in its reality by little children in the gracious kingdom of God.

What a transition, what a descent, is this, it may be thought or said, from the magnificence and grandeur of Ezekiel's city in vision to a little gathering of two or three humble, poor, and despised men! But it is no such descent from what is high to what is low. It is a transition rather from the ideal to the actual and real. It is the evolution into fact of what was given by the prophet in ideal type and form. Nor let any despise the day of small things, saying, "If even a fox go up, it shall break down their strong walls." Let not any, looking merely on the outward appearance of the company gathered together in the name of Christ, judge hastily concerning the church and city of God. For although Bethlehem was little among the thousands of Judah, and Nazareth despised and almost contemptible among the proud cities of Israel, yet from Bethlehem came forth the Ruler of the people, whose goings forth were of old from everlasting; and from the workshop of Joseph the carpenter in Nazareth there emerged that Mighty One, who is wonderful in council, and excellent in working—even Jesus the Christ, who saves his people from their sins, and reigns for ever on his glorious throne on the right hand of the Heavenly Majesty.

In the manger of Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling bands, was found the infant Redeemer; and in the workshop of Nazareth the young man Jesus might be seen. His lowliness was in contrast with his adorable majesty and glory; but it was, at the same time, in harmony with the ends and design of his incarnation. The cross seemed out of keeping with the power and glory of Immanuel; but it was by that cross that he engaged the wisdom and power and justice of God for the establishing and upbuilding of the city of God, as by his blood he opened a way and channel through which the unsearchable and immeasurable fulness of the divine love, grace, and mercy flow forth to bless, sanctify, and save sinners of mankind.

God seeth not as man seeth. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh into and through the heart; and where his eye sees two or three right-hearted men gathered together in his name, there he deigns to dwell, there he rests in his love, there he records his name, and there he dwells and reigns as head and king, there he guards the faithful by his Almighty power, and there he gives light and health and gladness and joy and honour. This is none other than the city of the Lord, concerning which glorious things are spoken and sung throughout the Scriptures of truth. It cometh not and groweth not with observation; nevertheless it is being built and extended—is continually growing up, through the successive ages of time, to be that stately and glorious temple, that city of the great king, which shall be to him as a palace of light, radiant and illumined with his own brightness, sanctity, and splendours—an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The littleness of its beginnings, the meanness of its citizens, the absence from it of everything fitted to attract or to dazzle the eye of outward observation, when rightly thought of, are infallible proofs that it is of God and not of man. And as the tree of lofty stature and of strong and far-spreading boughs, beneath which the fowls of heaven and birds of varied note and hue find a lodgment, contrasts with the seedling or almost invisible germ from which it sprang forth and grew to be a plant of renown; so the progressively developing and evolving growth, fruitfulness, and glory of the church of Jesus Christ,

the city of God, is now in sublime contrast with the smallness of its beginnings, and the weakness of the means, agencies, and instrumentalities from which, as seen or observed by men, all this glory proceeded. What then shall be the glory of this city, when it shall be seen in its perfection and completeness, the actual and realized reflection and embodiment of the grand idea and purpose of the eternal mind, wisdom, and grace of God?

This city is properly named after its Founder and its King. It is not properly a city localized in any country or earthly territory. It is the church of Christ in any given earthly kingdom or country. Everything distinctive of it, and peculiar to it, is derived from Christ, and is dependent on its relation to him, its living Head and glorious King. We must never confound it with sect, place, or nationality. "Neither on this mountain nor at Jerusalem shall men worship the Father," with any special acceptance or favour, because of the place from which the worship is offered. But incense and a pure offering, worship in spirit and in truth, offered by whomsoever and in whatsoever place, shall be, and is now, acceptable in the sight and presence of God.

Here, in this evangelical city, Christ is all and in all. He is the centre of union, giving true, real, and spiritual unity and compactness to his one undivided and spiritual church. For in living union to him, joined to the Lord in one Spirit, all the scattered companies, no matter where or how dispersed, form one city, church, and kingdom.

He is the fountain and source of all authority exercised within the city. It is reasonable that a man should bear rule in his own house; and it is reasonable and right,—every way most fit and becoming,—that the voice of law, rule, and authority within the church should be the voice of "Jesus only." For said the voice from the excellent glory on the holy mount where Jesus was transfigured, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." The flock of our Shepherd King hear the Good Shepherd's voice, and they know not, and will not, obey the voice of a stranger or of an usurper. Under law are the citizens; but as citizens of this city under law not to priest, prelate, pope, or prince, but under law to Christ only.

He is the foundation of the city. He laid its foundation in his blood; for by that blood-shedding he purchased it, that he might build it, and present it to himself a glorious church and city. He is the life of it. It is his creation: a new creation in which righteous peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are to have their sure and perpetual abode. And as its life is in him, so it will reflect and share his glory. The life is hid with Christ in God; and when he shall appear, the city shall appear in his glory.

All that distinguishes or differentiates the church of God as the Christian church, belongs to it from its relation to Christ Jesus. This it is which secures the unity of the church and its immovable stability. This city of God is impregnable. Its walls will never be scaled; its towers, bulwarks, and forts will never be beaten down; its citadel will never be taken by the enemy; its provisions shall never be exhausted: for its walls are salvation, and its gates are praise. Through its halls and palaces, and in all its streets, will continually be heard the song, "Salvation is of the Lord." "The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." Hallelujah! praise ye the Lord! For "on this rock"—of his own humanity, Messiahship, and divinity, said the King—"will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And again, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And to that Father pertains alike "the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever."

The holiness as well as the unity of this city is grounded on its relation to Christ. He it is that hath sanctified it unto himself, that he might dwell in it. Therefore did he redeem it and deliver it from under the tyranny of Satan, that he might dwell in it for ever. He chose it for himself that it might show forth his glory.

The catholicity of the church belongs to it because its Head is in heaven, and because the Spirit that is in him is given to everyone that believeth in his name. Wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he by his Spirit, and

there we find a part of the one holy and catholic church. Any catholicity other than this is not the catholicity of the true and only church of the living God. Simplicity, truth, spirituality are the signs and marks of Christian catholicity. This is secured by the presence of Christ; and this presence is with all, in every place, and of every name, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

True to the name of the city is the glory spiritually observable in it. Apostles, evangelists, and prophets, pastors, and teachers were the gifts of the King to his city and people. All things are theirs; for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. The true and genuine successors of the apostles are those who, disclaiming and repudiating the arrogant claims and pretensions of those calling themselves the successors of these extraordinary ambassadors of Christ, labour in word and doctrine, and continually give themselves unto prayer after the manner of the apostles. The apostolic men are the men who preach the apostolic doctrine, do apostolic work, abide in the apostolic fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer,—the men in whom is of a truth the Spirit of Christ, the men who are full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. It is the maintenance of the truth, the doing of the work of Christ in the Spirit of Christ, that can vindicate the claim of apostolicity on the part of any. But they are schismatics and sectaries, be they Anglicans, or be they Greeks or Romans, who arrogate to their prelates the rights and prerogatives proper only to the apostles of Jesus Christ. Luther, Knox, Latimer, Calvin, Zuingli, Whitfield, Wesley, Brainard, Elliot, Carey, Chalmers, Duff, Macdonald of the North, Moffat of South Africa, Edwards, Payson, McCheyne, Buchanan, and Henry Martyn, with Williams of Erromanga—these and thousands more, whose lives, labours, doctrines, zeal, and sacrifices have splendidly illuminated the annals of modern Christianity, were apostolic men. They were the successors whom the apostles would hear, approve, and own as their fellow-labourers in the kingdom of God. And so long as the Lord Jesus Christ, and not pope or prelate, dispenses the anointing oil of true consecration, even the unction of the Holy Ghost, so long shall the

catholic church of Jesus Christ vindicate its right to be counted, by all godly and Christian men, and even by the world itself, the church holy and apostolic. These, and such as these, among the citizens of this city, bear apostolic stamp, and indicate the apostolic spirit by their truly apostolic character and work. They are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

From Christ is all the light, righteousness, truth, grace, and power of this city. This it is that renders the church like a city set on a hill that cannot be hid. Hence it is that their light, from the character and doctrine and labours of the citizens, shines so before men that God their Father is glorified.

This is that city with its name Jehovah-Shammah. For now in this gospel age and ministration of the Spirit, "Ye," says the apostle to the Hebrews, "are come unto mount Zion. and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

It is the presence of Christ, according to what is signified by the name "Jehovah-Shammah," that gives to the city all its glory here and now, and that makes sure to it the glory of God through the ever-rolling ages of eternity. Here and now the glory of this city is liable to occasional eclipse and overshadowment, even as the glory of its King and Head was for a time veiled under a marred visage, under tears and an exceeding great sorrow, under thick, dark, and heavy clouds of reproach contumely, ignominy, agony, wounds, and death on the accursed tree. But even as he, having died, rose again and ascended to glory, attended and worshipped by the angels of God, thousands of angels strong, and now reigns there in the midst of the throne of royal and universal dominion,—so for the city which he had founded, and in which by his Spirit he dwells and reigns there in a store of glory far excelling and surpass-

ing that of the most famous, powerful, and renowned cities, kingdoms, and empires of this world.

“Come hither,” said the Apocalyptic angel to John in Patmos, “I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like unto a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. . . . And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth. . . . The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. . . . And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there is no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life. And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name

shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." This is the city of God; this the glory reserved for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this glory, which the richest splendour of figurative language can but inadequately express and declare, is but the reality corresponding with what is signified by the name of the city—JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH—THE LORD IS THERE. Then let us sing:—

“ I am the Lord, and by the name
Of great JEHOVAH known;
No idol shall usurp my praise,
Nor mount into my throne.

“ Lo! former scenes, predicted once,
Conspicuous rise to view;
And future scenes, predicted now,
Shall be accomplis'd too.
Sing to the Lord in joyful strains!
Let earth his praise resound,
Ye who upon the ocean dwell,
And fill the isles around!

“ O city of the Lord! begin
The universal song;
And let the scatter'd villages
The cheerful notes prolong.
Let Kedar's wilderness afar
Lift up its lonely voice;
And let the tenants of the rock
With accents rude rejoice;

“ Till 'midst the streams of distant lands
The islands sound his praise;
And all combin'd with one accord,
JEHOVAH's glories raise.”

ICHABOD; OR THE GLORY IS DEPARTED:

THE RIVAL CITY TO THE CITY OF GOD.

“Ichabod, for the glory is departed.”—1 Sam. iv. 21.

THE ANCIENT BABYLON.

IN holy Scripture we read of another city famous and much renowned,—a city set over against the city of God,—that great city, Babylon. It claimed to be mistress and queen over all other cities and kingdoms,—to be the “gate of God,” as if by it the mighty hosts of God went forth by divine commission to subjugate the world; and as if within its gates only could safety be found, and access be had unto the most High God. It boasted a great antiquity. It covered a large area. Built on the two sides of the river Euphrates, the circuit of the city was, according to the testimony of Herodotus, about 480 stadia, or 56 English miles, enclosing a space of nearly 200 square miles, or ten times the size of London. Its walls are said to have been in height about 357 feet, and in breadth about 85 feet. The vast space of this famous city was thus surrounded and enclosed by walls nearly equal in height to the dome of St. Paul’s in London. And on these Cyclopean walls were 250 towers to protect and guard the more assailable parts. It contained within it a very numerous population. The riches of the world flowed into it. It had a far-reaching and strong dominion; and for a time it held Jerusalem and

Judea under its sway captive and tributary. Through it there flowed the mighty river Euphrates; its palaces and its walls were the wonder of the world; its kings lived in stupendous luxury and splendour; and their decrees and behests were as the voice of God to many millions of mankind. This was Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," "the golden city." (Isaiah xiii. and xiv.) This was the city that in ambition towered high and far above the lofty heights, to which the original architects and builders would impiously have exalted the pinnacles of its proud citadel; for it is said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah xiv.) If great in its ambition, it was also great in power. It made the earth to tremble and to quake beneath the heavy and measured tread of its multitudinous hosts, by its shouts of war, and by its voice of lion-like roaring for its prey; by the thunder of its military power it did shake the kingdoms of the nations, making the world as a wilderness, destroying the cities thereof, and binding their captains, rulers, and kings in the bonds of a cruel, merciless, and degrading captivity; it opened not the house of the prisoners. In the hand of the Lord this city had been a golden cup that made all the earth drunken (Jer. li.); for the nations drank of her wine and were mad. This was the city that dwelt upon many waters and was abundant in treasures. This was the lady of kingdoms (Isaiah xlvii.) that said, "I shall be a lady for ever. . . . I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children." To this proud city Nebuchadnezzar carried the vessels of the house of the Lord, and put them in his temple at Babylon. Of this city the king's greatness had grown and reached unto heaven, and his dominion to the end of the earth, so that, contemplating with proud complacency the seat and centre of his royalty, magnificence, and power, the king said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"

Antiquity, unity, catholicity, sanctity, and great far-spreading and seemingly irresistible power and dominion belonged to this famous and far-renowned city. It was the mother and mistress of the empires of the world, and asserted for itself alike the prerogatives of supreme dominion and of supreme and ultimate arbitration among the principedoms and principalities, satrapies and governments of the whole earth. As if invested with almighty power and divine omniscience, infallibility and wisdom, it spurned all resistance, whether to its arms or to its behests and decrees. The mighty king had his vicegerents in every province, and received and gave information through his legates, ambassadors, and messengers. Might not this city—with its foundations so deeply and broadly laid; with its walls, towers, and bulwarks so strong and high; with its resources so ample and seemingly inexhaustible; with its captains and commanders so renowned by the splendours of military prowess and achievement; with its armies so multitudinous and invincible; with its sages, counsellors, and ministers of state, so wise, astute, so daring and so sagacious; and with a head and king before whose very image adoring millions fell prostrate—count on indefectible and inviolable perpetuity of dominion,—a perpetuity rivalling in duration the extent and widely spread range of its sovereignty and dominion over the tribes, nations, peoples, and potentates of the whole earth? Would not the shadow projected by it through the ages of time equal the shadow thrown by it across the far-sweeping arena of space? This was the proud hope, this the expectation, this the vain vision and delusive dream of its mighty monarch and of the princely men of his cabinet, court, and council. But there is a higher than the highest among men. There is a stronger than the strong, a wiser than the wise, a more ancient than the old, and one mightier far than the mightiest among men. And who may stand when he appeareth, when the Ancient of Days comes, when the judgment is set, and the officers and executioners of his just wrath and vengeance receive their commission to do his sharp and short work of judgment in the earth? The majestic and enthroned iniquity of Babylon, that had so long given forth

its iniquitous and blasphemous decrees, alike with the infallibility of divine wisdom and the irresistibility of divine and omnipotent power, culminated and reached its lofty climax of arrogance, daring, and blasphemy in a great convention and high festival of the nobles, lords, and princes, of the far-ruling kingdom. The occasion that was to illustrate and give signal demonstration of the grandeur, majesty, and glory of the great king of Babylon, was the divinely ordained occasion of signaling the sin, the impotence, the disgrace, feebleness, and ruin of all that but immediately before appeared to the eyes and in the view of millions so sacred, so powerful, so august, and so full of majesty. "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and shall have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." The learning of the wise men could not read the writing, nor could their wisdom give its mystic characters interpretation. The trouble of the king increased. His countenance was changed in him; and his lords were mute with astonishment. Is there

not an interpreter—one of a thousand? Daniel is called into the royal presence. Refusing offered gifts, honours, or preferments as if in recompense, he reads the writing, and gives the interpretation. Before doing this, as the prophet and minister of the living God, he refers in brief but comprehensive words to the dealings of God with Nebuchadnezzar, who had learned in the school of personal affliction and sore adversity that “the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and he appointeth over it whomsoever he will;” and addressing his words directly to the monarch before him, he says, “And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. . . . In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom.” (Dan. v.)

The doom pronounced by many prophets against the haughty and imperious city came suddenly and terribly upon it. Her broad walls were utterly broken down (Jer. li. 58), and her high gates were burnt with fire. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, so he overthrew Babylon. It is no more the habitation of living men. (Isaiah xiii.) The Arabian does not pitch his tent there; nor do the shepherds make their fold there. But the wild beasts of the desert lie there; the houses are full of doleful creatures; the owls dwell there, and the satyrs dance there. Hell

from beneath, or the realm of death, was moved for her to meet her; at her coming down the dead, even all the chief ones of the earth, were stirred up; and the kings of the nations, raised up from their thrones, said unto fallen Babylon, Art thou become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! Babylon is fallen! Babylon the great is fallen; and the gates of Hades have for ever closed themselves over all its power, pomp, wealth, grandeur, and glory. From the lofty and giddy pinnacles and heights of her towering ambition, pride, and blasphemy, she fell, as from a precipice, into the yawning and bottomless gulf of everlasting destruction, oblivion, and ruin. The festival of her splendour and pride was the signal of her overthrow, and rung the knell of her irretrievable destiny. For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and to the proud rolling waves of impiety, profanity, and blaspheming power, he says, "Hitherto shall ye come, and no further: here shall your proud waves be stayed." Thus did he speak the word, and Babylon the great of ancient time perished for ever, sinking as lead in the mighty waters of overwhelming ages. Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

THE NEW TESTAMENT BABYLON.

But as the ancient Jerusalem, with the visions of its glory, seen by the prophets and men of God, was typical of the New Jerusalem, and evangelical city, and kingdom of God, so the ancient Babylon was a type and prefigurement, an historically acted prophecy of the Babylon of modern times—the modern city of idols. And, as in the New Testament, we find minutely sketched and delineated the likeness and very framework, the constitution and glory of the city of God, with its name, "JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH;" so we find graphic and unmistakeable delineations of the rival city of Antichrist. Its name, its rise and growth, its character and works, its power, cruelty, and

doom, its end and ruin, are expressly given in the Scriptures of truth.

If, when turning from Ezekiel's vision of the glorious city of God to contemplate the actual and living reality as seen in the gospel, we were tempted at first to entertain feelings of a momentary painfulness excited by the contrast, we might be also tempted to cherish sentiments akin to contempt when reading of the beginnings of the rise of the modern Babylonian city of Antichrist. Conscious of the fact that God was with and among the faithful in Christ Jesus, and observing them as they went forth following the Lamb, conquering and to conquer,—and seeing superstition, craft, wickedness, ungodly power, chased and put to flight before the soldiers and army of the Prince of light, righteousness, and peace,—beholding the signs, wonders, and mighty deeds by which the Holy Ghost bore witness to the doctrine of Christ preached by the despised Galileans and by Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, we might be tempted to despise and think lightly of the workings of a mysterious power referred to in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. But experience ought to teach us that it is foolish and perilous to despise the first workings and initiatory beginnings whether of good or evil. The day of small things in either case may be followed by long years of prosperity, or dark and cloudy years of woe. Principles are never to be despised by wise men. For evil or for good, they have a most marvellous power of development, expansion, and growth. From hidden germs of truth and grace, at first unseen, and when seen despised by the world, grew that kingdom of God which in its developing and more manifested power has in every age awakened the hostility and encountered the determined and deadly opposition of the world. From scarcely observable or visible, because latent and hidden, workings has grown that stupendous system of baptized and enthroned iniquity, which for many long and dark ages has been, as it is at this hour, the most formidable adversary of the city of God, diffusing, wherever its shadow spreads, a most baleful and fatal influence on the minds, hearts, and morals of mankind,—an influence hostile and antagonistic to that of the

truth as it is in Jesus, and most ruinous to the souls of men. The modern Babylon attained its heights of power and ascendancy, its fully developed stature of gigantic iniquity and blasphemy, its full revelation of itself as the Antichrist and Man of Sin, only by slow and progressive steps, additions, and degrees. The germ of the system was in the carnal views of the people, not excluding the disciples themselves for a time, who expected Christ Jesus to set up a theocracy, or kingdom partly political and secular, and partly religious and spiritual—a kingdom, however, in which the secular honours, dignities, preferments, offices, and dominion should far surpass and entirely overshadow the duties and privileges purely religious and spiritual. It was this disappointed carnal expectation that crucified the Lord of Glory and put him to open shame. It is the same carnal and secular spirit working historically that has in the Papal or Roman system betrayed and crucified Christ through the long ages of that antichristian apostacy. For there is not a truth, a precept, a perfection, or prerogative of Christ, which it has not betrayed, crucified, or trampled in the dust, treating it as an unholy thing, and spitting upon it; while it has persecuted his faithful followers, and so shed their blood that it is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints of the Most High.

Speaking of the incipient workings of this system, the apostle Paul says, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." He contrasts it by name with "the mystery of godliness." He ascribes its hidden but subtle working to the malice and agency of Satan. It is "after the working of Satan." Now, Satan works by insinuating doubts, by propagating lies, and by colouring his falsehoods with an air and hue of plausibility, so that they may entice, beguile, and destroy the simple, and ensnare and seduce, if it were possible, the very elect. For as Christ's kingdom is grounded on truth and righteousness, Satan's is founded on falsehood, and is propagated and maintained by the deceivableness of unrighteousness.

In the apostolic age many things tended to check and hinder the too active growth and development of this system. The words and example of Christ, so fresh and vivid in the minds

of Christian men, tended to check and restrain the ambition to set up a worldly kingdom in his name and as by his authority. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight for me, that I should not be delivered to the Jews"—these words were yet remembered, and were well known. The cross and the scene at the crucifixion were, if I may so speak, full in the view of men; and Christ crucified was preached and presented, as by Paul to the Galatians, with the vividness not so much of a past fact as of a present reality. (Gal. iii. 1.) In the view of that cross, and beneath its shadow, men could not consciously dare to set up a secular and worldly kingdom under the assumed name of the Crucified One. To these things must be added the direct authority of apostolic teaching. But even under the shadow of the cross, and notwithstanding the authority of the apostles, the mystery of iniquity was secretly working. It found, however, its congenial sphere and soil in Rome, and there it began early to work with power—often hindered, often checked, rebuked, retarded, not only by the teaching and influence of godly and faithful Christian men, but also by the power civil, secular, military, and political of the Empire and Roman State. The fanaticism and ignorance of the multitudes, fanned into fierce fury by their superstition, acted on by the pagan priesthood, and in league with the imperial policy and power, hindered and interrupted for a time the development of this mystery of iniquity. At length, however, according to apostolic prophecy, the hindering causes were taken out of the way; and so dexterously cunning and crafty was the policy of a progressively debased and degenerating ecclesiasticism, that it contrived to gather strength to itself out of the increasing weakness of the civil power,—aliment to itself out of the impoverished and starved condition of the poor, while it allied to itself the ignorance and superstitions of the multitudes. The primitive and apostolic Roman presbyter developed into the Roman prelate, the prelate into the great primate, the primate into the pope, and the pope into a visible and audible god on earth. The successive stages are historically traceable till we come to the year 1870, when the Man of Sin—that wicked One, that Son of Perdition fore-announced

by Paul (2 Thess. ii.)—was revealed, sitting as God in the temple of God, declaring himself, as he had been voted by a few hundreds of his fellow-men, to be *ex officio* infallible. But the powers of the heavens seemed on that day to utter God's protest against the blasphemy of the decree of papal infallibility. And, in his holy providence, God, moving with steps of awful majesty, has since that time, in rapid and swift measures, been giving lessons of instructive judgments to emperors, kings, nations, and churches. For as certainly as when in high festival the king of Babylon saw the fingers of a man's hand come forth and write the mysterious words on the plaster of the wall over against the candlestick, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN; so certainly on the walls of St. Peter's in Rome did the finger of God write the words that doom to perdition the antichristian and blasphemous system of Romanism, when its visible head gave himself out before the universe to be none other than God on earth. "The Lord is a jealous God. His glory he will not give to another, nor his praise to graven images."

Next to the interest attaching itself to the study of the progressive evolution and history of true and spiritual Christianity, is that connected with the study of the historically developed Antichrist, or the mystic Babylon. The history of the former proves that the true and spiritual church has in every age been the pillar and ground of the truth—that is, that it has sought to present to the view of man, and maintain and vindicate, the truth given by the authority of God in Holy Scripture, unadulterated by any human admixtures, uncorrupted by the inventions and traditions of men. The history of the latter proves that it has historically so overlaid the truth and testimony of God by the fables and fictions, the falsehoods and plausibilities of men, that the truth divinely given has found its grave and sepulchre in Romanism. For it has robbed and plundered both Christ and his people of what is proper and peculiar to them; and it has transmuted the most spiritual of institutions into a huge carnal organization, where all is flesh and all is sensual, if not also truly devilish.

The mediatorship of Christ is made in it of no effect by the

countless number of those coadjutor mediators called saints, and more especially by the place and honours given to the thoughtful, unobtrusive, and devout mother of Jesus.

The prophetic office of Christ is virtually and practically superseded by the place given to antichristian dogmas, dogmas that contradict in express terms the authoritative teaching of the words of Jesus, the Great Prophet of the church.

The priestly office of Christ is done away with by the dignity and honours given to so-called priests, and especially to the supreme pontiff, and by the efficacy attributed to the mere words and acts of the priesthood. The sacrifice of Christ once offered, and once offered for all, is impiously caricatured in the sacrifice of the mass; and a principle, at once mechanical and material, displaces the spiritual agency, operation, and grace of the Holy Ghost.

The kingly office of Christ is dishonoured and brought into contempt by the blasphemous titles and prerogatives asserted for himself by the pope of Rome, and ascribed to him by millions of mankind.

The grace of God, the nature and ground of the righteousness by which man is justified and accepted before God, the doctrine of the regenerating and sanctifying operation of the Spirit, the perfection, sufficiency, and infallible authority of the Word of God in inspired Scripture, the nature of the kingdom of God, its ends, means, and designs, its discipline, worship, government, — all are corrupted, misrepresented, caricatured, and falsified in Romanism.

The people of Christ are all constituted in and by him a royal priesthood to offer spiritual service and sacrifices unto God. They are privileged all to be taught directly by the Word of Christ, their prophet; and they are as kings unto God, even the Father—a royal company of brethren, who are not permitted to call any man Master, or Rabbi, or Lord. For One is their Master, even Jesus.

In the city Babylon we find not only the grave of all the truth concerning God and his grace, concerning Christ and his people, but that city is itself a grand caricature and falsification of the kingdom and city of God. The city of God is spiritual,

and is constituted for spiritual ends. In it the temporal sword must not have place or work. But this city is secular, and constituted mainly for secular ends, and is maintained, defended, or propagated by secular means. Nay, it claims dominion and authority over all secular kingdoms. The city of God has a spiritual unity in the truth, by virtue of the union to Christ of all its citizens. The city Babylon has an external secular union, by virtue of the subjection of all its people to the authority of the pope. The city of God is holy by reason of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every citizen. The city Babylon professes to be holy, because only in it, and through its officials, does the Holy Ghost work. The city of God is catholic because, from its relation to Christ, it comprehends within it all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. The Babylonian city is catholic because its head is at Rome. The city of God is apostolic because founded on the ministry of apostles, and because its citizens continue in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and practice. The city Babylon is apostolic because it professes that its bishops have followed in lineal succession from Simon Peter—a monstrous historical lie. But in everything, in unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity, it is a secular and material system. It is of the earth earthy; and like all earthly things, instead of possessing indefectibility, it is liable to the law of corruption, and must pass away. In so far as it has been set up by the sword, the sword must strike it down. And in so far as it has been set up, framed, and consolidated by falsehood, the truth, through the power of the Eternal Spirit, must and will, as the breath from the mouth of God, utterly consume it. For taken away it must be, in order that the kingdom of Christ in spirit and in truth may fill the whole world. That system, as the Man of Sin, must also be the Son of perdition, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Of this, its ultimate and complete ruin and overthrow, recent grand events connected with the œcumenical council, and with the relative ascendancy in Europe of certain great powers, are harbingers and heralds. It may, indeed, be that, before the end comes, having

lost its hold on rulers and governments,—entering into league and alliance with the spirit of atheistic communism and superstitious democracy, which so luxuriantly grew under its shadow and fostering care—make one desperate effort to retrieve its lost prestige and dominion, or to drag down with it in its fall and engulf in its own abyss—its own prepared place—the whole framework of the political and social system of the world, in so far as that was shaped and modelled according to the principles of concordats with Rome, and fitted to sustain, buttress, and strengthen the decrepit rottenness of that vile and antichristian tyranny that has so long held in slavery the bodies, souls, and consciences of many nations of mankind.

There can be no question that the Roman Antichrist is responsible for almost all the persecution and bloodshed that have marked the history of the church since the downfall of the Roman Empire in the West. It is responsible too for almost all the infidelity and atheism that have prevailed during the same series of ages. And at this hour it is deeply significant that communism, political restlessness, materialism, and atheism prevail to any extent almost exclusively in those countries where Romanism has had its freest and fullest development, and in countries that were the grand props and mainstay of the entire system, and more especially of the temporal and political power, independence, and sovereignty of the pope. How long will it be till rulers and subjects hear the word of God saying unto them, “Be wise, O ye kings: be instructed, all ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” (Ps. ii.)

TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CITY BY PAUL.

In two passages in the writings of the apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, among whom the Man of Sin or the Antichrist was to be, and has been, developed, we have two

photographs of the antichristian apostacy. These agree in their main features and more marked lineaments. To them both is given the same name—apostacy from the faith or truth. And they are both alike distinguished by their main principles as after the working of Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. And in both cases they agree in opposition to the truth which is according to godliness. But the one is taken as it were at an earlier stage of the development of the Antichrist than the other. The passage in 1 Tim. iv. 1—8 is a photograph of the Romish church that might have been taken three hundred or more years ago, during the sitting of the council of Trent, or at a much earlier period in the history of the apostacy. The first general mark of the system is indicated in the words, “The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.” APOSTACY is on the front and forehead of the system. The “latter times,” as in the New Testament generally, signify the times of the gospel under the reign of the Messiah. And when it is said “the Spirit speaketh expressly” of this apostacy in the latter times, the apostle had in view some explicit and definite sentence or utterance of the Holy Spirit of inspiration in the Old Testament. It may be that the apostle had in view some such word as that in the seventh chapter of Daniel, at the twenty-fourth verse, where it is foretold that a power shall arise after ten others that shall be diverse from them, that the head of it shall “subdue three kings (is not the triple crown photographed here?), and he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” There can be no question that the papal system, with its head or power, is diverse from every system that existed and reigned before it in the world. The manner in which Christian, Jewish, and pagan elements were blended together into its composition as a religion, and the manner in which this mongrel coagulation of heterogeneous ingredients worked its way to political ascendancy and dominion,—so that to the pope was given precedency among mightiest emperors and monarchs,—mark and distinguish this

system from all that went before it, was contemporary with it, or that shall come after it. The conspicuous features, or the marked characteristics of this system, are these three:—*1st.* The speaking, uttering, or publishing and propagating words against the Most High, or against the true God, his character, nature, will, name, or the revelation which he has given of himself. Blasphemy is engraved in capital, conspicuous, and uncial letters on his brow or forehead. This is Romanism speaking through its head. *2nd.* The wearing out of the saints as by gradual oppression, making their burdens grievous and their lives bitter by hard bondage and service, till the saints should be almost stamped out—till true piety or godliness should cease to be found on earth. This undoubtedly is one of the historically outstanding features of Romanism. True godliness had almost been extinct when Zuinglius, Luther, Calvin, and the other reformers were raised up of God. And the stupendous efforts made at, and for a long time after, the Reformation to crush the saints of God, or to wear them out—efforts of craft, cunning, policy, and power—which deluged Europe with the blood of its best inhabitants and sons, are historically traceable to the wiles, plots, and machinations of the priests and princes of Romanism. Before God and man that system is answerable for the cruelties, murders, and bloodshedding that marked the face of every country where papal influence was predominant, and where men sought for freedom to worship God according to his Word. *3rd.* Another characteristic of the system, as portrayed by Daniel, is that this power should think, purpose, or determine to change times and laws. This to a marvellous extent it succeeded in doing in almost every country in the world. By its festivals and saints' days, by its kalendar, and by its concordats with the governments of the world, and more recently by its syllabus and decree of papal infallibility, it has expressed its intention, if its power were equal to its thought, wish, and will, to change times and laws,—the times and laws ordained of God, and the times and laws ordained by man. For it would supersede alike the authority of God Most High, and of those who in the magistracy are the vicegerents of God, and hold from him a rightful and inalien-

able authority in all matters civil and political for the good, order, and weal of human society. Daniel further states that this abnormal and monstrous power—this compound of debased religion and equally debased politics—should have dominion for a time and times and the dividing of time—that is, for a considerable term of centuries, at the end of which the dominion should be taken by deliberate deed from the power that had so misused it, and given into better and worthier hands—the people of the saints of the Most High. Are we not seeing these things passing in successive acts before us in the grandly developing drama in the theatre and outer platform of Providence in these latter days? 1866 and 1870 are black years in the Roman annals, but they are bright with splendour, though registered in blood, in the annals of Christianity and civil freedom.

If the apostle had the passage in Daniel in his view when he wrote the words concerning the apostacy, in his first letter to Timothy, it is interesting and important to mark how, after giving the general description of the latter-day apostacy, he exhibits its more prominent features. These, we shall find, agree with what Daniel had said, although they are presented in minuter and more specific forms and details.

In this photograph these are the lineaments of the great apostacy from the faith:—

1. A giving heed to seducing spirits.
2. A giving heed to doctrines of devils or demons.
3. The speaking of lies in hypocrisy.
4. The debasement or cauterization of moral sentiment.
5. The prohibition of marriage.
6. And the prohibition of meats.
7. The publishing and teaching of profane and silly fables.
8. The exalting of bodily exercise to the disparagement of godliness.

By these things the apostacy sketched in photographic outline by Paul identifies itself with that described by Daniel; for the voice of seducing spirits is raised against the words of the Most High, and doctrines of demons are substituted for the sure and wholesome doctrines of the Word of God. Lies, with

the intention of deceiving those to whom they are spoken, and not believed by those who retail them, distinguish the system. Conscience toward God or man is thus seen to be awanting, being seared as with a hot iron. Laws contrary to nature, and to God's revealed will, respecting marriage, meats, and, by consequence, concerning times and seasons,—laws unnatural, cruel, unjust, oppressive, enforced by dread anathemas, and, if possible, by penal infliction, by fine, mutilation, imprisonment, and death,—wear out the saints of the Most High. Fables and fictions profane and silly are taught by those who claim to be as the mouth of God. And bodily exercises, vigils, fasts, processions, crossings, dressings, genuflexions, pilgrimages, macerations, lacerations, penances are enjoined, commended, extolled to the infinite damage of godliness, and to the ruin of the souls of men. Fables and lies are substituted for truth; and mere mechanical and bodily works take the place of that faith, from which the abettors of this system have apostatized. This is the picture in Daniel as coloured to the life by Paul. Is there in all history any but one face or figure that answers to this likeness? And is not that figure found in antichristian Rome? As face answers to face in water, or in a mirror, so does the aspect, the moral physiognomy, and historically developed character of the Roman apostacy answer to the portraiture of the apostacy given both by Daniel and by Paul.

But there is another photograph of the same system given in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, in the second chapter. In this prophetic picture the whole system is seen in its completed development—in that form and stature, proportion and figure, which it should assume immediately before its downfall and doom. This gigantic stature of iniquity is to be attained before what is called by the apostle the day of Christ—that is, before the manifestation of his glory in the world, foretold by all the prophets,—the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Anointed; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the channels of the sea. Two things shall indicate the near approach of that day—namely,

first, the full development of the great apostacy, and following on that, with the suddenness and brightness of a lightning flash, the destruction of the antichristian dominion of the great apostacy. Here, as in the description in the letter to Timothy, the general term applied to the system is an apostacy, or, more definitely, as in the original, THE APOSTACY. The prefixed article is emphatic and demonstrative, It is not an ordinary apostacy that is indicated, but *that* apostacy spoken of expressly by the Spirit—*that* signal, great, and marvellous apostacy from the faith which shall precede the day of Christ. To this apostacy, in its matured and fully developed character, the apostle applies three epithets most suggestive and significant. These are, THAT MAN OF SIN; THAT SON OF PERDITION; THAT WICKED OR LAWLESS ONE. By these titles Antichrist is indicated in contrast with Christ, and in opposition to him. Christ Jesus is THAT JUST AND RIGHTEOUS ONE; THE SAVIOUR BRINGING SALVATION; THE FULFILLER OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS; THE PRINCE OF PEACE. The Antichrist is, as the Man of Sin, opposed to all righteousness; as the Son of Perdition, the cause of ruin to others, and doomed to destruction himself; and as that Wicked One, without or above law, changing times and laws, ungoverned by any law of God or just laws of man. Of these designations, the central one includes or comprehends the two others. In the Son of Perdition are embodied, as in unity, the sinfulness of the Man of Sin and the lawlessness of that wicked one. The system is one, and it shall, as one, perish or answer to its name, the Son of Perdition. But this name identifies it with Judas Iscariot (see John xvii.) in sin and lawlessness and in destiny. As such, it is excluded and excommunicated from the true church of God; and yet, like Judas, it attains to its culmination in its iniquity by its position within what professes to be the house, temple, or church of God.

The sin or lawlessness of this system is seen—

1. In its opposing and exalting itself above all that is called God, or that is worship.
2. In taking God's seat, place, or throne in God's house or temple.

3. In giving itself out as God, or showing itself that its head is God.

These are the perfected features in fully developed Antichrist or the apostacy. The processes by which it at length attains to this bad pre-eminence—to this unrivalled height and acme of developed wickedness—is indicated, and another name or designation is in this view given to it. It is called **THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY**. It is in its nature mysterious, and fitted to excite the wonder of mankind. It is especially a mystery in its manner of iniquitous working, and in its power and dominion over men. It is a sacrament of iniquity, wickedness, or lawlessness. But this mystery or arcanum—this dark, secret, and hidden thing—shall at length be unveiled or fully revealed; and its true though hidden character of sin, perdition, and wickedness shall be made manifest.

The system is marked in its working by the following characteristics:—

1. By secrecy in its more recondite operations, and in the processes by which it gains its ends.

2. By persistency against whatever withstands or would hinder its attaining that for which it works.

3. Its progressive approaches and its general working is after the manner of Satan. Subtilty, fraud, and guile mark its deceptive advances, working, and progress.

4. To this it adds all power, and signs, and false and lying wonders or miracles.

5. Every art of deception will be practised by it—“All deceivableness of unrighteousness.”

6. Its dupes and victims shall be chiefly found among those that will not receive the truth in the love of it; but, having pleasure in unrighteousness, prefer the lie palmed upon them by this mysterious system of iniquity.

Two things are to be noted concerning it. Its victims are judicially dealt with by God. Because they receive not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, God gives them over to their own way, to strong delusion, to believe the lie of the Man of Sin. This is his judgment on them in this world; and in the world to come they suffer the doom of un-

believers according to the word, "He that believeth not shall be damned." The system itself in its maturity, or when the measure of its iniquity 'is full, and the longsuffering of God can bear no longer, is doomed to certain, swift, and irremediable destruction and ruin—"Whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness (or epiphany and clear shining as in the day) of his appearing." By terrible things in righteousness God has been, and now is, answering the prayers of his saints, and fulfilling his own words of faithful promise.

If with this photograph of the apostacy, sent by Paul to the Thessalonians, we take what is said in the eleventh chapter of Daniel's book, as well as the picture of the apostacy already considered, the conviction will be irresistible that all these descriptions are designed to indicate to us the one great power of Antichrist which should grow to its full proportions and measure of iniquity in the latter days. In the eleventh chapter Daniel describes a power or king that "shall do according to his will; who shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." These are among the marked features and characteristics of this extraordinary power. There is exhibited to view a power which shall gain a far-reaching and long continued dominion by practising the acts of deception, supported by physical or secular power. So great will be its prestige, and so deceitful and mysterious its manner of working, that, notwithstanding its disregard of the laws and authority of God and man, and notwithstanding its public blasphemy of God Most High, and its stupendous arrogance in taking to itself the place of manifested divinity above all that is called God—above princes and kings and emperors, and even above God himself as revealed on earth—not only shall ignorant multitudes bow down before it, but many of understanding shall fall, being deceived and destroyed by its subtle and

Satanic working and influence. The sketch given by Paul agrees in its main features with that given by Daniel. And as in the former picture, so here it must be confessed that there has been and there is only one historic power, one actual system among men which corresponds with the portraiture here given. That system has its seat at Rome. There the baptized and enthroned iniquity reigns in full development. And "many of understanding" in this country, by falling prostrate at the feet of Rome, on whose head is a crown of blasphemy, illustrate the truth of the prophetic statements of the Old and New Testaments, of Daniel and of Paul. The prophetic photograph given of old by Daniel, and again taken in the spirit by the apostle Paul, gives a lifelike and full-sized picture or portrait of the great anti-christian and Roman apostacy, as it stands self-revealed and declared by the œcumenical council that was convened in 1869 and in July, 1870, pronounced through its head and speaker the decree of papal infallibility. The imposture, arrogance, iniquity of the system, as *THE MAN OF SIN*, seem to have attained their full height and stature of blasphemy by that crowning act of wickedness. It remains to be seen how, on the theatre of his holy and avenging providence acting in human history, the Most High God will deal with the stupendous infamy and wickedness in demonstrating that it is "*THE SON OF PERDITION*," that must, like his predecessor of that name, Judas Iscariot, go "*to his own place.*"

PORTRAITURE OR PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN.

But in the New Testament there is a yet more lifelike and fully drawn and painted portraiture of the sublime abomination. The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to John, and by him written when, as he tells us, he "was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," consists of a declaration of what he had seen "in the Spirit," or in the "visions of God." Some of these things had relation to condition of the churches

when John lived and wrote—"the things which are;" and, some of them were more immediately related to the condition of the church and of the world in the future, or after John should retire to his rest—"the things which shall be hereafter." The book is at once didactic and prophetic. It is throughout symbolical in the form in which its truths are expressed. And this fact misapprehended has been the occasion of interpretations of its contents, and of deductions and inferences from its statements, presenting both in aspect and in amount a collection or medley of such a heterogeneous kind—a conglomeration of opinions not unlike to chaos on a small or epitomized scale. This collected mass of opinions finds no analogy whatever in any conglomerate stratum to which geologists can refer or point. It is equalled only by the altogether fanatical or imperious dogmatism of very many of those who have oppressed the world, not with what John saw in the visions of God, but with what, according to these writers, John *must* or *ought* to have seen. If history had been written after the method of these interpreters, we should have not a record of what has occurred, but a narrative of events that *must* or *ought* to have taken place. But the progress of events holds on its way after its own fashion and method. And in it man is both actor and recorder. Natural history presents its facts, and they remain facts apart altogether from psychological theories and theories physiological,—theories that teach how God ought to have proceeded in the historic genesis of the universe, had he called Dr. Darwin and others to his council, and acted according to their suggestions and advice. The Bible keeps its ground and place, notwithstanding the assaults of open enemies and the weaknesses and follies of professed friends. The apostle Paul knew the doctrine of the atonement, and of the righteousness of faith, and the true doctrine of the Christian life long before a modern pedagogue took him to school and offered to teach him the correct doctrine on these topics, and many others,—the doctrine of which Paul, the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, seems to have been ignorant, but which he *must and ought* to have taught had he been a disciple, not of the late Dr. Arnold, of

Rugby, but of Dr. Matthew Arnold, the professor of "Light and Sweetness" as the panacea for the sins, sorrows, and miseries of mankind. Each one has and vends his *nostrum*, his *meum modicum*, of light and sweetness, or of darkness and bitterness, for the correction of the apostle's views of justification by faith. But interpreters should remember that they are here only interpreters, not masters in arts, or doctors either in laws, philosophy, or divinity. They are poor scholars at their lessons under the teaching of the apostle speaking with the authority and inguiled by the inspiration of Jesus Christ the Son of God. And the special blessing attached to the reader of John's book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is not withheld, notwithstanding the indignity and dishonour done to it from earliest times down to the present age and Dr. Cumming.

"The exegetical study of this book," writes one,—speaking with the authority given by ripest and sanctified learning, by skilful and long practised exercise in the study and interpretation of Scripture, blended with a modesty, reverence, and spiritual sympathy for truth rarely found among scholars and theologians,—“ would require a peculiar preparatory provision for carrying it on with success. The first thing that presents itself to view is the state of the text, which has suffered more in the course of transcription than any other portion of the New Testament, as is evident from the extent to which varieties of reading have accumulated, according to the registration of them in the critical editions in which they are collected. Another consideration is the peculiarity of the style, which, regarded merely in a grammatical point of view, exhibits, in the frequency with which irregularities of construction occur, a remarkable contrast to the style of the gospel and the other writings of John. This difference Moses Stuart ascribes to the deeper and more thorough infusion of the Hebrew element in the book of the Revelation than in the subsequent writings of the apostle, for he assigns to it an earlier date, prior at least to the death of the Emperor Nero; respecting whom he adopts the theory of Benary of Berlin that he was the “beast” (*θηριον*, chap. xiii. 18), whose number was 666, or, according to another

reading, as ancient as the time of Irenæus, 616, presenting, indeed, the very striking coincidence that the numerical value of the letters of the emperor's name and title, when expressed in Hebrew characters, will be either the one number or the other, just as written with or without the letter *n*, or Hebrew sign for 50, as representing either the Latin form Nero, or the Greek Nerōn. But the above-mentioned peculiarity seems to be perfectly consistent with the later date, of which the book gives so marked an impression; for, in addition to the poetical spirit which breathes throughout the whole, it may have arisen from the renewed study of the prophetic books of the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, both in the Hebrew original and in the Greek translation; for between the visions recorded in these three books, and some, at least, of those with which the Revelation abounds, the resemblance is so great as to give evident proof that it was the result of design. In both cases the result is that of a series of impressions that were made in vision on the minds of the respective seers; not that there were objects *in rerum natura* exactly corresponding to the descriptions that are given. The expression, "I was in Spirit," or, "in the Spirit," occurring in Rev. i. 10; iv. 2, denote the transition through which John passed from his ordinary state of the usual exercise of the external senses to that in which his mind was prepared for receiving the impressions of which he gives an account. A similar expression is employed by Ezekiel when he speaks of the hand of the Lord being upon him (i. 3), and falling upon him (viii. 1)." *

Were these, and a few more principles and considerations of a similar kind, kept in view, men should have shown, not merely the negative wisdom of John Calvin, who, although having commented on almost all the other books of Scripture, refrained from treating of the book of the Revelation of John, but a negative wisdom of a different kind, that, namely, of refraining from touching or treating the contents of this book in a spirit of wild and unchastened ignorance, fancifulness, and

* *Exegetical Study.* By Alexander Black, D.D., late Professor, New College, Edinburgh.

dogmatism. For by this method a prejudice has been raised and propagated against the study of a book, to meditation in which a very special blessing is annexed by the Lord himself. By the conduct of the sons of Eli, men were driven in abhorrence from the very altar and worship of God; and by the conduct of too many expositors and would-be interpreters of this book, devout men have been driven away from the study of it, and from meditation in its wonderful revelations and discoveries of the glory of Christ in the government of the church and the world, as that is indicated in the pages of this prophetic or pre-historical record of events. For the prophecies here, as throughout the Scriptures, are records of events written in cypher, symbol, or hieroglyphic, before the events themselves became, or shall become, actual and historical. This is the character of the book of Revelation in regard to the things that were, and that are, and that shall be, just as with respect to the *past*, or what occurred in the pre-Adamite creation and preparation of the world for man, this is the form of the language in the first chapter of Genesis. It is the record of what was given, not in dark speeches, but in the visions of God, as seen by the inspired writers.

For our guidance here, the Lord himself has given us an example and specimen of the hermeneutical principle to be applied, or of the key to be used, in interpreting the symbols and visions of this sublime and mysterious book. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks *is this*: The seven stars are the angels—messengers or official representatives—of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Rev. i. 30.) Things, persons, and events are throughout the book represented by suitable signs and symbols. The right reading and interpretation of these will give, in competent hands, the right reading and interpretation of the will of the Head of the church, and of that will acted out, or in its relation to the events and systems as revealed in this book.

In the seventeenth chapter of this book there is a very remarkable vision, and accompanying, or added to it, is the

interpretation of it by the revealing angel. In the vision, the figure or form of a woman is seen, seated "on a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead is "a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF FORNICATORS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

This is one vision. Parallel to it, take for instruction the message to the church of Thyatira (ii. 18—29), as if expressly penned and designed to meet the case which should emerge in the history of the church and of the world, when this woman should in a system be actually manifested.

"To the angel (or official representative) of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have somewhat against thee, that thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my

works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

My reason for taking this message with the vision is simply this, that as the message to each of the seven churches is for the use of all the churches till the end of time represented by these, and also to every man that hath ears to hear; and that the message to each church was not only suited to that particular church at the time when John wrote to it, but was divinely and expressly adapted to states of the church that should occur in the historical evolution of events, till the end and consummation of all things. In my view, the word to each church is not merely a didactic, hortative, convicting, or commendatory word, but it is also as in type strictly a prophetic word. Nay, I believe that the full force of the message or messages is only attained when it is seen applied to the historical state and actual condition of the church in the ages of time. The interpretation that proceeds on the idea of finding in any one of the seven churches an exact counterpart or reflection of its state described in the message of the Lord to that church, has always been and must always be unsatisfactory; just as the interpretation of the Psalms of David, proceeding on the idea that the statements within them find full and adequate explanation when regarded in relation to David in his life, spiritual state, sufferings, or glory, must be unsatisfactory. David in the Spirit, or the Spirit by the mouth of David, gave expression to what finds full verification and actuality only in Christ and his kingdom. And John in the Spirit, or the Spirit by John, has given expression, in the messages to the seven churches which were in Asia, to what finds full realization only in the dealings of the Lord with the churches actually existing in the historical progress of his kingdom in this world. As the angel of each church was the official representative of the church with which his name is associated or identified, so the seven churches are themselves to be regarded

as officially representing the historical phases and conditions of the church of Christ in all ages and countries. And any given message may be appropriate to any given church or state of the church, according to the internal condition or outward relations and circumstances of the church. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Now, in the message to the church at Thyatira, a state of things of a very marked character is supposed or indicated. It is a state in the Christian church historically parallel to a state in the ancient church when the influence and power, the corrupting influence and murderous power of Jezebel were predominant and in the ascendancy in Israel. Israel had before the time of Jezebel greatly and grievously departed from the Lord and corrupted the doctrine and ordinances of divine worship. The doctrine of the priests and the morals of the people were alike vitiated and debased. Paganism, in belief and practice, had been substituted for the pure doctrine and spiritual worship of the living God. Idols were set up and worshipped. State policy, expediency, craft, and power, were all in league to set up, promote, and maintain, the idolatrous system, with its calves and altars in Dan and Bethel. But it was in the time of Ahab that the iniquity of Israel advanced with stately strides towards its goal of wickedness. By alliance with Jezebel, the daughter of the heathen king Ethbaal of the Sidonians, Ahab far outwent even his apostate predecessor Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, in making Israel to sin. For he, no doubt because of his unholy alliance with the heathen house of Ethbaal, and acting under the soft, stealthy, and devilish influence of his wife Jezebel, "went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And he made a grove; and he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." (1 Kings xvi.)

This new corrupting power in Israel showed itself in the vitiated doctrine concerning God and his worship that was taught in Israel; in the general prevalence of idolatry,—an

idolatry practised at the court; inculcated on the people; supported by state endowments; and propagated by bands of hireling priests and lying prophets; in vitiation and depravity of individual, domestic, social, and national morality—the spiritual adultery being the mother of fornication; in the murderous cruelty practised against the servants and worshippers of the true God, in the attempt to suppress the true religion, and to establish on its ruins the idolatrous system that was countenanced at court, and legalized and enforced by the statutes of Jezebel, and the power that sprung from her alliance to the Israelitish king Ahab. The arts of seduction, the influence of that woman Jezebel, and the arm of the supreme civil power were all put forth to suppress truth and to establish idolatry.

Even to Jezebel and to Ahab God gave warning upon warning and space to repent, but Jezebel repented not. God at length hewed down the infamous woman, and the system of which she was the head and impersonation. The just and avenging sword of his' holy providence smote that system, leaving of it neither root nor branch. Yet, though it thus befell Israel, there was a time when the Lord could commend Israel's charity and service, Israel's faith and patience. But that time had long passed away. It could be spoken of only as a thing of the past, in such language as, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was then holiness unto the Lord." (Jer. ii.) Israel went after idols, and sinned more and more; so that *the Lord could no longer bear*, because of the evil of their doings, and because of the abominations which they committed. (Jer. xlv. 22.) Jezebel's end was as ignominious as her life had been flagitious. There is a tragic and pictorial grandeur in the graphic and vivid narrative of her death, as related in the simple records of the kings of Israel and Judah. Finding that a new and fiery power had risen against her, and had already entered within the walls of her city Jezreel, and that the streets were resounding beneath the solid and rapid steps of armed men, and the thundering of rolling chariots driven by charioteers more fierce than their high-spirited war horses, while the echoing din of

the citizens shouting welcome to Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi of Ramoth-Gilead, sounded her death knell, she entered into her fortress or Vatican palace, and having tried to renew her youthful appearance by calling to her aid the Madame Rachel of her court and her ladies of the bedchamber and wardrobe, she covered and concealed the wrinkles and blotches of her face as by enamelling, and the unsightliness of her eyes by painting them, and the baldness of her scalp by a magnificent tiara or head-dress, she looked out at a window, and, in language of haughtiness, malignity, impotence, and anger, she cried, with the feebleness of a toothless imbecility, and with the venom of a dying snake or fury, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?"—an utterance as of injured innocence, the cry so often repeated by long successful villany become in its turn the victim of a just and avenging retribution. Hereditary right! Prescriptive right! The divine right of enthroned and anointed iniquity! Anathema! anathema! anathema! But Jehu, driving furiously through the city gate, was not made of stuff to be cowed by the spiteful word of a painted hag, having on her head a tiara, and her face painted as became a mother of harlotry. Lifting up his face to the window, he shouted, "Who is on my side? Who? And there looked out to him two or three chamberlains. And Jehu said to them, Throw her down. So they threw her down. And some of the blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trod her under foot. And when he had come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: and the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say that this is Jezebel." (2 Kings ix.) Such was Jezebel, and such was her end.

Turn now again to the scene and picture presented in the

seventeenth chapter of the book before us, in the Revelation of John. A power is there portrayed that exhibits itself in the figure of a woman. That woman is seated on a *thērion*, or beast of power and prey. This union is in itself suggestive of a system or power in which are combined feminine delicacy and intrigue,—a power of soft insinuation and blandishment, with the opposite qualities of strength and devouring ferocity, as if the dove in appearance were the vulture in reality and in habit and practice. It is, as the Lord hath warned us, the ravening wolf coming among the flock of God in sheep's clothing, and with a soft and gentle bleating, that shall give place at length to the bark and wild yell of the hyena, or fierce and untameable beast of prey.

The monstrous beast, or *thērion*, was of a scarlet colour, and gilded over with gold and precious stones, and purple—emblems of its riches and splendour and pomp of power. It was as if written all over with names of blasphemy, and it had seven heads and ten horns. These are the symbols and emblems of its great dominion and power. These heads and horns represent kings and governments springing out of the mother power, or the beast on which the woman sits; and they, in league, or bound by concordat engagements to the central power, give to it their united strength in maintaining the dominion of the enthroned woman.

The woman wears the purple robe of empire or supreme dominion, and the scarlet colour of grandeur, force, and blood. And she is gilded over with gold, and decked and set out with precious stones and pearls—emblems of her splendour, ambition, and resources. In her hand is a cup of gold, with a mixture of strange wine, filled with abominations and fornication. She is the soliciting temptress and procuress of the mighty ones, governments, kings, and nations of the world. She recommends herself to them by her power, by her splendour, by her blandishment. Seated on her throne in the high places of the world, she calls to passengers who go right on their ways, and hearing her bland and enticing voice, the simple, silly, ignorant, and foolish, as well as many of understanding, many sense-loving and sensuous—charmed by music—dazzled

by the glare of gold, jewels, pearls, and precious stones—and regaled, though besotted, by that whoredom and wine that take away the heart—forgetting what befell, in ancient poetic story, how those enchanted by the syren song drank of the cup of Circe, and were changed into swine—these, as if bewitched by the arts of the mighty sorceress, first dally with the enchantress, play like Puseyites and Ritualists with her toys, and deck themselves with bits of her drapery and attire, touch, as it were, the rim of her golden cup, till at length, as if intoxicated by the aroma of the mixture moving itself curiously, they take large draughts of it, and fall into the bosom of this mother of fornication, and to their amazement and horror, when it is too late, they find themselves clasped as with arms of adamant in her hateful and loathsome embrace. “For her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell.” And many mighty ones, men of renown and brave heroes, has she first lured within her coils, and then hurled headlong into death and perdition. I have seen the delicate gossamer filaments of the spider’s web, almost invisible to quick-sighted vision, spread over the expanded beauty of the passion flower, and have seen the unwary fly alight on the petal, as if to examine its tints of loveliness, when, in less than a moment, the spider, that lay hid within the folds of the flower concealed by its beauty, darted on its victim, and carried it to his little palace or den. And seeing this, I thought of the cunning and Satanic craft that can weave a web for the catching and destroying of the souls of men over the very cross of Christ; while the deceiver and destroyer, unsuspected in that place, hides his deceit and his murderousness behind the cross on which Jesus the Son of God was put to death, and in dying prayed for his executioners, saying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

The name of this woman, so different from the name of the city of God and the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ that we shudder even in bringing the two into that proximity needed in order to exhibit the contrast between them, is upon her forehead. As God set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should slay him, so God has branded on the brow of this

woman, this seductive and destroying power, in characters legible to the most illiterate, her name, that seeing it they may flee from the voice of the enchantress, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF FORNICATORS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. It is a vivid writing of what Paul had said when he described the apostacy as THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY ; of what Daniel, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets foretold concerning the Babylon of the latter days. It is as Babylon, and as the mother of abominations, the realization of what is said throughout the Old Testament and the New of the arts and wickedness of the world-wide depravity that should mark the reign of the antichristian and apostate power in the times of the gospel. But, as if half had not been told, the apostle John tells us that he saw this woman drunken—intoxicated. What a picture! She is unabashed, bold, and impudent. She talks deliriously. She is drunken, but with what wine? Not with that from the cup in her hand. That is for others. She herself has quaffed largely and drunk deeply of another cup. Her cry has been for blood. Blood! blood! Blood till the world become a solitude, and then she thinks there will be peace. But while heretics—that is, those who drink not of the cup that she has mixed, and eat not of her dainties—live there can be no peace. Therefore she must have blood. And drunken with blood, she wears among her ornaments and jewels, medals commemorative of deeds of blood the most cruel and appalling that have been recorded in the history of the human race.

Her power to slay, kill, and destroy has been obtained by her relation to the beast, on which she is seen to sit. The union in the pope of the spiritual and political or temporal power gave him power to do as he pleased within his own territory or patrimony. And the testimony of history is that the most arbitrary, tyrannical, and oppressive government in the world is that over which the self-styled vicar of Christ and successor of Peter presided. When shall the full story be told? and the full revelation of the horrid cruelties of that system be made? And the union, by concordat or otherwise, of Romanism with the civil power in every country where it

gained ascendancy, enabled it to hand over to the arm of the civil power those whom it condemned as heretics. Heresy and high treason were crimes of equal enormity,—the former, indeed, the more heinous of the two. As well might Pilate's act, in publicly washing his hands when he delivered up Christ Jesus to the Jews to be crucified, be held to relieve him of his responsibility or to extenuate his crime, as the assertion of so many advocates and apologists of historical Romanism, that, because churchmen as churchmen did not persecute or put to death those condemned or suspected of heresy, they are not chargeable with the guilt and criminality of these wicked and bloody deeds that have soaked and drenched the earth opening to receive the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, shed by those professing to act in the name of Jesus, religion, and God. A more plausible defence may be given of Pilate. Nay, the Lord Jesus, when standing at his tribunal, enunciated the principle on which the Roman priesthood, the Roman officials, including priests, prelates, cardinals, and popes, must be held more guilty, before God and man, of all the blood shed in Europe for the sake of religion since the papal system attained its ascendancy and dominion, than the civil and political governments that acted merely at the instigation of the priesthood or pope. For thus it is written: "The Jews said unto Pilate, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: THEREFORE HE THAT DELIVERED ME UNTO THEE HATH THE GREATER SIN." (John xix. 7—11.) The sin of Judas and the Jews, including the chief priests, rulers, scribes of the people, and lawyers, who delivered Jesus to Pilate, and clamorously demanded that he should be crucified, was greater even than the sin of Pilate, the representative of the political and civil power of the world. And the sin of the antichristian

priesthood, prelates, cardinals, and popes, in delivering over heretics to the civil power, and in demanding that they be put to death, is greater even than that of the civil governments and magistrates who have given effect to the bloody wishes and frantic and ungodly and inhuman demand and cry for the execution and death by cruel torture on the rack, or by faggot and fire, of the innocent, meek, and heroic servants of Jesus Christ. And as their turpitude and guilt, so shall their plagues be in the day of vengeance and divine visitation, when God shall arise to execute judgment for all the meek of the earth. "Because they remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy, and slew the broken in heart, they shall not obtain mercy. As they loved cursing, so it shall come unto them. As they delighted not in blessing, so it shall be far from them. As they clothed themselves with cursing as with their garments, so it shall come unto them, and be within them like water, and like oil in their bones. It shall be unto them as the garments which cover them, and for girdles with which they shall be girdled continually." (Psalm cix.)

As if to remove every shadow of a doubt whether this mysterious, blasphemous, corrupting power, intoxicated with blood, was indeed the great Roman Catholic apostacy,—at the sight of which, though seen only in the visions of God, John "wondered with great admiration," the revealing angel gives to John, and through him to the church of God, the interpretation of the mystery of the woman and of the *thērion*, or beast that carried her. Jezebel is revealed; and by her alliance to the house of Ahab, the supreme civil power, the secret of her domination and of her great cruelty is declared. The centre of this power of this unnatural, abnormal, and monstrous combination of seductive craft and of ferocious force, of unbridled licentiousness with a professed zeal for God, is at Rome, the seven-hilled city. The beast that in John's time raged and ruled from Rome over the whole earth, goes down to the abyss or bottomless pit of perdition. But in vision, as in fact, there arises another beast, or *thērion*, diverse from the former, and on it sits the mother of prostitution. The ecclesiastical head springs out of the decayed empire of Rome, and

gathering to itself all the elements of power that marked the fallen system of imperialism, and mixing these with all the dregs of degenerate Judaism, paganism, and Christianity, and by concordats and confederacies, leagues and alliances, with the governments of the earth, this effeminate and mongrel power, this prodigy of lewdness and religion, leaning on the sword, attains to a dominion of a kind altogether different from that of the fallen empire; and over a range and extent far surpassing that over which the eagles of imperial Rome ever flew. "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Over these the woman reigns by the influence of her so-called spiritual doctrine and teaching, and by the force and power of the *thērion*, or beast. In every priest these two elements are combined. He is a mixed person of politics and religion. He carries about with him a sword on each thigh. On the right the temporal sword, on the left the spiritual sword; and by the use of either, or of both, as occasion may require, he maintains and propagates the cause of mother church, of that church of Jezebel and Baal which gives itself out to be the mother and mistress of all churches. The effeminaey and the cruel tyranny of the whole system,—its wiles, intrigues, conspiracies, frauds, pollutions, abominations,—its falsehoods,—its arrogance,—its bloody cruelty,—its transmuting of truth, even the truth of God, into a lie,—its legalizing of iniquity,—its stupendousness of imposture,—its crimes against God and against man, with its name of blasphemy, reveal it in the light of God to be none other than the masterpiece of Satanic ingenuity, malignity, and cruelty; the culmination and acme of the guile, policy, and power of the god of this world to dazzle and blindfold the eyes of men, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into their minds, and they should be saved. If the incarnation of the Son of God—that by obedience unto death he might bring in everlasting righteousness and bestow eternal life on guilty men who accept the proffered gift as absolutely of grace—be the great mystery of godliness, surely Romanism, as the incarnation of deceit, spiritual corruption, malignity, and force, is the great mystery

of iniquity, the grand exhibition of Satanic wisdom, guile, and power, embodied in Antichrist, the Man of Sin, and set over against that which is the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth in the name of Christ crucified, the only begotten Son of God.

But her judgment is at hand. For as Elijah, that prophet of fire, followed by Elisha taken from the peaceful plough, foretold the doom of Jezebel; so the men of the reformation time, men of fire, having indeed the tongue of fire from God, followed by men in more peaceful times, have for these three centuries and a half been raising the cry and shouting through the streets of the mystic and great city, saying, Babylon must perish; and anticipating the event, antedating or foredating it, they have been crying mightily with strong voices, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils or demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the power of her delicacies." (Rev. xviii. 2, 3.) This has been the voice of reformers at and since the reformation, and their voice has been heard over the world: the whole earth has been lightened with the glory of the truth proclaimed, although the darkness in many countries comprehended not and received not the glorious light, and many people were deaf to the voice that proclaimed the message of God.

"I gave her," says the Lord Jesus, "space to repent, but she repented not." Since the time of the Council of Trent, or rather since the day that, in 1517, Martin Luther, in the face of the world, nailed his theses on the church door of Wittenberg down to the time of the œcumenical council that assembled in Rome on the 8th of December, 1869, the voice of God speaking by his servants has been heard from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Notwithstanding this voice of mercy and of doom, the progress of

the iniquity has not been arrested. It has rather gathered volume, intensity, and force. From the hour that it accepted the services of Loyola, with his secret society, blasphemously prostituting the name of Jesus by calling itself the "Society of Jesus," although properly named a "Society of Assassins," under oath to deceive, betray, intrigue, forswear, and put to death, as occasion may require, it proclaimed itself Antichrist. That society, in some form or other, is now the moving, ruling, and prompting principle of Roman Catholicism. Ultramontanism, now dominant in the decree of papal infallibility and in the dogmas of the syllabus, is nothing more or less than Jesuitism or diabolicism enthroned and incarnate. "She repented not." And "now they sin more and more." A fatal necessity of sinning, expressed in "non possumus," marks the development of Romanism in these days in which we live. The "non possumus" is a declaration that they cannot retrace their steps to reason and to the commandments of God. Retreat is barred and blocked up by infallible decrees in past ages; and the grand fortress of the tridentine council frowns scowlingly and defiantly on any return towards Bible doctrine and truth. To stand still is an impossibility. The mind of man,—the minds of the million are moving. Mary must be honoured: the immaculate conception is formally pronounced. The pope gives his vote and voice; and if Mary the mother of Jesus was not born immaculate, she ought to have been, and all the faithful must take the papal word for it that she must have been born without taint of original corruption or sin. This will have as much effect on the fact in question as a vote taken and given some weeks ago at a meeting in a provincial town will have on the question submitted for consideration and voice. It was put to the meeting whether there was an endless punishment, called hell, in store for the wicked and the ungodly. It was voted and carried by a majority, or as my memory is not very clear about it, unanimously, *nemine contradicente*, that hell is not and cannot be, must not and ought not to be: we wish it not to be; we will it not to be; we vote it not to be; therefore it must not, cannot, ought not to be! This is as valid in argu-

ment in Dundee as the papal decree, concerning the immaculate conception, given at Rome on the 8th of December, 1854. Neither the vote in the provincial town, nor the vote and decree in the metropolis of Antichrist will or can effect the matter voted upon or decreed. Galileo may, under terror of the high excommunication, declare his conviction that the earth is stationary; nevertheless, apart from papal dogma, or weak admission by an unconvinced astronomer, the quiet earth, alike indifferent to the decrees of popes and to the vacillating weakness of astronomers, held on the even tenor of its way, moving with an unerring precision and infallible certainty that might be envied by the Pope, and with an unvacillating steadiness to be envied by the persecuted and timid philosopher. Nor will the vote of six hundred prelates or church dignitaries, all frail and ignorant and fallible and sinful mortals, avail to alter the frailty or fallibility or sinfulness of Pio Nono, or any other pope, so as to transmute fallibility into infallibility. Fallible units multiplied can only produce a fallible sum-total. But the decree concerning Mary, and the place given to her in the system, has an effect not anticipated by the Pope. It has revealed the Popish Church or system as answering in one of its main features to the portraiture of it in the book of the Revelation. Its effeminacy is publicly and *de jure* decreed by itself. As a woman, it is seen seated on the *thērion* or beast of secular power. And the decree of papal infallibility has brought into conspicuous view the grand feature of the system, as claiming and avowing for itself visible godhead and divinity, with the honours and prerogatives inseparable from God, revealed or revealing himself with infallible truth and authority. Thus the system stands self-confessed and self-condemned, for it glories in its shame and blasphemy, as giving itself out to be God in the temple of God. In this it verifies the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century of the Christian era it repeats on a grand scale the sin of our first parents. For, like them, listening to the voice of Satan,—speaking through the ultramontane or Jesuit section of the huge and diabolical organization,—it has aspired to be as God, knowing good and

evil, an ambition to be above restraint or restriction of law, even from God, ambition to ascend to the seat of the Most High: the visible head of the Roman Catholic Church, believing himself, and confirmed in his belief by the suffrages of his assembled lords, deputies, councillors, princes, and prelates, that his eyes should be wondrously opened to know both good and evil,—if he should taste of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, if he should be decreed and voted infallible, and if he should decree and declare himself so to be,—he took of the fruit and did eat, and lo ! his nakedness, shame, and ruin were revealed. For the thunders and lightnings of heaven, echoed by the thunders of German cannon and the blazing fires and wild havoc of war, summoned the guilty system to the tribunal of God ; while the same God, by his mighty hand, smote down with resistless force the pride and power of that empire which had been the mainstay of this visible godhead and compound of blood, blasphemy, and fornication. But the end is not yet. Nevertheless, it is moving like a planet approaching its perihelion, with a speed accelerated as it nears the goal. Backward the “ non possumus ” cannot go. Stationary it cannot rest. Forward, downward, headlong it must go, propelled by all its crimes and sins against God and man, and driven by the just and righteous judgment of God into the vortex of that abyss prepared and ordained for it, as for everything that worketh abomination and that maketh a lie. And as already a gallant nation and people,—and many nations and people,—have been dragged into degradation and misery by this system of baptized and seductive abomination, so in her ultimate downfall she will involve in a common ruin, and drag down into a common bottomless pit with her, dynasties, powers, principedoms, and peoples, who were partakers of her sins, partners in her crimes, and the advocates and abettors of her arrogant and blasphemous pretensions, decrees, and deeds. Her children, even her eldest and best beloved sons, must go into captivity or perish by the sword. For this is the voice and decree of the Most High, “ Because her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities, reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double accord-

ing to her works: in the cup that she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine: and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." In one hour her so great riches come to nought; in one hour is she made desolate. For by her sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. Her merchants, shipmasters, sailors, and companies in ships, and all that trade by sea. Her priests, her monks, her nuns, her sisterhoods, her societies, her brotherhoods in their monasteries, nunneries, stalls, offices, chaplaincies, her bishops *in partibus*, her prelates, her legates, her orders, her archbishops, cardinals, secretaries, doctors, professors, and princes, shall cast dust on their heads, and cry, weeping and wailing, saying, alas! alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Shame and confusion of face, grief, lamentation, wailing, and sorrow, shall take the place of joy, pride, revelry, of the pipe, the harp, the viol, the organ, the dulcimer, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music. For a stone hewn without hands out of the mountain, has fallen on the image, crushed it, and ground to powder its head of gold, its shoulders of silver, its loins of brass, and its feet and toes of iron. Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets! For God hath avenged you on her. "And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation and glory, and honour and power, unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication; and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

That that is determined must be done. "For, saith the Lord, my purpose shall stand." Great Babylon, the Antichrist, must be taken out of the way. Meanwhile there is silence in

the political heavens of the world, but it must continue only for a very short time. Let the pause or temporary cessation in the process of grand and terrible events of these latter times be rightly turned to account. One great nation is gathering itself up again, by efforts at internal organization, by appeals to patriotism, national sensitiveness, and to the records of the past in its victories and defeats, by straining every sinew, nerve, and muscle, to consolidate an army that may, in the day of battle, stand and fall, or advance to victory and conquest, and not turn back in ignominious flight, or surrender at discretion; and, elastic and volatile and buoyant, the national sentiment is responding to the appeals made to it. Wealth is poured in floods into the national treasury and exchequer; while priests fan into flame the ignorance and fanaticism of a gay peasantry in the fair fields of France. Hope has not yet given place to despair in the heart, either of the mysterious man-God imprisoned in the Vatican, or taken care of there at the cost of a liberated Italy, with his maintenance, bed, board, and dignity guaranteed; or in the heart of that other no less mysterious man, the exile a second time, who at Chishelhurst finds an asylum in this highly favoured peaceful though guilty country. Secret societies are at work all over the world that have their central seat of inspiring and prompting intrigue and direction within the Vatican, in the Privy Chamber and Council of the Pope. An invisible net-work of diabolical societies is thrown over universal Christendom. The Jezebel has painted her face, and put on her head dress, and looks out from her palace windows. But an ominous sight is that which meets her eye in the far extending horizon. And ominous sounds fall on her ear. The sights are those of nations and kingdoms astir seeking freedom and truth; and the sounds are those of mighty men and multitudes, the confused noise of warriors, horsemen, and charioteers who, long ago, goaded as to madness by the fraud and violence, by the wiles and wickedness of that woman Jezebel, are now coursing, in full speed, the executioners of the vengeance of a righteous God and of deceived humanity, to cast her from her seat, to tear her in pieces, and burn her with fire—the fire

kindled by justice, freedom, and truth. Other societies, imitating the seeresy and universality of the secret societies of the Roman ecclesiastics, are at work in the interests of materialism, infidelity, and atheism. They are, at once, the mimiery of and recoil from the secret societies of the Jesuits, and other orders and brotherhoods, that have been fostered under the shadow of the papacy, and have requited that power by devoting themselves in soul and body to its service. And in the near, or not far distant future, it would be no marvel to find and see three great forces at work in a grand war and terrible campaign—a war and campaign fought with havoc and disaster to every system, society, institution, government, dominion, or power that is not grounded on the firm and eternal rock of impregnable and unmovable truth. For Rome, having lost her hold on the governments and monarchs, emperors, and kings of the world will, in all probability, and with certainty, attempt to remount her seat on the beast, by using as her stirrup the ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism of the democracy. This will be one of the great powers: Rome in league with the democracy against constitutional and constituted civil authority. The internationale, or communist army, will in this war, for a time, in all probability, make common cause with the democracy led by the priesthood, in the vain hope of adjusting their matters of disagreement when all lawful authority has been overthrown and laid in ruins. The most monstrous and anomalous flag that ever waved in battle will be the flag bearing an atheistic and communist device, interwoven with the colours of the mother of fornicators. And yet even this is not a thing at all incredible; for atheism, as it this day prevails in the world, is the monstrous progeny by recoil from the atheism practised, though not professed, in every Roman Catholic Chapel or Cathedral, from St. Peter's in Rome to the remotest extremes of the earth. The war-cry of battle for a common liberty may rally round a common standard atheists in theory and atheists in practice. Time will show. But the Lord reigneth.

Another company in this war consists of those that love liberty, and believe that it will follow truth, as the shadow

attends the substance. These are the men who believe in God, but do not believe in the Pope. Who believe in God's word, and not in the materialistic doctrines of communistic Comptism. Faith in God will sustain them. They will everywhere appear as the friends and guardians of order and liberty. They may be hard pressed, but their cause must be victorious. For although numbers may be against them: though craft, policy, and Satanic power and subtlety may be in league for their extermination, the Lamb, their leader, shall overcome. For he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful. "Let us, therefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence, and holy fear; for our God is a consuming fire." Amen.

THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH

IN THESE LATTER DAYS.

A SERMON FOR THE TIMES.

Preached in Glasgow, on the 31st December, 1865.



“The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”—1 Tim. iii. 16.



“THESE things,” says the apostle in the verse preceding the text, “write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Without taking up the diverse criticisms that have been given of this passage, I may state that I regard the terms “house of God,” “church of the living God,” “pillar and ground of the truth,” as all referring to the one object—the company of those called into the fellowship of Christ; and accordingly the letter of the apostle may be regarded as a manual or directory for Timothy, and, after him, for all who exercise the office of the gospel ministry in the church of Christ. In this letter, and in the other epistles commonly called pastoral, ministers are instructed in the main heads and principles of their duty as holding office under Christ in his house or church. We here learn what should be the right aim, spirit, and conduct of the ministers of the church of

Christ; and we must take our instructions respecting these matters not from men, not from the charges of bishops, not from the exhortations of presbyteries, but from the Lord himself, speaking to us by his servant and apostle.

Before entering on the subject of discourse a word or two may be necessary to bring out the signification of the terms here employed.

EXPOSITION OF THE TERMS OF THE TEXT.

The term "house of God" is adopted from Old Testament usage. In the Old Testament it denotes, first, the temple, and, secondarily, the people. Here, and in other places of the New Testament, it denotes the company of those who profess faith in Christ Jesus, and subjection to him as Head over all things to his church. Of this house he is the builder; in this house he has deposited his oracles; here he dwells; of it and in it he bears exclusive and supreme rule—"The Son over his own house;" and this he protects by his almighty power, so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "Whose house are we?" says the apostle to the Hebrews, speaking in the name of all who hold the beginning of their confidence in Christ steadfast unto the end. The term church, or *ecclesia*, signifies a company called together and separate from others; and as here used it signifies those who have been called and separated by the Lord as a people diverse from all others—a holy people sanctified unto God. This is the church of the living God as distinguished from the synagogues of Satan and of idols. This is that church or flock of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.) Of it in the Scriptures of truth glorious things are spoken,—spoken respecting its constitution, history, functions, privileges, work, and prospects. And in the text, the terms "pillar and ground of the truth" used to describe it, are among the glorious things spoken of the church of the living God. These terms have been the occasion of much acrimonious controversy. The Roman synagogue claims these words as exclusively appropriate to it; and no wonder, for it claims to be the one and holy Catholic Church. But that church, instead of being the

pillar and ground of truth, has for many ages been the pillar and ground of error, heresy, and idolatry. It has become the house of idols, the abode of every unclean thing—of that which defileth and worketh abomination, and frameth lies. While excommunicating all others, it is itself excommunicated from the godly fellowship of the apostles, martyrs, and saints of the living God. By the truth we are to understand the uncorrupt doctrine of inspired Scripture—the whole revelation or counsel of God. And when of this the church is said to be the pillar and ground, we are taught that two great functions of the church is to maintain and to publish the whole doctrine which is according to godliness—the whole truth as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The metaphorical or figurative language here used does not imply and does not teach that the church is greater than the truth. It does not teach that the church is the foundation or ground of the truth in the sense that the Romanists, and all Romanizing interpreters would force and extort from the words—namely, that the church is endowed with infallibility, and that it is the church which gives to the truth its authority. The text is far from giving ground for any such perverse and unscriptural dogmas. A document containing statements of weightiest moment may be affixed to a pillar, and that document may be said to be supported by the pillar. But it would be as reasonable to say, that because the pillar supported, held up, and gave publicity to the document, it was possessed of the distinguishing excellence of the document published, as it is to say that the church, because it is ordained for maintaining and publishing the truth of God according to holy Scriptures, is possessed of the infallibility and authority which belong to the truth as given by inspiration of God. The church, instead of being greater than the truth, is, in so far as it is the church of the living God, the creature or creation of the truth; and instead of supporting the truth in the sense of giving the truth authority,—the authority because of which it is to be believed,—it derives its being and support from the truth, and can speak with authority only when it speaks according to the truth. It is not, “Thus saith the church,” that binds the conscience;

but, "Thus saith the Lord." It is sufficient honour for the church that it should be put in trust with the oracles of God; that it should be ordained to preserve, defend, and propagate the truth. This honour has been given it of God. But let not the church of the living God aspire to sit as God in the temple of God. Let it not usurp the authority over conscience, which belongs to the truth and to God—to God speaking in the truth.

Having made these remarks, I proceed to treat of some of the duties or functions of the church, more specially with relation to the times in which we live—the present time. Guided by the text and context, I shall, in dependence on the gracious and promised aid and enlightenment of the Spirit, endeavour to indicate, first of all, certain features or characteristics of the present age, which it has in common with all former ages or times; and with respect to these I shall indicate what are some of the duties of the church. And I shall also select certain features or characteristics of the present time,—characteristics that are, to some extent, peculiar to it, as distinguished from former ages; and with respect to these, I shall endeavour to state what appears to me to be the duty of the church,—a duty in keeping with its functions as "the pillar and ground of the truth."

ORDINARY ASPECTS AND DUTIES.

I. Of the characteristics of this age in common with former ages, and of the duty of the church.

On this part of my subject I need say but a very few words. With all the spread of knowledge,—with all the advancement in science, literature, art, and philosophy, that marks the age,—with all the applications of mechanical science to the useful arts,—with all that telegraphs and railways and steamboats have done for facilitating intercourse between man and man between the remotest parts of the earth, man is still ignorant of God,—man is still at a distance from God,—man is still alienated from God in his heart and by wicked works. The carnal mind is still enmity against God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. "The world still lieth," as the apostle John

expressively says, "in the wicked one." This cannot be denied by any observer of the social and moral aspects of the world. And, as in former ages, so in the present, men have experimented largely with a view to remove, mitigate, or eradicate the evils under which the world groans. Statesmen and politicians, aided by adepts in social and political economy, have laboured with this view. But the selfishness, and avarice, and ambition, and cruel passions of human nature assert their power, and baffle the wisdom of the most sagacious, and defy the power of the strong. Old Adam is too mighty for these antagonists. War, immorality, sensuality, and idolatry assert their unholy dominion, after the wisdom of diplomatists and the experience of ripest statesmen and philosophers and economists have been called to devise effective remedies and counteractives. Wars still proceed from lusts in the members. Within the heart the war is planned; within it are cast the mighty artillery; within it are forged the thunderbolts wielded by the bloody hands of warriors. Even free trade has not inaugurated the universal and abiding age of peace. Out of the heart still proceed evil thoughts,—thoughts that defile and destroy. The immorality of the world holds on in its foul course, after all that ethical and economic science may have demonstrated respecting the injurious tendency, as well as moral deformity of vice. Men still love pleasure more than God. Wealth, luxury, and ambition have still, as of old, their myriads of devotees. The cry still is, as in former ages, Who will show us any good? The world has not yet discovered the secret and true nature of its disease. It is still ignorant of the true remedy. It feels its wants; but in its blindness it knows not that God who can alone supply its need, and knows not where to find that God. Hence men go to broken cisterns,—cisterns that can hold no water. They go from mountain to hill, in all the spheres and regions of pleasure, literature, art, science, business, philosophy, and superstition, seeking rest,—seeking what the good is for man,—but not finding it. Men still worship, as of old, before the idols of the den, tribe, forum, and theatre. But the worshipper fails to discover truth,—the truth which his soul so urgently needs.

THE TRUTH TO BE MANIFESTED.

Now, with reference to these aspects of the age, what, let me ask, is the duty of the church? Is it not to be true to its function as the pillar and ground of the truth? Is it not to uphold that truth so prominently and conspicuously that the world may see it? For "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." The whole truth of God must be published to the world. But while the church is to testify to the truth, and to exhibit it in its totality, keeping nothing back and adding nothing, yet that truth is to be displayed from the grand centre and ground of revelation—the cross of Jesus Christ. This is evidently what the apostle had in view when, after the words of the text, he said, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." The grand truth, the truth of all the truths of God—is the truth concerning Jesus Christ—the truth as it is in Jesus. It is the cross that harmonizes and brings all the parts of the truth into unity. Let us, therefore, as true churchmen, survey the whole compass and range of the truth from this grand centre. And, standing here, let the church lift aloud its voice to an ignorant, guilty, and bewildered age, and say, Look unto Jesus, and be saved; behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Why will ye die? Would you be wise? Here is the wisdom of God. Would you be strong to overcome the wicked one? Here is the power of God unto salvation. Would you have peace and purity? Here is the peace of God. Here is the blood that sprinkled on the heart cleanses it from all pollution. Here, in a word, is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. Great, indeed, is the mystery of godliness. It is a mystery that unveils all other mysteries,—that throws light on the mysteries of sin and suffering, on all the darkness in which humanity is enveloped, on all the miseries to which

man, fallen man, is subjected. It is a mystery that solves all problems otherwise insoluble. It answers the most anxious questions of the human mind; it meets the yearnings of the human breast; it satisfies the wants, the deepest wants, of the human soul. It raises man from guilt to righteousness. It brings him near to God. It sanctifies, saves, glorifies the humble one, who by faith looks toward it, and sees in it the character, perfections, will, justice, goodness, love, and grace of God, who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The first and grand function of the church is to make fully known, in season and out of season, the gospel of the grace of God,—the manifold wisdom of God in the mystery of the cross. For this is the only antidote to the deadly disease of sin, guilt, and pollution, under which the world is perishing. Let the church so exhibit the cross—the whole truth as it is in Jesus—that it shall meet the eye of princes and peasants, of statesmen, philosophers, scholars, philanthropists, and all men, so that the words of Christ may be fulfilled, “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” This is what the present age needs. This is what the commission of Christ requires of his church. The gospel of old, the everlasting gospel, is what the age needs, is what the church is bound to give to it. Let us not then instead of bread offer a stone, instead of fish a serpent, or instead of an egg let us not offer a scorpion. The gospel,—the pure unadulterated gospel—not harangues, or essays, or orations, or theories, or speculations about it and about it—the gospel itself, spoken with great plainness of speech, is what the men of this age need. Woe is unto us therefore—woe unto the church, if we preach not the gospel. Let the church—let the ministers of the church, give themselves therefore to prayer and the ministry of the word; and let our preaching be like that of Paul, “Not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” that “the faith” of the hearers “may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

GAINSAYERS TO BE CONVICTED.

This age, like former ages, has its own prophets who flatter it and withstand the truth. In every age of the world there have been false prophets—men ignorant of the truth—men hostile to the truth—men who, from corrupt and base motives, perverted the truth, and led away disciples after them. In this respect it cannot be denied that the times in which we live may bear comparison with any former age. The apostles of all kinds of error and heresy are moving to and fro on the face of the earth. Nor need we wonder much at this. Because of this we are forewarned in the words of Paul,—words that follow immediately after what he says concerning the mystery of godliness,—he thus writes, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving to them which believe and know the truth.” There were apostates of the class described in these words in the apostolic age. Special mention is made in the first chapter of two such—namely, Hymenæus and Alexander, who, concerning the faith, had made shipwreck. Hymenæus is again mentioned in the second epistle, with Philetus, and classed among those who concerning the truth had erred. Special mention is also made, in the second epistle, of Alexander, the copper-smith, who greatly withstood the apostle’s words, and did him much evil. In his letter to Titus, the apostle speaks of many unruly and vain talkers whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake. But, perhaps, one of the most complete and full statements concerning this matter is that contained in the third chapter of the second epistle of Timothy. (See 2 Tim. iii. *passim*.) According to these statements we are informed that even in the apostolic age the mystery of iniquity began to work in opposition to the mystery of godliness. Now what in that age was the function of the church in

relation to these things? It was not only the declaring of the gospel, or of the full-orbed harmonious truth. It was more than this. It was the vindication and defence of that truth. It was the exposure of the nature, tendencies, and results of the errors and heresies that were opposed to the truth. Among the qualifications for a bishop or elder in the church, Paul requires this, that he be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. (Tit. i. 9.) And instead of that timorousness and mealy-mouthedness that distinguish not a few sincere friends of truth in the present age, Paul requires of Timothy that he should most plainly remind his hearers of the express testimonies of the Spirit concerning the apostates of the latter days. This was part of Timothy's business and proper work in the house of God; and in discharging it he would approve himself to God—"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ." Paul himself was "set for the defence," as well as the publication "of the gospel." (Philip. i. 17.) And Jude, giving a reason for his writing his epistle, says, "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God unto lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." The church of the apostolic age, in so far as it fulfilled its duties to Christ, and met the requirements of that time, published the truth as it is in Jesus, and at the same time vindicated and defended that truth against adversaries. And so in every subsequent age; and so now also. If the church of the living God is to exercise its proper functions, and to discharge the weighty duties devolved on it by the commission of Christ, it must, to a very considerable extent, be a church militant and controversial. If silken and gossamer sentiment take the place of sound principle and bold vindication of the truth,—if effeminacy take the place of vigorous Christian manliness,—if the men building Jerusalem do not use both the trowel and the sword, it will fare ill with the church and with the world.

No Christian can love controversy for its own sake. It is not a wholesome or healthy state of mind that delights in controversy,—that, salamander-like, lives in the fire. But no more is it a sound, healthy, or vigorous state of mind that shrinks back from battle when the walls, gates, foundations, and palaces of truth are assailed or threatened by the enemy. The church in this age, as in every age, should copy Christ's example and obey his injunctions. But his example is that of the Meek and Lowly One, gently instructing those who submitted to be taught, and at the same time reasoning and disputing with the gainsayers. The great preacher and great controversialist was Christ. And he has enjoined that his church in all ages should imitate his example. Let the church carry the spirit of her Master and Head into controversy; but let her not shrink from controversy. "The fighting times" of the church are not counted by any special decades of years. The church advances, age after age, as an army following its leader and commander. Some special period may be a fighting time, because of some battle for truth; but so long as the church is passing through a land haunted by enemies, she must exhibit on her banner the olive branch, and beside it the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Or, to change the figures, the church is appointed to labour in this world for God. The harvest is to be gathered. The labourers in this harvest field are surrounded all the day by hostile bands; and in order that they may defend themselves when assailed, and drive back their assailants, these labourers must bear arms. For the work must go on till the great harvest be gathered in. It must go on. But that it may go on prosperously the workmen must wear the sword while they ply the sickle; or the sickle itself must be used as a sword when the enemies fall upon the peaceful labourers. Those who talk or preach in these days against controversy—as if it necessarily implied, on the part of the church, the indulgence of a spirit of "unfairness, uncharitableness, wrath, malice, and evil-speaking"—seem to me to mistake the character of the times in which we live, and to misunderstand the nature of the work to which the church is called. If, at any age in the history of the church, it was the duty of the friends of truth

not only to declare the whole truth, to exhibit the influence of that truth on the character and life, and to call into harmonious and combined operation all the gifts and powers committed to the church, but also to vindicate and defend the truth against adversaries, and to expose dangerous and destructive heresies, —this is certainly the duty of the church in the present day. “Is not my word as a fire, and as the hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces?” We do not undervalue the practical methods recommended by some; we cannot too much adopt and prosecute them. But, at the same time, we must not undervalue the method recommended by the apostle—the doctrinal method, by which, while the believers are edified, gainsayers are put to silence. To preach peace, peace in these days, and to pipe simple sentimental lays to thoughtful hearts is, it seems to me, to stop our ears and to shut our eyes to all the signs of the times; it is to suffer the foundations of the temple to be undermined, and the bulwarks of Zion to be thrown down, while we idly dream of charity, and sing sweetly of the pleasures of peace. But not after that method can the church be true and loyal to her King and faithful to the trust committed to her. Every Christian loves peace; but no Christian must let his love of peace govern his love of truth. That the church and the world may at length come to enjoy a lasting peace, the church must now contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. The defence of the truth is in these days a duty to which the church of Christ is imperatively called. For, apart from the interests of the world in this matter, the existence, the self-preservation of the church demands, and that most urgently, that the sound of the trumpet be heard throughout all lands, to rally the friends of truth, the faithful in Christ Jesus, round the standard of the cross, and beneath the banner of the Lamb.

PRAYERFUL WORK.

In keeping with what has been already said, it may be added here that, as in former ages, so in the present time, the

state of the world calls for self-denying, prayerful, and vigorous work on the part of the church. There can be no question that much of the energy that ought to have been expended in the extension and planting of the church at home and abroad, among Jews and Gentiles, has been expended on small wars within the church itself. A working church must fight the common foe. It must fight while it works. But an idle church must also fight; only in this case every man's hand must be against a brother. This is a penalty annexed to indolence within the church. The tendency of such a church is not so much to die of self-indulgence, as to die by self-extermination. Intestine war must in an idle church take the place of the aggressive war of a working church. Such intestine strife is not only most unseemly, but it is most dangerous. How significant is the word, "And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land," after the statement, "There was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle." The unseemly strife weakened and endangered the common cause of both Abram and Lot. So has it often been in the history of the church. And if the church should within itself avoid controversy in the present day, it must fill its thoughts and hands with work. And if there is a mind to the work, the work is easily found; for "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." The field is the world. Never, perhaps, in all time, was the field so open as now. The marching orders given to the church are "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The world is crying from north, south, east, and west, "Come and help us." The voice of the Lord is sounding "Go; for lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end." Surely it is time that all true friends of Christ should cease from warring against each other, and should war only against the common foe, and should enter a common league and confederacy to subjugate the whole world to Christ. When we look to one side of the subject, we magnify the office of the church as designed for the publication of the truth. When we look to another side of the subject, we magnify the office of the church as set for the exposure of error and the defence of the truth.

And when we look again to the same subject as it is seen from a different or seemingly different side, we are disposed to magnify the office of the church as ordained to change the moral wilderness of this world into a beauty and fertility like the garden of Eden. Some may think that these aspects of the functions of the church are contrary the one to the other. But they are rather like the colours in light—complementary of each other. The first duty of the church includes all its other duties. It is to publish the truth. But truth must vindicate itself against error and gainsayers. Controversy is unavoidable. And if the truth be published, then those who believe in it must go and spread and plant that truth throughout the world. The Christian church is essentially and apostolically a missionary church,—a grand missionary society or institute. “As my Father sent me, so send I you.” Some men, looking to one side of the ecclesiastical prism, may be disposed to magnify the exposition and faithful preaching of the word. They cannot exaggerate this. Some may be disposed, looking at a second side, to magnify the importance of controversy in defence of truth and in the exposure of error. They can hardly exaggerate the importance of this. Others, looking to the third side, may be inclined to magnify the missionary functions of the church. But with respect to these can there be exaggeration? Can myriads on myriads be seen by them to perish without God, without Christ, without hope, and while they hear the voice of Christ saying, “Go, preach the gospel to every creature?” Can they, seeing and hearing all this, exaggerate the functions and offices or duties of the church as the missionary institute of the Lord Jesus Christ? Go, if you think so, and stand by the death-bed of your fellow, and hear him say, “I have been a heavy sinner; it is getting dark, mother; give me your hand.” Go, if you think so, and see the multitudes in heathendom, who live and die, believing the fables and lies of aged superstitions and idolatries. Go, if you think so, and take your place in the most melancholy spot on earth, the Jews’ place of wailing, beneath the shadow of that temple where once their fathers worshipped. Look upon Zion, a wilderness; Jerusalem, a desolation. Look on that thick veil of unbelief

on the face of the Jew. Strive to enter into his heart, and tell me if the church is not called at this day to show mercy to the Jew, and to strive to bring in the fulness of the Gentiles? Let the church of God therefore be up and doing. Let the church work "while it is day; for the night cometh in which no man can work." And in its working, let it learn the grand lesson taught to the now venerable missionary Dr. Duff, on his first and outward voyage to India, when the only thing saved from the wreck, from amidst all his scientific instruments and apparatus was the Bible,—the Bible that is the grand instrument for the enlightenment, conviction, and conversion of the world.

"O spread it, then, and let it circulate
Through every vein of all the empire,
That where Britain's power is felt,
Mankind may feel God's mercy too."

SPECIAL ASPECTS AND DUTIES.

II. Of some of the special and distinguishing characteristics of this age, and the duty of the church.

It is to the religious rather than the scientific and political aspects and phenomena of this age that our attention must be directed. But, from the intimate relation of all forms of thought, life, and action to each other, and because of their reciprocal influence, we must not ignore all phenomena but those that can be tabulated and classed as directly religious. The human constitution consists of body as well as of mind; and, because of the relation subsisting between these two factors in human nature, no mental as no bodily physiology can be complete or satisfactory that does not note and take into consideration the influence, on the one hand, of the body on the mind, and, on the other hand, the influence of the mind on the body. As in the case of the individual man, so in the case of the life and action of the race of mankind, evolved in the phenomena of history, two agencies or factors are at work. These may be called and classified as physical agencies, and as moral and religious agencies. Intense action of the one class

will powerfully modify the condition and operations of the other. And, similarly, the languor or inaction of either class will tell on the condition of the other. Nothing in this world,—no change or event, can be isolated from causes and consequences. Nothing exists for itself. It is part of a grand and stupendous system by which the Most High rules over his creatures, and executes his will, purpose, and decrees. When we survey the phenomena of the age in which we live, we cannot but contrast this age, in its physical changes, with former times. This is an era of grand events, and, at the same time, an epoch distinguished by the rapidity with which these great changes are or have been evolved.

Within the last fifty—within the last five years, there have been accumulated and condensed events of a magnitude, grandeur, and importance perhaps unequalled in any period of the same duration since the world began. The surprise and the admiration excited by these events seem, however, lost by the bewilderment occasioned by their number, variety, and rapid successiveness. Inventions in art, improvements and discoveries in science, and the application to the purposes of life of these varied inventions and discoveries, have, within the last fifty years, almost entirely changed many of the modes and usages of life. The facility and rapidity of transit and of intercommunication between the most distant parts of the world may be taken as a general index of the present state of the world in contrast with previous states. By the steamboat the traveller is rapidly transferred from America to any part of Europe,—from Europe to any part of the world. The great ocean has really become the highway of the nations. In the railway carriage, on the iron way on land, we are carried at a speed that, to the men of a past age, would have seemed miraculous or incredible. No part of the civilized world can now be said to be far removed from any other part. Distance has not been annihilated; but it has, by rapidity of transit, been abbreviated: and men are hurrying to and fro. Inhabitants of the most distant parts are passing and repassing, visiting and revisiting, the most remote places, without even pausing to wonder at the fact.

But the wonders of the electric telegraph surpass even those of the steamboat or the rail. Man converses with man at the distance of many thousands of miles almost as familiarly and easily as with his next neighbour. Knowledge is running to and fro. The great globe is in course of being girdled with a new zone—the zone of intelligence ; so that the antipodes, separated by twelve thousand miles, can soon inquire, as fellow-townsmen, respecting the health of their fellows at the opposite extremes of the earth. Friendly salutations or hostile messages may soon be transmitted at a moment's notice, and in almost a momentary period, between the citizens of Edinburgh and those of Pekin, or between those of New York and the men of Patagonia. This is, indeed, the age of iron, of steam, and of electricity. These agencies were in existence before our time, but their power was latent. The iron of our island lay peacefully beside its black combustible coal neighbour. The steam of the world passed off into condensed air, and the electricity was diffused and latent. It was reserved for this age to bring all these latent powers into action, and to wield and concentrate them, so that they are made serviceable to the purposes of commerce, science, and war, for the convenience of man's estate. Corresponding with the agency called into operation have been the effects on the social, commercial, and military movements of the world. All these have received a mighty impulse of acceleration. War and commerce have assumed a new aspect. All things are moving fast all over the world. Opinions are quickly formed, transmitted, exchanged, renounced. Men take less than the wonted time to inquire, to deliberate, to act. The literature most acceptable to the reader is that which costs the least amount of thought, labour, or reflection. The literature of the world seems to be fast assimilating itself to the literature of the rail or the electric telegraph. Haste, haste, haste, is on our means of transit, and on our opinions on literature and action.

High pressure is on the writer, traveller, and reader. Men generally are living fast, too fast. Body and mind are alike under high pressure. The fever of the brain and the sweat of the brow bear witness to the pressure on body and mind. The

moral pulsations of society seem dangerously, if not feverishly rapid. And their occasional and mysterious intermissions serve to increase the fears, forebodings, and alarms of those who thoughtfully observe and reflect upon the moral aspect and actions of mankind. For, what is the end sought after in all this haste, and under all this pressure? Is it goodness, or is it not rather greatness? Is it wisdom, or is it not rather wealth? Is it not in too many cases a haste and urgency to grasp the objects of a criminal ambition? It is surely to be desired that, in times like these, men would force themselves to the exercise and labour of slow and deliberate reflection. This would, on the whole, expedite the moral progress of men, while, at the same time, it would reinforce their wasted moral strength and resources.

The impression left by the recent events through which the nations of Europe have passed is remarkable, as illustrative of the most significant aspect of this age. These events are historical; and, like all historical events, they are the antecedents of events to come, but the impression left by those historical events is not the ordinary impression left by history. We regard them not as much as they are past and accomplished,—we refuse to give them anything like historical isolation,—we look upon them rather as they are precursive and prospective. They seem to leave a prophetic, rather than a historical impression. While they pass before us, we are impatient; while we read the narrative of them, we are dissatisfied. We ask, before they are completed, before the narrative is ended, “What next?” The events are themselves incomplete, they are without their sequence, and hence the question, “What next?” The attention, accordingly, of diplomatists, statesmen, merchants, and, in fact, of all thinking men, is at this moment directed to the future, rather than to the past. We have obtained what has been called an honourable peace; but we are afraid to disband our troops and to lay down our arms. We retain, as it were, by the force of an indestructible instinct, the attitude of war, even after the proclamation of peace. The future, with its omens projected from the unfinished events of the past few years, commands our

attention and awakens our concern. We resemble less those who are advancing along an even path, or who are climbing an ascent, than those who are urged down a declivity. The insecurity of our position, the uncertainty respecting the immediate future, express themselves in a wistful inquisitiveness at the future, and by a tremulous and expectant attitude of observation. The things coming, or about to come, on the earth, are the objects that command attention, from the highest and the proudest monarch and the meanest subject.

But this expectant attitude, this forward looking of men, does not proceed from the insignificance of the recent past; it is rather the direct and necessary consequence, the logical sequence of mind drawn from these events. There is a pause or suspension in the procession of the events; but the instincts of our nature refuse to admit a pause in the logic of the events. The mind hastens to complete by anticipation in thought what is not yet completed in reality. Hence the question, What next? Our position also and relation to those events tend to beget the same question. Had the same events occurred at the distance of a century from our time, or at any period of less activity, they would have attracted more attention, and they would have left a more lasting impression; but, occurring in the midst of a series remarkable for its rapid and grand evolution,—occurring at a period when all the powers in society are working with a force and velocity unpredecated, we, who are carried forward with the rapid movement of those events, lose sight of them in the immediate past through our fearful apprehensiveness about the immediate future.

DUTY NOT A MERE NEGATION.

What, then, it may now be asked, is the duty of the church, having respect to these physical characteristics of the age? It is not, certainly, to set itself in an attitude of antagonism to the mind of the age, which is actively and intensely working in all these rapid changes. It is not, certainly, to pronounce anathema on what may at first sight appear to be inconsistent

with facts hitherto believed to be real and true. It is not, certainly, the duty of the church to shut its eyes and to be blind to the changes that are so rapidly transpiring. These events are to be interpreted as fulfilling the counsels and purposes of God. They are parts of those forces ministerial to the kingdom of Messiah, by which old and inveterate superstitions are being overthrown, and by which the way of the Lord is being prepared,—the way for the universal diffusion of the gospel, and for the bringing in of the glory of the latter day. The church of Rome may, indeed, dread the effects to be wrought by the discoveries of science in these days. For it is founded upon ignorance. It may denounce anathema against nations who throw off the yoke of despotism, and against *savans*, who do not read the hieroglyphics of nature through the spectacles of the priesthood. But the church of Christ, founded upon knowledge, and ordained to publish and defend the truth, need not look with jealous eye on the advancement in the sciences in this age. For we are well assured that the truth revealed by God in his inspired Word will never be contradicted by truth fairly learned from the study of his works. Let the church keep abreast of the science, literature, and philosophy of the age. In this way, when the enemies of revealed truth seek to turn science against godliness, the friends of gospel truth can slay these enemies with their own weapons. A profound knowledge of the Bible, an impartial exegesis of its contents, a severe and systematic study of the doctrines derived from Scripture, together with a thorough knowledge of the world's own sciences,—these are required in this age of the friends, ministers, and defenders of truth. Hasty interpretations and generalizations from nature may be at variance with the plain teaching of the Word of God. But the just interpretation of nature will never conflict with the just interpretation of inspired Scripture. The voice of the church to men in these times should often be the word of Samuel to Saul in the days of old—"Stand thou still awhile, that I may show thee the Word of God." (1. Sam. ix. 27.)

Nor should the church sink into gloomy forebodings and despondency when putting the question, What shall the end

be of these things? There may, indeed, be changes and events full of great tribulation in the near future. But these all are predetermined—they are all known to him and regulated by him who is Head over all things to his church, and who has ordained that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of his name as the waters cover the sea. Let the church then publish her principles and doctrines, and let her rejoice in the promises of the Lord, according to which all things are working together for good to them that love God. For, whatever may be the future of this or that nation or empire, the church of the living God has before it a glorious futurity.

SPECIAL ASPECTS AND DUTIES.

But I must advert to other characteristics of the age than those already mentioned.

In every age of time, since it pleased the Lord to grant unto man the revelation of his grace in the word of inspired truth, men may be said to have shown a threefold disposition or attitude and habit of mind with respect to divine things and to the Word of God.

There have been in every age humble believers in the divine testimony; men who bowed with reverence before the authority of God speaking in his Word. These, in every age, have been as pillars in the temple of the Lord.

There have been, also, in every age, those who, inclining to superstition and will-worship, perverted Scripture, and added to it the traditions of men. These in every age have shown a disposition to drag down the spiritual mysteries, and to incorporate them in forms and carnal observances of men's own invention.

A third class of men have in every age refused to receive the Holy Scripture on the authority of God revealing it. They came to Scripture with the measure and standard of their own reason, and wherever Scripture taught (not what was contradictory to reason, for this it never teaches) what did not quadrate with their preconceptions or prejudices, they ventured

to impugn and to reject. These have in every age been the broad churchmen and rationalists.

In this age we observe all these three classes of men at work. But their working is in keeping with all other workings of the age: it is characterized by intense activity. Superstition has had a wonderful revival in this age. All over Europe, and over the world, the priesthood and agents of the Man of Sin are at this hour working with a zeal and an energy almost unprecedented in the history of the great apostacy of Rome. In our own country (Great Britain) the energy of Romanists may be judged of from the following facts:—In 1851 there were only 46 Romish chapels in London, now there are 117. In 1851 there were 9 nunneries in London; there are now 31. In 1851 there were 2 monasteries; now there are 15. “While this increase has been taking place in and about London, the progress of Rome has been going on apace in other parts of the kingdom. The total number of convents and nunneries in England is 187, in Scotland 14—making together 201. There are 10 popish colleges in England, and 2 in Scotland. The popish church has already 33 Members of the House of Commons, 32 of whom are returned by Irish constituencies, and 1 by the constituency of Arundel in England, with a constituency so small as 184 electors, according to last Parliamentary return. Besides all these agencies, banded together, and no doubt ready to obey the behests of their master in Rome, as was manifested at the last great party struggle in the Houses of Parliament, there are also committees organized for special purposes, such as the St. Peter’s Pence Association—altogether illegal and disloyal—for the purpose of levying a tax on the Roman Catholic subjects of Queen Victoria for the support of an antagonistic king in Rome, whose president is a Member of the House of Lords, and whose secretary is an English magistrate. There is also a poor-school committee, for watching over the education of Roman Catholic pupils in schools receiving grants from the Government. There are also committees for pressing forward their demands in regard to chaplaincies in prisons and work-houses. There are also 69 Roman Catholic Members of the Peerage. With such a phalanx, combined together for the

destruction of the Protestant religion, and the establishment of Romanism on its ruins, or, in Romish words, 'that the Roman Catholic religion, with all its rights, may be exclusively dominant in such a sort that every other religion shall be banished or interdicted,' it is not surprising to find that Romanism is making progress, both in adherents and in State support, in the face of an indifferent people, and of two parties in the State vieing with one another in granting all that she demands, in order to obtain support for their own selfish and political ends. Hence grants are given profusely for popish purposes in Ireland; for schools in Great Britain; for chaplains and officiating clergymen in the army; for chaplains in Government prisons, and also in city and borough prisons, in addition to bills or reports threatening to establish still further chaplains in workhouses and other public institutions. Upwards of £300,000 is *annually* given for popish purposes by the people of this country, exclusive of many annual grants given in connection with public institutions and establishments in the Colonies. While all the governments of the country are seeking to withdraw their support from idolatrous institutions in India, and using their influence in abolishing Hindooism and other systems of error in the East, they seem to vie with one another in giving grants of money for maintaining and propagating a more dangerous and unhallowed system of idolatry at home. On the other hand, the Protestant churches are divided, and do not aim at any combined action to resist their common enemy."

Facts such as these, taken in connection with what we daily see and hear of the doings of the agents of Romanism, are proof of the zeal and activity of the Romish church. Their hope is to conquer and subdue Great Britain, and, through that conquest, to subdue the world. This age, if marked by nothing else than the revival of popery in this country, would be signalized as distinct from all ages since the period of the blissful Reformation. We must not forget that the progress of Romanism in this country has been mightily helped by the movement that commenced more than thirty years ago in Oxford. It was evident from the first, to all thoughtful ob-

servers, that Puseyism must inevitably develop itself into Popery. The multitudes who have gone over to the Romish church since the commencement of that movement make good the description given long ago of Puseyism, when it was said to be "An inclined plane to Popery." But, while many have left the pale of the English church and joined the communion of the Roman apostacy, these are not so dangerous to the interests of Protestantism as are those who, being Puseyites or Romanists at heart, remain within the English church. Nor is Father Newman at all so efficient an agent of the papacy as Dr. Pusey. That remarkable man sees nothing to prevent a union between the Anglican and Roman churches, except the decree concerning the Immaculate Conception. Truly we live in very perilous times. When a man like Dr. Pusey should set himself to attempt to demonstrate that the Protestant and Reformed Church of England differed in almost no vital doctrine from the synagogue of the Man of Sin.

Puseyism is a revival of Sacramentarianism and of Ritualism; and the Church of Rome is the only church where the Puseyite notions find perfect development. Hence the crowds of perverts. But the influence of Puseyism has been felt, and is felt at this hour, within Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches. Hence the itch for innovations that is exhibited by not a few within the Established Church. This itch proceeds from the persons referred to having tasted the cup which Rome sends round among all people and churches. And with all these Romanizing and Roman energies in operation around us, we are exhorted by some friends of the truth to avoid controversy, and to sing a syren song of peace. If the churches of Christ in this land do not arise and shake off their lethargy, if they do not unite in common and vigorous action against the advancing legionaries of Rome, they may be awakened when it will be too late to confront the enemy with any reasonable hope of success. Besides this, the example of the effects of professorial teaching in Oxford, in connection with the progress of Puseyism and Romanism, ought to admonish the churches that, if they would preserve the truth in its purity and integrity, and have ministers sound in the faith, and able

to teach the form of sound words, they must watch with the greatest care over the character and tendencies of the teachings in their halls of theology.

The human mind has frequently recoiled from superstition to infidelity, and as in former ages, so in the present, Romish superstition has driven men to infidelity and to atheism. The reaction against Puseyism has manifested itself, not by professed infidelity, but by what is termed Broad-Churchism. The party known as the Broad Church in England have for some years shown great activity, and their disciples are numerous in all parts of the country. Their views on many of the cardinal truths and facts of revelation are vague, unfixed, and indefinite. They dislike doctrines, and call them dogmas, and they abhor articles and confessions of faith. As the tendency of the Puseyite is to extreme superstition, so the tendency of Broad-Churchism is towards extreme rationalism. The prevalence or growth of this party gives mark to the religious character of our times. The men of this party delight in a cant of their own about culture, advancement, liberty, progress; a liberal and scientific theology; blind traditionalism, bigotries, charity; complex philosophical and historical culture; ripening culture, &c., &c. They have, if not their shibboleths, at least their sibboleths; and these they utter far and wide by means of the press and pulpit. While readily admitting that some of the representatives of this class are men of scholarly accomplishment and of superior talents and literary acquirements, we must confess that we have not in their writings found evidence that they have been trained into anything like a systematic knowledge of theology. Whatever may be said respecting their literary education, it is painfully evident that their theological education must have been either neglected or have been of the most superficial and elementary kind. Their writings testify that they come to the Bible with all their boasted philosophy and preconceived notions of what the Bible should teach; and not as sinners needing salvation, dependent on grace, or as children willing to be taught the will of the Father in heaven. Statements such as these may be said to savour of arrogance, and they may expose the speaker.

to the favourite argument of certain persons, which consists of nothing else than the use of scurrilous epithets and personal abuse, just as sticks, stones, brickbats, faggots, and fire were the arguments of the enemies of truth in former times. But the interests of truth and the interests of immortal souls demand of us that we use great plainness of speech. For by their fruits systems like trees are known. And if the fruits of Broad-Churchism teaching are such as shall nurture living godliness, such as shall fortify the minds and hearts of men under severe tribulation, such as shall produce instances of heroic self-sacrifice in the cause of God, we have greatly misunderstood the nature, character, and tendencies of this so-called Broad-Churchism. The history of the church bears witness that all that has given character to Christianity, as a moral and spiritual power over men, has been diverse from our modern Broad-Churchism. The same history testifies that the representatives and types of our modern Broad-Churchmen were in every age the trimmers, time-servers, renegades, and dregs of the church. And no marvel. They have no fixed "Thus saith the Lord." Reason is their oracle; and to escape from danger, even when truth is assailed, is their policy. Puseyism may last while Romanism lasts; but this Broad-Churchism is only the fitful product of certain times. It is destitute of all the elements of permanency—it is built, not on the everlasting and immovable rock of truth, but on the shifting sands of human opinion. Unless Broad-Churchism, whether on the north or south of the Tweed, exhibit other characters than are seen in its zeal against the Sabbatical law and its rage against the Decalogue,—unless it exhibit other claims on our regard than its aversion to determinate propositions and doctrines, and its abhorrence of confessions of faith, together with its love for liturgies, organs, and sacraments, we must refuse to admit that it is other than a compromise between the grossest infidelity and the blindest superstition. This we assert to be its true and real character. But, just because it is a compromise, it cannot be of long duration. It must choose either the way of truth, or the way of superstition, or the way of avowed infidelity. Infidelity and superstition, though not compromises,

must also be of temporary duration. The Word of God, and that alone, abideth for ever.

The duty of the church of Christ, with respect to this characteristic of the age, is written as with a sunbeam. It must, whether in good report or evil report, declare, publish, and defend the truth as it is in Jesus. It must vindicate and assert the invariableness of truth as given and revealed by him who knows the end from the beginning. It must, in faithfulness to the Lord, as well as in faithfulness to the souls of men, preach law and gospel, grace and truth. It must invite men to walk in the old and everlasting paths that lead to Zion. It must declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. No uncertain sound must now be given. For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle? And, whatever men may say, none but the deaf, none but the dead can fail to hear the sounds of war—the trumpet blasts of the coming conflict. In that war organs, postures, liturgies, and beggarly elements of all kinds must perish. But out of it severe simple truth will come, if wounded, yet victorious and triumphant.

A sermon for the times might, in the judgment of some, be expected to treat more of local and recently raised questions than this sermon. But with merely local and temporary questions it is not here that I shall deal. At the same time, apart from questions of a merely local and temporary character, I may state that there are aspects of the providence of God towards us as a people that demand from the church in Britain special and devout recognition, and that call for humiliation and thanksgiving.

Other nations have been recently convulsed by revolutionary changes; some have been devastated by war; and some have had multitudes of their people destroyed by the plague. God for many years has blessed our beloved country with peace and with great prosperity,—a prosperity that has made this little island the wonder and envy of the world. It becomes us devoutly to acknowledge in all this the goodness and lovingkindness of the Lord. But we have abundant reason also for confessing our sins and the sins of our fathers. For

we have not been careful to return unto the Lord according to his mercies given unto us. We have gloried rather in our own wisdom and power than in the grace and goodness of the Lord. For this our great national sin let us humble ourselves before the Lord, being admonished by his judgments. For if the pestilence is not among us as a people, the plague is among our cattle. And none but the infidel and atheist, who deny both God and his providence, can fail to see in this, as in all plagues, the hand and judgment of God. Spare us, O Lord, and turn away from us thy wrath!

Before concluding this discourse, there is yet one subject of grand importance to which I must advert. This age is in many respects one of disintegration. Old institutions are crumbling as if their substance had been eaten out of them by the dry rot. What seemed but a few years ago to be stately palaces, built on apparently strong and sure foundations, are now falling into ruin. Their foundations are giving way. The mighty river of truth is rubbing against and carrying away the clay beds on which they were built. Even Peter's old chair is crumbling into dust beneath the pope. And ecclesiastical politicians are beginning to raise in England the old cry, "The church is in danger." It must therefore be repaired. Props, binders, buttresses must be used to prevent the walls from falling to the ground. Among the expedients for strengthening and preserving the Anglican Church, the most notable by far is that of Dr. Pusey and his coadjutors in the Anglican and Scottish Episcopal Churches. It is the grand project of union between the Greek, Roman, and Anglican Churches. This indicates that if the age is one of "pulling down," it is also an age of building up. But in vain shall man build after this fashion, with untempered mortar, with wood, hay, straw, stubble. The fire will consume all such composite structures. Men may thus build; but God will cast down and destroy their unholy work. Their folly and their doom will be as those of the builders of Babel. "They said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top

may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel," or "Confusion." (Gen. xi.) Similar to this, but more terrible, shall be the doom of the modern and mystic Babylon, which Dr. Pusey and Dr. Manning, with many builders of the same kind, are attempting to set up. For this is the sure word of prophecy, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Rejoice "over her then, ye heavens, and ye holy apostles, and prophets: for God hath avenged you on her." "Alleluiah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

But while amalgamations such as those referred to are mere confederacies for evil, and in the cause of Antichrist, there is surely a most imperious call to all the churches of Christ, the churches of the reformation, to aim, pray, and labour that the divisions of Zion may be healed,—that the breaches in the temple walls may be repaired. And much do I rejoice that in my loved Scotland, the Lord has put it into the hearts of so many in the sections of the Nonconformist Presbyterian churches to seek to unite the churches on the basis of eternal truth. May God speed those builders, and may he himself build up his house in our land. "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion. Build thou the walls of Jerusalem." It is not an amalgamation of incongruous materials that we desire or hope to see; it is not a conglomerate mass welded by pressure from without that we desire or hope for; it is not an aggregation of dead stones that we hope to see. Romanism and Anglicanism have or may have union of that kind. But our hope is to see

a blissful union of churches holding the common faith, holding the One Head, and enjoying the quickening and sanctifying grace of the One Holy Spirit. Yes, we believe it is the duty of churches of Christ to exhibit their spiritual oneness, not only by friendly co-operation in every good work, but by actual incorporation, that the church in our dear native land, like a building fitly framed in Christ, may grow into a holy temple in the Lord. Amen.

YET THERE IS ROOM;

OR,

AN EXPOSITION AND OFFER OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM
OF GOD.*

“And yet there is room.”—Luke xiv. 22.

WHEN the Lord Jesus Christ spoke these words, he was, we are told by the evangelist, in the house of one of the chief Pharisees, eating bread on the Sabbath day.

When there, he healed a dropsical man, and vindicated his

* PREFATORY NOTE.—This is my favourite sermon. I part with it now with most mingled feelings. It goes to the press from a manuscript wet with many tears; but the tears are those of love, in wonder, adoration, and gratitude. They are not the tears of one who has no hope; but they are the expression of a heart moved, and yet at rest, rejoicing in the Lord with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. May it go forth, not only bedewed with my tears, but bedewed with the grace and the anointing of God the Holy Ghost, that others may know the joy of love in tears, as they look unto him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, while they hear his still small voice saying, “In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.” Were it my last utterance to my wife, my daughters, and my only son—to all of whom I now dedicate this sermon—it would be, “My beloved wife, with Harriot, Mary, Thomas, and Margaret, my dear children, YET THERE IS ROOM, come with me, let us enter joyfully into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

GEORGE MACAULAY.

DUNGLASS CASTLE,
OLD KILPATRICK, 16th January, 1872.

action, not only as in keeping with the uses, ends, and design of the Sabbatical law, but also as an illustration of a principle according to which the Jews themselves acted in matters in which their self-interest came to the aid of their hermeneutics, or method and laws of biblical interpretation.

HUMILITY.

Observing how some of the guests chose out "the chief rooms," the Lord, according to his invariable manner, took occasion to address to them, and through them to us, words of gracious counsel and exhortation. "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest place; lest a more honourable than thou be bidden; and he that bade thee come and say unto thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room." True humility is not only another name for true politeness; it is also true policy. For it leaves room for promotion, or the possibility of advancement to honour. Therefore, "When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship (honour) in the presence of those who sit at meat with thee." But not to teach the lessons of social civility and politeness did Jesus become manifest in the flesh. For other and higher ends was the great mystery of godliness revealed. Nevertheless, civilization, with all the urbanity of manners which it implies and produces, is the invariable handmaid, attendant, and shadow of Christianity. Politeness in manners, as in letters, is the reflection of genuine godliness or piety. And there can be no true godliness where there is not a genuine and unfeigned humility. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is the law in the kingdom of God. It holds in the kingdom of ordinary providence and in the kingdom of grace. Let it go abroad that a man is in haste to be "somebody," or to exalt himself, and every other man will account it both his interest and duty to

thwart the purpose and projects of the too eager ambition. Men will, in such a case, set themselves to abase or bring down the aspiring, the ambitious, and the self-elating. On the other hand, let the impression go forth and spread itself that a man possesses real worth, that he is a man of character and of ability, and at the same time a man modest, unpretentious, and humble, who prefers and esteems others rather than himself; the crowd in this case will open of itself the way or avenue along which it invites the man of modest worth to walk upwards to the place of distinction, and the platform of office and of honour. Self-love is gratified and flattered in bestowing patronage on the deserving poor, on the humbly and modestly able, worthy, and good. But whatever may occur in this strangely complex and seemingly confused region of daily providence, the law operates with undeviating precision and with unvarying regularity in the kingdom of God's grace. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Humility is the sublimest virtue in the kingdom of God. It is the measure and index of the moral and spiritual build and stature, growth and attainments of the Christian man. *Mensura humilitatis est mensura incrementi*. By the valley of humiliation we enter into the kingdom; and along that valley, with progressive lowliness of spirit, we walk in holiness and usefulness, till we reach the lofty heights of blessedness and glory, to which we are predestinated in Christ Jesus. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" so spake the Lord, who is the fountain of all honour and exaltation in the kingdom of God. "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another." (Psalm lxxv.) He that is in his own judgment less than the least of all saints, yea, the chief of sinners, is among the greatest and foremost in service, sufferings, and honour in the kingdom of our God. For except we be converted, and become as little children, we shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of God. "You write to me about academic honours and distinctions," said the missionary Buchanan to the Rev. John Newton; "I would not give a

little brokenness of heart, contrition, and emptiness of spirit before the Lord, in exchange for the highest honours and offices that Cambridge can confer or bestow." As the orator, or master of eloquence, when asked the secret of his art, replied again, and again, and again—"Action!" so it has been well said by Calvin, quoting from Augustine, "if I be asked the secret of the Christian life, I will answer, after the manner of the orator, Humility, humility, humility! and continue answering, Humility!" For as the bird that builds in the lowest place mounts on buoyant and elastic wing to loftiest heights, so the humblest Christian is the most Christ-like and God-like among men. And as the barley, when the grain is ripe and full in the ear, bends its head in graceful modesty, so the Christian, ripe in grace, and laden with the rich fruits of godliness, bends his spirit in unfeigned lowliness before his God. The vesture of humility, which he wears in the view of men, is but the index of that graceful enrobement with which his inner and hidden man of the heart is attired in the presence of that Lord, who, looking into the heart, seeketh there for truth in the inward parts, finding it there also in beautiful league and amity with that "wisdom which, coming from above, is pure, and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

HOSPITALITY.

Turning to the master of the feast and head of the house of hospitality, the Lord directs his words to him, and through him to all who would be careful to use hospitality. Among the guests around the table or present at the entertainment there was what nowadays would be called a conspicuous absence. The poor, the perishing, the starving, and the needy were not represented there, except by the man sick of the dropsy whom Jesus had healed. On this Jesus remarked, and on it grounded one of the most instructive and memorable lessons of his kingdom. "Then said he to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy

brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee." "Lest they also bid thee again!" Is not the language of the Lord Jesus Christ on this occasion fitted to check and repress all hospitable thoughts, all the interchange of friendly offices among men? Must not the man that hath friends show himself friendly? Is not social intercourse regulated necessarily by the law of giving and receiving, the law of friendly reciprocity? The words of Jesus are not inconsistent with the action of this law; they are not designed to check the habit of giving and receiving; they do not discourage the principle that prompts to the interchange and reciprocation of friendly and good offices; and they do not repress but direct hospitable impulses and thoughts. Without restraining the neighbourly feelings of hospitality, they indicate a direction and use of hospitality far more excellent than that which is common among men. For the hospitality here encouraged is like the politeness or civility of which the Lord had in speaking to the guests given the directory, card, or law. It is not a mere worldly hospitality, any more than a mere worldly politeness and urbanity, which is here taught and inculcated by the Lord. "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." The truly hospitable thoughts, intent on their objects, need never lack opportunities of indulgence and gratification. Nor need those who act according to the counsel and exhortation of the Lord adopt the philosophy of those who would divest virtue and godliness of their appropriate and sure reward. Do the thing because it is right, kind, and good; but in doing it cherish not the cold and discouraging thought that would abstract from goodness the approbation and reward of him who is the only Good One. For God is not unrighteous to forget the work of faith and labour of love which may have been showed toward his name by those that minister to his saints. (Heb. vi.) In showing hospitality to the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, a very peculiar and altogether exquisite happiness is

ours. In the meantime is a very special blessedness, according to the word, "It is more blessed to give than to receive,"—a blessedness in measure a reflection of the Divine felicity, springing from resemblance in character and in work to our Father who is heaven. For he giveth to all liberally. He worketh and doeth good continually. That which he gives his creatures gather. They all wait on him that he may give them their meat in due season. He openeth his hand, and they are filled with food. But not only so. There is in store and in reserve a blessedness for those who imitate and copy the example of their Father in heaven. They are blessed now, and they shall be blessed hereafter. For among these poor, maimed, lame, and blind, for whom few seem to care, and to whom few show kindness, there are the kinsmen, the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Heir of all things. He is, as it were, now in a far distant land, in a remote province of his kingdom. But he has minute, ample, and most correct information of all that befalls his poor kindred and relations here. And when he shall return, having received the kingdom, he has himself taught us that, from his glorious seat of universal judgment, he will recount and reward the kindnesses done in his name, and because of relatedness to him, to any, even the least, of his poor brothers and sisters. Like himself, the elder brother, when he sojourned here, these are unknown and despised by the world. But a cup of cold water given to any one of them, because of relationship to him, will not be without reward in that day when he shall appear in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels, to judge both the quick and the dead. Nay, more, in his sight and estimate that cup of cold water may be of far greater account than offerings and gifts the most costly and ostentatious. For if, when a peasant, seeing the grand and royal cortege of his earthly sovereign in procession through his far-reaching dominions and territories approach on the highway near his lowly cot, having nothing to offer, rushed to the stream that flowed near by his hut, and dipping his hands into the water, filled the hollow palms with the pure and limpid water, and then went up to the great emperor with this as his tribute of obeisance and honest loyalty of heart, the grand emperor, so far from dis-

daining the gift and offering, ordered that it should be preserved in a golden vase of rarest worth and workmanship; we are assured by himself, that Christ Jesus, the King of kings, does not disdain to acknowledge the cup of cold water given in his name to one of the meanest and least of his brethren. "They cannot recompense thee; but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." No look, or thought, or word, or deed of kindness is lost. Say not, when you know that love to Christ has prompted your thought or deed, and when it is misinterpreted, misconstrued, and ill-requited, it is just what might have been expected from a thankless world. Speak not thus unadvisedly with your lips, and not for one moment indulge the feeling that hides and lurks beneath this form of words; but rather go on, add kindness to kindness, in the morning do good, in the evening withdraw not thine hand. For thy labour of love is not in vain in the Lord. And, whatever requital our actions may receive from men, let us be sustained by the sure word of Christ that we shall be blessed, for we shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Our praise we seek not from men; but we do most earnestly seek it from God. Study, therefore, my brother, to show thyself approved unto God—a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. To do good and to communicate forget not. Use and show kindness and hospitality to all men, even to strangers, but especially to such as are of the household of faith. For with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

The reference in the words of the Lord to the recompence and blessedness of some at the resurrection of the just drew from one of the guests the remark, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God, eating bread in that kingdom, and the resurrection of the just were all associated in that man's mind as they are in the minds of many who ought to know more of the nature and blessedness of participating in the privileges of the kingdom of God. The little child, looking peering and wistfully up into its mother's

face, and seeing that countenance furrowed deep with care and solicitude and grief, and while hearing the voice of a mother's intense and earnest affection pleading for Jesus, and his love hears, but heeds not, for it thinks that the happiness of religion is a thing of the future, in heaven, or at the resurrection: and accordingly the little child, turning to its toys and playthings, leaves seriousness for those who are cumbered with care; and the happiness of being religious to those who have outgrown the age of smiles, gambols, glee, and toys. Dear, dear little ones, dearly, dearly loved, with your little chubby fingers thrust among the tissues and heart strings of my soul, often much troubled, but now tranquil, listen to the words of Jesus—"I love them that love me, and they who seek me early shall find me;" and again, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Dear little lambs, when you read or hear that sweet story of old, how Jesus, when here among men, called to him little children, and taking them up in his arms, blessed them; believe him that happiness and joy only belong to those who now take Jesus to be their Saviour and their all. Believe not the lie of Satan, that smiles and toys are inconsistent with love to Jesus.

"Grace is a plant, where'er 'tis found,
Of pure and heavenly root;
But fairest in the youngest shows,
And bears the sweetest fruit."

The young man, the lad setting out from his father's house, and from the sweet, sweet home of a mother's love and piety, to mingle with the active jostling crowd, and to elbow his way in the thoroughfares and in the market places of men, hears the voice of a father's thoughtful wisdom, prudence, and godliness, as it says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth;" "My son, if thou be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine; for a wise son maketh a glad father;" and hears also the voice of a mother's gentle, cautious, and timid solicitude, "What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? Depart from evil, do good, refrain thy lips from guileful speech, thy ways from those

of the strange woman, be not a guest at the banquet of folly, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, pass away, let thine eyes look right on, seek peace and pursue it, walk with God," believing in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. But the young man, intent on pleasure, thinks of happiness as if it were in religion reserved for age, for the sick-bed, for the infirm and the dying, for the time of the resurrection of the just. The busy merchant,—the plodding husbandman,—the anxious father,—the too careful mother,—and the burdened peasant, groaning beneath his load of labour, with shoulders too early bowing down towards the grave, all hear of happiness. but they put it away in thought from the present, and transferring it to some more near or remote futurity, they conclude that present happiness is incompatible with present godliness. They, too, say, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God at the resurrection of the just." Nay, more. Even the atheist or infidel, who, while enjoying the bounties of God, denies and disowns the heavenly Donor and Benefactor, admits that, if there is a heaven, the godly man shall be the happy man at last; and, if there is a hell, the ungodly and the vicious man must at length be most miserable. In all these cases, from the infant with its sparkling eyes, smiles, and flaxen locks, to the hoary-headed or bald atheist and scorner, there is the admission that godliness and happiness shall probably be identified at some future time; but there is the practical demonstration that, for the present, godliness is not reconcileable with felicity. This is one of the most common and fatal of the arts of deception and delusion practised upon the children of men by the tempter and destroyer of souls. And men are the more easily duped in this way, because, while they follow in the paths of sin, they give a verbal homage to the excellence of godliness and virtue. They hope, wish, intend, propose, at some time, to give more earnest heed than they now do to the things that they hear from the Word of God, and to the great salvation. The grand fallacy is this—the forgetting that heaven and hell are begun on earth. And that, if we would now be happy, we must now, and without delay, see to it that we are justified before God, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, received

by faith alone. Heaven and hell have their shadows and presentiments, their earnest, pledges, and presages here. Heaven and hell are developments into perfection of character and of principles here imbibed, received, and in operation. They are characters as certainly as they are states. And the life here is but the preparation of a man for the dread and unchangeable future of eternity. Why, then, should we postpone the felicity of heaven? Why should we not, by foretaste and in anticipation, insert the purity, peace, beauty, joys, and harmony of heaven into the sphere of this transitory and troubled life? It is possible, blessed be God, to do this. It is actual, blessed be the Lord, in the experience of not a few, who seem to the eyes of men to be tossed, tempted, and afflicted continually. They sit not in the chair of scorners; they feast not, and riot not with fools; they may not be seen where wealth, wordliness, and fashion—whether political or religious—hold their much frequented gatherings; their names may be, and often are, as unheard and unpronounced by the tongue of contemporary fame, as was the name of Jesus, while he toiled in obscurity in the workshop of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth; yet are they admitted to the banqueting house of God, they have communion with the church of the firstborn, and their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

PRESENT BLESSEDNESS.

In response to the remark of the guest, who said, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," and to correct the latent misapprehension of true blessedness, and of the nature of the kingdom of God, and to instruct his church till the end of time, Jesus spoke the parable in which the words of the text occur—"And yet there is room."

As in many places of the Scriptures, so here, the kingdom of God, or that gracious reign and administration of the divine will according to which sinners are received into favour,—are pardoned, regenerated, justified, sanctified, and made heirs and partakers of eternal life,—is compared to a feast or supper, pre-

pared for many, and to which many are invited. It is, in other words, God's way and method of showing hospitality. "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and he sent his servants, at supper time, to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready."

This is the provision of God's liberality, bounty, and grace. It is in greatness, richness, costliness, fulness, abundance, variety, suitableness worthy of the greatness, grace, resources, and liberality of the Eternal God and King. Before the time of supper or the feast, before the arrangements were formally completed, intimation of the approaching feast and of its time—a sort of prefatory invitation—was sent to certain persons, "those that were bidden,"—that had been bidden before the hour and time of supper had arrived or fully come. To them, when the time of supper had fully come, the servant is sent to say, "Come; for all things are now ready." Former notices, hints, or intimations were fitted to prepare them for this announcement and invitation, so that they might be expected to be in readiness to comply with the call now given, "Come" now, "come;" for all things, as pre-announced and pre-arranged,—all things which might be expected according to the purpose and intention previously revealed,—
"All things are now ready."

This is none other than the voice of the Servant-Son of God addressing the message of grace, mercy, and good-will from God to the Jews, who had at various times and in diverse manners received intimations of God's purpose to provide largely, suitably, and spiritually for the wants of men,—his purpose to bless all the families of the earth through the promised seed of Abraham. It is the voice of him who is called the Servant of God, his Elect, the Beloved of God, in whom the Father always findeth delight. Come, says Jesus, to those who were outwardly, by covenant, by promise, by privilege, the children of the kingdom,—come, avail yourselves of the blessedness offered unto you. Come; for the kingdom of God hath come very nigh unto you, and God is revealing his righteousness, his grace, and his salvation. "Come; for all things are now ready." It is as the voice of the town-crier

in the city of God, saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." "For in this mountain hath the Lord of hosts made unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will in this mountain destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it." (Is. lv. and xxv.) This is the great feast and supper prepared of God at the evening time of the day of Jewish privilege. It is the provision of Zion, the preparation of the gospel of peace. And in its fulness, greatness, freeness, and richness of blessing it is worthy of God and most adapted to the necessities of man. It is divinely ample, suitable, varied, and free. It provides water, wine, milk; with food truly good; with wines on the lees, and fat things full of marrow, and wines well refined. It provides not only things absolutely necessary, but with divine munificence and prodigality, it provides and offers far more exceedingly above all that it entered into the human heart to think of, to wish, to ask, or to expect. It is the unsearchable abundance and depths of the riches of the mercy, grace, righteousness, wisdom, and redemption of God. It is grace out of the fulness of God that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. It is glory out of the fathomless depths, and inaccessible and unscalable heights, and measureless lengths and widths of the love and glory of God. O my soul, think well of God! "He giveth liberally and upbraideth not." "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "Wherefore, also, he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

We speak of the feast of reason and the flow of soul. Here we feast on life, and light, and joy. The darkness has passed away. Death is swallowed up in victory. Sorrow and tears are no longer our portion and our mark. The gentle hand of Omnipotence, touching our faces, by Jesus Christ, has wiped away all our tears. The days of our mourning are ended; for the Son of God was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death: and he says unto us, as we are led by him into his banqueting house, with his banner of love everlastingly waving over us and above us, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. Eat; for my flesh is meat indeed. Drink; for my blood is drink indeed. Eat, drink, and thou shalt never die." Yea, indeed, the saying is here true. "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant;" for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

"We surely shall be satisfied
With thy abundant grace,
And with the goodness of thy house,
Even of thy holy place."

COME, O sinner, COME; FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY. Eternal life, all blessedness, is offered here and now; offered with the liberality of God, and with the divine sincerity; offered freely; offered with most absolute gratuitousness; offered, sinner—offered, my sinful soul, to thee; offered to every creature under heaven. Come, then, come unto Jesus; for all things are now ready. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. But what is believing? Is it not, O my soul, as thou hast found, confiding only, confiding all, always and in everything confiding in Jesus Christ the Son of God. Away, away, for ever away with the cobwebs of scholastic and Satanic casuistry! Trust to him, trust in him, trust him. Thus shalt thou find that it is true that all things are now ready on God's part; thus shall thy peace and prosperity of soul be as a river, and thy righteousness (because he is now thine) like the waves of the sea. Why, why should the only unready and unprepared thing be thy hard suspicious unbelieving heart? Turn, oh turn, at the reproof, call, and

entreaty of God; for he waiteth to be gracious, saying, "Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David."

THE MESSAGE, AND THE RECEPTION GIVEN TO IT.

In carrying out the instructions given to him, the servant, we are told, went his rounds delivering the message or invitation of his master. But those to whom he first went began with one consent to make excuse. This is the testimony of Jesus, the Servant Son of God the Father. It is not a railing accusation, but a sorrowful lament over the folly, apathy, and guilt of those to whom first the offers of the righteousness and blessedness of the kingdom of God was made. Of them all—that is, of the great multitude of them, it is said by the faithful and true witness, they all as one, or all with one consent began to make excuse. They were ready and prepared only with a polite apology; and they found the matter of their excuse in the bounty and kindness of God.

The first is a man who has very recently become a landed proprietor. He has purchased an estate in the country. He is, at the moment when the servant waits on him, about to go and see it. He forgot all about the supper at which he was expected to be present; and had made all his arrangements so as to visit the newly acquired property and estate. "I have bought," said he, "a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it." It might be all very desirable that he should take his place in honour of the servant's master at the pre-announced supper table and in the festive hall with the guests. But the invitation was unseasonable, it was extremely inconvenient for him; in fact, he could not so modify and change or postpone his arrangements as to be at the supper. The carriage was at the door, and with all respect, and, indeed, with much esteem for the master of the servant, and while duly appreciating his kindness and benevolence, he must adhere to his previously arranged plan, and to his intention of visiting his estate; accordingly he sends away the servant with good

words and fair speeches,—words and speeches urbane and polite, as became a country gentleman and one of the upper ten thousand—“ I pray thee, have me excused !” The aristocrat is civil, fair spoken, polite ; but he bows the messenger to the door with an “ I pray thee, have me excused.” There is a polite and urbane or aristocratic avenue that conducts to hell or everlasting punishment and separation from the presence, grace, and glory of the Lord, as well as a more vulgar thoroughfare leading to perdition.

The second is a man in a somewhat different rank of life. He is the representative of our successful merchants, and of our thriving gentlemen farmers—our men of industry and commerce—our aristocracy of wealth. He too has altogether, in the multitude of his business, and in the number, importance, and variety of his transactions, enterprises, and speculations, forgotten that the supper to which he is now invited was, as frequently intimated to him, being prepared. The many matters necessarily demanding his attention had expelled this thought, and he had really forgotten all about the master’s supper. But this was far from his having or entertaining any sentiments other than those of profound veneration for the kindness and benevolence of his friend, the servant’s master. And to assure the servant of this, the farmer invites him to partake of his hospitality ; for it was out of anything but a feeling of disrespect for his master that the farmer could not, by any possibility, comply with the invitation conveyed to him by the servant. In modern phraseology the reply of this man would be, “ Offer my compliments to your master, and say to him, that really I was so engaged, as you yourself can testify—so driven hither and thither in the hurry scurry of business, that however much I could wish, as I hope I do wish, to honour his proffered and much esteemed friendship, yet, as you yourself see, I am immersed over head and ears in business, and besides, as bearing on the question of present duty, I have only returned from the market, where I bought five yoke of oxen,—made an investment,—as you see, and, as is so very natural in the circumstances, ‘ I go to prove them.’ I am sincerely sorry that you have come at so awkward a time, for it is extremely so, but I pray thee, have me excused—make for me

the best excuse you can." Commerce and industry can pave their pathway to perdition, if not by good intentions, at least by plausible excuses. The deceitfulness of riches or of business, as well as the lusts of pleasure and other things, may choke the good seed, prevent its growth, and render it unfruitful. And yet, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The third man to whom the servant delivered his master's invitation, is also a representative or typical man. He does not speak, in his excuse, of land, or of the farm and merchandise. He may even despise the hauteur of the incipient aristocrat, and smile at the eagerness with which his neighbour the merchant, or the thriving and busy farmer, prosecutes his business. As for him, he will now live, and let live. Even the Levitical law, as given by Moses, will excuse him from certain kinds of engagements. Besides, he has heaven and happiness at his own fireside. He does not need to go out to dine. "I have married a wife," he says bluntly, "and therefore I cannot come." This, it has been well said, is the lamest and least satisfactory of the three excuses, while it is given with more abruptness than either of the other two. For the landowner could not take his land with him; the farmer could not take his five yoke of oxen; but this man might, at the least, try to persuade his wife to accompany him to the feast in the house of his friend the servant's master. The home may prove as seductive, and as fatal to our spiritual interests, as the farm, the shop, the counting-house, or the landed estate. Domestic habits and cares, domestic delights, may prove as ruinous to the souls of men, as delights, habits, and ways aristocratic, and industrial, or commercial.

So far, the servant's work is done. He has faithfully delivered his master's message, or word of invitation. He has delivered his own soul—that is to say, although his service has not been attended with success, yet he has not forfeited the good-will and approbation of his master. And, although returning to give in the report of his work to his master, he might be heard, as if in soliloquy, uttering the words, "I have

laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my reward is with my God; for with him on high is my record that I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; I have not refrained my lips, the Lord knoweth: nor have I hid his righteousness within my heart; for I have declared his faithfulness and his salvation: I have not concealed his loving-kindness and his truth from the great congregation." Yet he does not appear before his master with the blood of souls in the skirts or folds of his official robe: he has saved his own soul, being faithful to the trust committed to him. With heaviness of heart, with a sad, sad grief, not with the joy of success, he gives in the account of his ministry. He called, but men refused; he stretched out his hands, but no man regarded. His ministry, though faithful, proved to those among whom it was exercised the savour of death unto death. He hearkened and heard; but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his course: making light of the call of wisdom, they went their ways—one to his land and farm, another to his merchandise, his family, and his home. The servant is dispirited and sad. The master is angry. But he has other work in another sphere, and among a different class, for his faithful servant. For not in vain has the supper table been spread, and richly furnished with all manner of choice meats, and fruits, and wines. The proud proprietor, the comfortable and thrifty farmer, and the happy bridegroom or but recently married man, may be indifferent to the love, grace, friendship, and good-will expressed in the invitation to the supper. The love proffered in that invitation may find no room or place where the love of land, of business, or of the wife and family, unduly prevails. And when the servant has told his lord how it fared with him, and with the message of grace and love which he had conveyed to those to whom he had been sent, it is no surprise to find it written: "Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."

Those to whom, in the former instance, the servant was sent, are, historically, socially, and morally, a representative or typical class. To the Pharisees, and to the scribes, and to the better (?) classes in Judea, the first invitations of the gospel of the grace of God, and the first tidings of the kingdom of God were addressed. But they turned a deaf and listless ear to the message of grace announced to them by the incarnate Son of God. They made light of it; and rejected the counsel of God, to their own everlasting and irreparable ruin. The heart of the Servant-Son is sad, and its sorrow overflows in tears, as beholding guilty and doomed, because apathetic, Jerusalem. He weeps over it, saying, in the broken ejaculations of a sorrow too great and profound to utter itself in rounded forms of speech: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes!" For God the Father is angry because of the dishonour done to his servant the Son, and the contempt with which the overtures of infinite love have been treated.

These men are, socially, the representatives of a class, or of classes, to whom the blessedness and grace of the gospel kingdom are offered. They are in prosperous, easy, and even affluent circumstances; they have all things, and have need of nothing; they are rich, and increased in goods. They know not, wretched as they are, that they are poor, and blind, and naked. To them, the riches offered in the gospel—the white raiment, and the eye salve, together with the hospitality of the grace of God—have no attractions; for they are at ease. They eat and drink; they buy and sell; they marry and are given in marriage; they go to church and market; to county meetings and grand assemblies; to concerts, balls, and theatres; and, perchance, once a year, to a prayer meeting, or to the table of the Lord, to save appearances, and gild the unreal and rotten life with a thin film of religion, worn like rouge on the surface that meets the eye of poor, human observation: but they are not right with God; and at times, amidst the quaverings of mysterious feelings within them, when the unwelcome handwriting on the walls of their souls is seen, they confess to themselves that they

are not right and justified in the sight of God. But, alas! they are so much taken up and engrossed with the business, cares, riches, or pleasures of this life and world, that they do not consider and give heed to the messages, entreaties, invitations, and warnings of the voice and love of God. They perish, not deliberately despising, but habitually making light of, neglecting the great salvation by the Son of God. And from heights of social enjoyment, and the status and platform of worldly ease, and comfort, and wealth, they fall—for their feet must slide in due time—as by a slippery way, suddenly, into everlasting woe.

I need not enlarge on the fact that these men, polite to the servant, but indifferent to his message and to his master's goodwill and friendship, are, morally, representative men. If religion before God is another name for polished courtesy and civility in manners and in speech,—another name for conduct before men irreproachable and blameless (although even by this test many could not stand to be tried),—if religion be another name for the affability or patronizing kindness of our aristocracy,—for the industry and integrity of our merchants, men of business, and farmers,—and for the virtues that find their congenial sphere in the charmed circle and enclosure of a well-ordered and peaceful home, without faith in God by Jesus Christ, without conversion or the birth of the Spirit—without submission through grace to the will and authority in all things of God—without the love of Christ constraining to a life unselfish, holy, and devoted unto God—without that hope which, while it is anchored in Christ within the innermost sanctuary of heaven, shows itself here in progressive imitation and conformity to Christ, purifying the heart and life, as Christ also is pure,—then, these apathetic, easy, courteous, polite men, indifferent to sin and grace, to God and his Christ, to the cross and salvation, are and must be accounted Christians. But let us not be deceived. God will not accommodate the terms of his grace and the methods of his salvation to the lukewarmness and heartlessness of a polite worldliness and indifference. Be zealous and repent! “Flee from the wrath to come.” What meanest thou, O sleeper! Awake! arise! Call upon God by

Jesus Christ, saying, God be merciful to me *the* sinner; Lord, save me, for I am a perishing and lost man,—perishing and lost because unholy, vile, corrupt, and guilty before God. Religion, if it is anything, is a thing of earnestness. Nothing is, or can be, more fatal to it than that apathy or indifference which is the index of the three most terrible and spiritual judgments of God,—an eye blinded, and that will not see or look to Jesus; an ear deaf, and that will not hear the voice and words of Jesus; and a heart besotted, fat, fleshy, and heavy, that will not receive the truth and the Saviour in faith and in love. From these we must pray to be saved if we would participate in the grace and blessedness of the kingdom of God, and have our part and lot with Christ Jesus in the glorious inheritance of the saints and saved of God. With six “Amens,” or “Verilys,” Christ has assured us that we each man must be born again if we see and enter the kingdom of God.

But whatever may befall those who make light of offered grace and salvation (and God’s anger must be against them because of his good-will contemned by them, because they reject the salvation purchased through the obedience unto death of his only begotten Son), his house and table shall be furnished with guests. A multitude which no man can number shall assemble to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The master of the house said unto his servant, “Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.”

THE SERVANT’S SECOND MISSION.

The Lord Jesus expounds here by a parable of his own kingdom what he had said to the Pharisee who had invited him to eat bread in his house, concerning the principles and laws that ought to prompt and regulate his exercise of hospitality. By an illustration taken from God’s method of procedure in bestowing upon men the blessings of his kingdom, he would teach us how we should proceed in showing benevolence or hospitality to our brethren of mankind. But more than this.

The Lord here indicates that if, when we say, "blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," we really mean to say, Oh that that blessedness were ours here and now! Then participation in that blessedness is now offered to us in the gospel; that if we come short of the great salvation, if we perish in our sin unpardoned, unregenerated, unsanctified, we perish without excuse—our guilt like our folly is our own; for Christ the Son of God offers to each of us a present, full, perfect, everlasting salvation. He commandeth us to repent and believe the gospel. He entreats, exhorts, beseeches us by the mercies of God, by the terrors of God, by every argument, if I may so speak, of the divine ingenuity, sincerity, and love, from his cradle, from his cross, from his throne, with tears, with smiles, with compassion, with majesty, from the depths of poverty and abasement, from the greater depths of his infinite pity and lovingkindness, from the agonies of Gethsemane and the mysterious sorrows of Calvary, as from his seat amidst the light and glories of the eternal throne, and from the bosom of his Father's love, delight, and good-will he pleads, reasons, beseeches us not to sin against God and our own souls, by making light of the mercy, grace, and righteousness now at this hour offered to us with all the sincerity, pathos, and earnestness of God—yea, of God and man in himself united. Why will ye die? Why perish for hunger? Why not now eat of the bread of life and drink of the water and very wine of life? For thus does he speak, "Come; for all things are now ready." And if argument were needed that there is enough for you, for me, for every one to whom the message of gospel is sent, it is found, not only in the good-will and grace that provided the feast and that sent the servant with the invitation to those that were bidden, but also in the righteous displeasure and anger of the master of the house at the slight put upon his good-will, and the contempt with which his invitation was treated by those who with one consent began to make excuse. The anger and wrath of God against unbelievers are proof and demonstration that ample provision is made in Christ Jesus for every sinner, and that God wills that all men should be saved. Let not, therefore, the sophistry of unbelief, or the casuistry of a suspicious, sin-loving

heart, beguile and deceive us. Rather let us believe the word, "All things are now ready;" and let him that heareth "Come;" yea, let him pass on the gracious word, "Come, for the master calleth for thee; come, for all things are now ready."

Out of the anger of the master of the house against those who slighted his invitation there breaks forth grace to others. The anger against the despisers gives urgency to the message of grace to others. Leave dealing with the aristocracy of land, wealth, religion, and comfortable respectability—leave the west end and upper ten thousand of society, and "go out *quickly* into the streets and lanes of the city." There, in the thoroughfares, lanes, wynds, vennels, and sunk in ignorance, destitution, and moral as well as social degradation, you will find those who will welcome the invitation to the supper,—the invitation spurned or politely disdained by those at ease who, like the full soul, loathe the honeycomb. You will not find there the elated and polite lauded proprietor, the courteous and busy merchant and farmer, and the contented, happy, and rejoicing husband. You will find "and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."

Not on a mission of mere attraction is the servant now sent; but on a mission of aggression. Say not merely that men are invited; that they are welcome; that they are expected; but "bring them in hither." They may wonder, and be incredulous. They may be surprised that they, out of their miseries, should be invited to sit as at the king's table, and see the king's face. Too good news to be true! We never heard such words of grace! They must be for others, not for us. How could we be thought of? It is a mistake: we are too far gone; we have no hope; we must die in our misery. These are very different sentiments from those of the dwellers in the stately west-end mansions of the social and religious world. But Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The whole have no need of a physician, but those that are sick. From preaching in the temple and in the synagogue to the fashionably religious, and to the scribes, lawyers, rulers of the people, and Pharisees, Jesus himself, as the Son serving his Father, and doing his will, went out into the streets and lanes of the city,

—went down into the depths and dungeons of human sin and of human degradation and misery, offering grace, righteousness, salvation, eternal life, to those amidst the social dregs, and reputed the very offals of society; and he brought up with him to faith, life, hope, light, love, honour, liberty, and joy, the publicans and the harlots—the moral and actual outcasts and pariahs of civil and, more especially, of religious and fashionable Pharisaic prudery, formality, and hypocrisy. “This man receiveth sinners,” said these Pharisees. He is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner. “Behold,” said they, “a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, the friend of publicans and sinners!” Yes, if, in dispensing mercy to the bodies of men, his congenial sphere was as in the infirmary and lazaret-house of the world—among the leprous, the paralytic, the possessed with devils, the poor, the lame, the maimed, the deaf, the blind—among those sick of fevers, or suffering from all manner of intense, varied, and complicated diseases, healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people; his congenial sphere in the moral and spiritual world is among the broken, crushed, bruised, grieved, downtrodden, vexed, sad, disconsolate—the weary in spirit, the heavy laden and burdened in mind—among those that are and feel themselves to be as orphans spiritually—nay, more, as blind, maimed, lame—poor, helpless, friendless orphans, forsaken, despairing, forlorn. To such he was sent: to such he was anointed with the Spirit of the Lord God to preach good tidings, to proclaim the year of grace and jubilee, and to convey righteousness, life, liberty, and salvation. And, faithful to his mission and embassy, rebuking the apathy and unbelief,—the formal religious contentedness of the unbelieving and self-complacent and self-righteous Pharisees, he said unto them, “Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” These accepted of the righteousness and blessedness of God, which the Pharisees disdained; and, being justified, having much forgiven, they loved much, and they glorified God, believing in Christ Jesus unto eternal life.

They, like the others, are thus not only historically, but also socially and morally or spiritually representative of men to

whom the message of grace is announced, and to whom are sent the servants of God. There is hope when a man begins to feel that his case is hopeless, life when he feels that he is lifeless, grace when he feels that he is graceless, righteousness when he feels that he deserves to be condemned, health when he begins to feel that none but Jesus the physician of God can heal his soul, and that no ointment or mollifying medicine can avail in his case, except the balm of Gilead, applied by him whose name is JEHOVAH ROPHKA, who was bruised for our iniquities, wounded for our transgressions, and by whose stripes we are healed. A sense of need, of guilt, of helplessness is the invariable precursor and attendant of faith in the all-sufficiency, completeness, suitability, efficacy of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the lost. Those thus touched by the Spirit of God, contrite and trembling at the Word of the Lord, are those to whom God from on high looks, and among and in whom he dwells as in his temple and palace, that he may revive the spirit of the humble, and revive the heart of the contrite ones. For God rejecteth the proud; but he giveth grace to the lowly. Hence Jesus calls, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." While formal and self-sufficient Pharisees wait on Christ's ministry to criticize, to judge him, to pronounce on his orthodoxy, to catch, if possible, something that may give a plausible pretext or colour to their unbelief, or to their accusation of malice against him, and while they go up to the temple to inform God how good and religious and exemplary they are, and how generous and benevolent they are, how different they are from men in general of whom they have a very low opinion, and especially how far they excel the poor publican who is crying for mercy so far back as if he stood in the court of the Gentiles, the poor despised publican and the harlot, whose spiritual substance has been utterly wasted, and who have no argument but their need and God's grace, hear Jesus gladly, and wondering at his words of grace, receive them into the heart, believing that God, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not the austere, tyrannical, hard, relentless, and merciless

Being pictured to them by Pharisaism, but is slow to anger, of great mercy, ready to forgive, even that "God who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Moloch is not God any more than Belial. Our God, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, delighteth in mercy; he has much more than king David the heart of a father longing to go out towards his banished to bring them back; he has the father's heart and the king's majesty. He doth not respect any. He is absolutely impartial and just; yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him. "Return, ye backsliding children, for I will surely have mercy upon you." This is his voice—this the voice of the Incarnate Son who is ever in the Father's bosom. This is the voice of Christ's atoning blood, crying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It is the voice of him that died and rose again, saying, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "None is good but one, that is God." "I will surely have mercy upon them." "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Brethren, it is in the faith of these things that I live. By these things I live; for this is none other thing than faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ,—faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. But why do I thus speak? Why? But, because, as a minister of Jesus Christ, I desire, pray, and labour, that each of you may attain to the faith in God that relies on him, and confides in him, not only as God all-sufficient, but as our Father in heaven who knows what we need, and will give to all who confide in him grace and glory. Sinner vile, guilty, despairing, come with me, and let us be introduced to the Eternal God, by his only Son Jesus Christ, who teaches us to call that God our God, and his Father our Father, because he hath taken us into brotherhood and sonship with himself, through the regeneration of the Spirit and the adoption of grace. He not only invites us to his table, but he condescends to come to be a guest with us who are sinners. Nay, he entreats that we receive his fellowship,

saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me." This is his attitude, this his action, this his voice, although rejected by the lukewarm Laodiceans, to those even in Laodicea who may be brought to feel their need of him, and to feel that their interest, duty, honour, and exalted privilege to sup with Jesus, and to have him in fellowship supping with them. What manner of grace, condescension, love, is this? "He receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

The servant returns from his aggressive mission to the streets and lanes of the city,—returns not, as before, sad, downcast, and sorrowful, but thankful and full of hope. His language indicates that there came with or were brought in by him numbers not a few from the city streets and lanes. A multitude of the poor, the lame, the maimed, the blind, came up to the door of the banqueting hall. They looked a ragged, wretched company, diseased, despondent, and to man's eye most despicable. But not so despicable in other men's eyes as in their own. They entered by the porch. They were there washed in a medicated bath. They were conducted into the dressing chamber. They were clothed with a change of raiment. Their rags were put away as they plunged into the fount of cleansing and of health. They are robed in the garments of righteousness, praise, and salvation. They enter the banquet room. Each looks a priest or king, a kingly priest, a priestly king, unto God, and unashamed, they, with faces lighted up with joy, the index of hearts transfigured with ineffable grace, they unite in the anthem, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us priests and kings unto God and his Father, to him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen." And as Bunyan said, "When I looked in and saw them, and heard their songs of joy, I could wish, I did wish, to be with them. But the Master's will is not yet. Conduct a few more to the Jordan, see them safely cross, and learn from them to trust my sure word, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest:' then thou also, laying aside thy sword and staff, and helmet and shield, shalt, standing in thy lot, put on the victor's

crown, wave the victor's palm, be clothed in the robes of white linen, clean and white, and sing for ever the loved song of Moses and the Lamb. Amen. Be it so, Lord Jesus !”

“And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.” It is the voice of Jesus respecting his ministry in the days of his flesh among the Jews. Father, “it is done.” “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,—that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

“It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.” Such is the servant's joyful report. It combines in it the expression of gratitude and of expectation. Not a few have come to sit down at the supper table. But there are still empty places there. There is room yet; and surely there is yet work for the servant. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? For yet there is room.

“I must,” said Jesus, “preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.” (Luke iv. 43.) And again, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also *I must bring*, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd.” (John x. 16.)

THE THIRD MISSION.

“And yet there is room,” said the servant. “And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” The hospitality of the master of the feast will not be satisfied till the house be filled with guests. Therefore, seeing that, according to the servant's report, there is yet room, a new com-

mission—a new direction—is given to the servant. From the streets and lanes of the city, he is now sent out into the highways and hedges. The pagans (*pagani*) are now included in the administration of the great and divine liberality. The cities have been evangelized. But the country, with its scattered villages, and dispersed and perishing millions, must not be uncared for. Jesus came into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. His fame had preceded him. It drew to him a mother who was in sore distress because her daughter was grievously tormented. “Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” He seemed neither to hear nor to heed the cry and passionate appeal. The disciples seemed, for the time, more benevolent than their Master. Not so was it in reality. Let me fall into his hands, but not into the hands of the gentlest and kindest of his servants. “It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs,” said he to the praying woman; and to the disciples he said, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The disciples could answer nothing. But the woman, by her faith, entangled and caught him in his own words. For surely, said she, “Thou, the Son of David, shalt not, wilt not, cannot be less kind than the children of ordinary and poor men; and yet even they grudge not that the little dogs under the table should have the crumbs that fall from their richly furnished table. True, Lord, I am low, vile, base, unworthy as a dog; yet, is it worthy of thee to deny me this crumb of mercy?” Thus did importunate faith appeal to Jesus; nor did it appeal in vain. “O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee according to thy faith. And her daughter was made whole from that hour.” Type and anticipating prefigurement this of the harvest of souls to be gathered into the kingdom of God from the Gentile world—from the highways and hedges. Similarly, when Jesus heard the words of the centurion of Capernaum, saying, “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. He marvelled, saying

unto them who followed him, Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

In his valedictory words, almost immediately before he was received up into glory, Jesus said to the disciples, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming unto you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, *and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"

Christ, by his Spirit, with the Word ministered by his servants, has, for these eighteen hundred years or more, been preaching the good news to those in the highways and hedges of the world.

In the instructions given on this occasion to the servant there is a word which has been twisted, tortured, wrested, perverted, to an amazing degree. It is the word "compel" them to come in. Pains and penalties, fines, mutilations, forfeiture of liberty and goods, imprisonment and persecution unto death, because of religion, and in favour of the interests of the kingdom of God, have found justification and sanction in this word! Ultracalvinism and Ultramontaniam find a common ground, or basis, in this word of Jesus. But in this word there is nothing to vindicate the exaggerations of hyper-Calvinism—of a Calvinism verging on fatalism; much less is there here anything to give the shadow of a sanction to Ultramontaniam, or any form of persecution, because of religion. The temporal sword—physical force—must not have any place whatever within God's kingdom of grace. Nor must it be used for the direct and spiritual objects and ends of that kingdom. Compel men to come to a supper! Compel men by force, torture, imprisonment, death, to come to participate in grace! Compel men by physical force, by physical constraint, by pains and penalties, to enter into communion with God, to go to church, to be religious, to believe in Jesus, to go to the Lord's Supper! The idea is abhorrent to religion, to humanity, to liberty, to God. It is a prostitution and profanation of Christianity, and of civil

freedom. It is Cain lifting his hand against his brother Abel, because that brother, differing from Cain, was accepted before God. Conformity has more than sufficient or justifiable argument, in every church established in Christendom, by its endowments, immunities, prestige, and privileges, without making participation in its worship and communion the condition of admission to all the rights, privileges, and offices proper to civil citizenship. And yet, in the so-called Protestant and Reformed Church of England, this was, till not very long ago, the law. And to protest against this iniquitous prostitution of the Lord's Supper, and this violation of the primary laws of free citizenship, was to be guilty of radicalism, or of seeking to subvert the constitution in church and state ! That church learned its lesson in this matter, as in the court of High Commission, and many others, not at the feet of Jesus, but at the feet of Antichrist. As an Irish peasant once remarked to me, "Men won't be scolded, much less scalded, out of or into a religion." "Come, now," saith God, "let us reason together;" and his servant Paul says, "I speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say."

The words, "compel them to come in, that my house may be filled," reveal the intense and eager earnestness of him who sends his servant out into the highways and hedges to see assembled around him at his table a multitude whose happiness shall be a reflection of the good-will that provided the feast and furnished the table. They are expressive spiritually of the divine solicitude for the felicity of man. At first, no such word was addressed to the servant. And he delivered his message, and reported a polite declinature of the invitation on the part of those invited. The servant does not seem, from the parable, to have used any urgency or vehemency of entreaty, appeal, and persuasion. And one of the penalties of fashionable respectability and elevated rank is, that even God's servants often seem paralysed in their presence; and instead of using great plainness of speech, and addressing them as great at once in rank and great in sin, they, speaking to ears polite, give a polished and refined version of the law and gospel to those genteel and aristocratic sinners; they do not use a becoming directness and plainness of speech. The fear of man has proved to them a

snare; and they report failure and disappointment. What else could they report? And if our finical essays, our pretty theological billets-doux are to be the fashionable and prevailing type of west-end preaching, I need no prophetic vision or revelation to verify this announcement, that not only is the complaint well-grounded respecting a fecklessness in pulpit ministration and eloquence, but that this thing—which is neither manliness nor godliness, neither philosophy nor religion, neither law nor gospel, neither fish nor flesh, neither meat nor drink, neither fit for infants nor young men nor fathers, neither fit for sinners nor for saints, although fitted to entertain on a Saturday or Sabbath afternoon an audience of the gay and thoughtless, who find in it, such regalement as, the scenes and actors being changed, they find in the concert, opera, or theatre—will prove, as it is proving to a very ominous extent in certain circles, the ruin, undermining, and destruction of all serious and evangelical religion and holy living. John Wycliffe said, five hundred years ago, that the downfall of religion begins with a *perverted* clergy, and that the revival and reformation of religion begins with a *converted* clergy. Fearful in this view is our responsibility as ministers of the gospel and kingdom of God.

In the instruction to the servant sent into the streets and lanes of the city there was tacitly involved or signified what is expressed by “compel them” to come in, for it was said to the servant, “Bring them in.”

Here, however, the language is urgent, emphatic, and most expressive. It is as if it were said: Take no apology. Be not put off by polite and courteous excuses. Plead, reason, urge, entreat. Be instant in season, out of season. Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire. Let them know that you will not give them rest, as you will take none to yourself, till they consent to come with you to keep the supper and feast of the Lord,—till, believing through grace in Christ Jesus, they be able to say, “Truly our friendship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

“And yet there is room.”

Where, it may be asked, is this room? It is in the house of

God, which is not yet filled. It is at the supper and feast of the Lord. There is yet room in that house and at that table for the poor, and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind, for the outcast and pariahs of society, for vilest sinners and most profligate prodigals. Yet there is room for thee, hearing the word of grace and of the kingdom. Come then, and instead of needing violence to bring thee, or to compel thee to come in, use holy violence in entering into the kingdom of God. For it suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Strive, as one in agony, to enter in by the strait gate into the narrow way; for wide is the gate and broad the way leading to destruction: and many go in by that gate, and walk in that broad way; but strait is the gate and narrow the way leading to life, and few there be that find it.

ROOM YET IN THE MERCY OF GOD.

Yet there is room where it was first opened and found—IN THE MERCY AND GRACE OF GOD. Mercy is still God's darling attribute, as an old writer speaks. For "Who, says the prophet, is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, that passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because HE DELIGHTETH IN MERCY." Often in my musings and in my foolish and silly thoughts did I wonder why God should have been, as it were, at so great pains to commend himself in his mercy to mankind. And I suppose that in these musings and thoughts, I only felt as myriads of my fellow-men think and feel and have thought and felt. For if there is any truth from the opening chapter of Genesis to the closing words of the book of Revelation which the Holy Spirit of God is careful to bring into promineney, and to write in every variety of letter, expression, and form, it is this, that God delighteth in mercy; that he is good and ready to forgive: for in this way he gives contradiction to the diabolical and successful lie that God grudged, envied, or restricted the happiness of man. I ceased to wonder and muse after this sort when very early I observed within myself, as I have

since had ample and frequent opportunity of observing in others, that the most incredible thing to a soul conscious of guilt before God is, that God can or will be gracious and merciful. It is, in fact, the last thing that an awakened and anxious soul will receive as true. Hence the fearful agonies through which some of God's dear servants and children have passed and are passing in their transition from nature to grace, from death to life, from the sense of condemnation to the fact and sense of acceptance and justification before God, and from the spirit of bondage to the spirit of adoption, according to which they cry, Abba, Father. The apathetic and the spiritually dead or asleep may find it easy to believe as in dreams or reverie that God is merciful, and that he is too good, benevolent, and kind to condemn them because of their infirmities, frivolities, trivial offences, and sins. But when the law or Word of God comes with divine light, majesty, and authority, revealing God and sin, justice and guilt, then all vain hopes are laid in the dust, and the man dies. He is without hope, because God is just and holy, as well as good. In vain do you, a miserable comforter, tell him of the universal and paternal benevolence of Deity. The man does not question that. But because he believes it as you do not, and in your present apathy, cannot, he is sunk in despair, for he knows of no goodness in God that is not the outcome as well of justice as of benevolence; and the cry of his soul, whether it ascend from the college in the wilderness with Job, or from the halls of modern culture with Wesley and Whitfield and others of recent and honoured name, is, "How shall man be just with God?" Well, knowing the agitations, heavings, anxieties, and deep, deep necessities of man, when man really begins to consider his position before God, and his relation to him, the LORD has been, like a loving father, solicitous to anticipate the workings of the prodigal's heart, and comes forth to meet the anxious, poor, and perplexed, the self-condemning, God-justifying sinner, declaring his name, and saying, "JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." This is his name,

that men may trust in him. For to him belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him. For saith the same Lord God, "Mercy shall be built up for ever." And in response to this purpose and revelation of God in his mercy and grace, the sinner, rising into the life of faith, and of incipient hope, may be heard saying, "I will sing of mercy and of judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing." And to the Lord belongeth mercy. There is mercy with thee, O God, that thou mayest be feared. Therefore do the sons of men put their trust in the shadow of thy wings. Hence the publican, standing afar off, not venturing to lift up his eyes unto heaven, smiting on his breast, cries, "God be merciful to me *the* sinner." And as it is written, "Every one that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved," it is recorded of that praying, sin-confessing publican that he went down to his house from the temple of God justified. Mercy walks, no doubt, leaning on the arm of Omnipotence, guarded and protected from insult, injury, and wrong by the consuming fire of eternal and inviolable justice. Yes, justice and judgment are the habitation of God's throne; mercy and truth go continually before him.

The grace, or undeserved good-will of God to the guilty, and his mercy or good-will and compassion to the wretched and the miserable, come forth in quest of the perishing and the lost. Grace and truth have come by Jesus Christ. Believest thou this? Believest thou that there is room for sinners,—room for thee in the amplitudes of the mercy and the grace of God? O my brother, think well, think generously of God. He is God, and not man. For thus he testifies concerning himself that we may trust in him—"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." "These words," says that sainted man of God, the late Dr. Charles MacIntosh of Dunoon, "refer to God's ways and thoughts in redemption. The proposition is true, indeed, in the widest sense. All God's ways and thoughts are infinitely higher than ours; but it is here more especially applied to pardon. The preceding verse contained that gracious command, 'Let the

wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' But this assurance of mercy and pardon as ready to greet the penitent, being in itself so wondrous, and so contrary to all that the consciousness of guilt leads the awakened sinner to expect, the Lord, to encourage him to receive the truth, follows up his invitation with the words, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.' Some persons may think that there is nothing in this very difficult to compass, and that there is no truth easier of reception than that the Lord is gracious. But what is the secret of the ease with which they believe this great truth ? It is that they have never felt the wound or sting of sin : they have never been brought as justly condemned criminals to God's bar. Their faith in the divine forgiveness is all a dream. The words seem intended to teach not only that there is mercy in God, but that there is mercy enough and pardon enough for the convinced and consciously self-destroyed sinner. They teach that that mercy is real and is infinite. And if it is infinite, is it not enough for you, however great your sins ? None ever perished for want of mercy. Many have perished for despising mercy, many for rejecting mercy ; many have perished for sinning because mercy abounds ; but none ever perished because there was not enough of mercy."* In keeping with these views of mercy, the chaste, earnest preacher, the most resembling Leighton in style and thought among Scottish theologians since the time of Leighton, speaks of God as pardoning freely, fully, heartily, unalterably. This is the gospel of the unsearchable riches of the mercy and grace of God. For this infinite and free, moving mercy and love of God in compassion to guilty man opened room for him in the house of God, a mansion in the heavens, a place in communion with the Eternal Father ; and "yet there is room." Why divide between the ability of God to save and the willingness or grace of God the Saviour ? Why say, If thou wilt, thou

* *Memoir and Sermons* of the late Dr. Charles Macintosh.

canst? or why again say, If thou canst do anything for me, do it? Trust at once in the willingness and the ability of God by Jesus Christ. "Only believe;" for there is not lacking aught on his part. Come, then, come; for yet there is room in the mercy of God,—room for thee, poor, halt, maimed, blind. For not by works of righteousness on our part, but by his mercy and grace he saves us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROOM YET IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD.

Yet there is room in the PURPOSE, or design, and decree of God. It is the fixed and unalterable purpose of God to save a multitude of sinful men by and in Jesus Christ,—a multitude which no man can number, who shall be to the praise of the glory of his grace through the ages of eternity. That purpose is from everlasting to everlasting. It is sure and unchangeable as the nature of God. And because it is so, it lays a sure foundation for faith and for hope. Contingency here would be fatal to faith and to salvation. Contingency in purpose, plan, and design, may belong to man, but cannot belong to God. But, just because man is a creature of contingent purposes, he is unreliable. Faith cannot absolutely rest or repose in him. He may propose; but his purposes may be frustrated, thwarted, and rendered ineffectual. He sees not afar off. His ability is, like his foresight, limited. What is he, that he should be accounted of? "But I am the Lord; I change not; therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed." Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. He is not man, or son of man, that he should repent. "My purpose shall stand; and I will do all my pleasure." This gracious and absolute purpose of God is revealed in the gospel, and takes effect by the gospel. It is in Christ, by Christ, with Christ, for Christ, through Christ. He is all in all in the purpose of God; and when the sinner takes him to be all in all, then God and the sinner agree in purpose, love, and good-will. Till a man submit to this will of God, acquiesce in this purpose and plan

of God, and consent to Christ as revealing and executing the Father's purpose of mercy and grace, no man is a new creature, —no man is a regenerate man,—no man is properly a child and heir of God. On the contrary, he is contravening, thwarting, fighting against the grace and purpose of God,—against the method, plan, and principles of his moral government in nature, and his reign of grace in righteousness by Jesus Christ. I enter here into no theological debates; I touch on no questions of theological casuistry. They are to me, when I come to deal with the question of your or my own personal relation to God and salvation, as so many cobwebs. After having from my childhood, I may say, meditated on the absolute sovereignty of God, and the questions of duty and human responsibility, and holding at once the absoluteness of God's decree, the freeness of God's offered mercy, the all-sufficiency of Christ Jesus, the imperiousness and urgency of the duty to believe in God, to acquiesce in his revealed and gracious will, and the tremendous responsibility attached to having had opportunity of hearing of Christ and his salvation, and of having that Saviour and his salvation pressed and urged on my acceptance, in declaring God's gracious purpose, or expression of his good-will, to guilty men, according to which he commandeth every man to believe in the name of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ—that is, commandeth me and you and all others to confide in Christ with a trust, reliance, or confidence bearing some little progressive proportion to his infinite trustworthiness, merit, grace, and all-sufficiency,—I shall not be guilty, as John Calvin puts it, of plunging through the decree of predestination into the vortex of perdition, or of plunging into the vortex of predestination, when I ought rather to flee to Jesus for salvation from sin and from wrath. It is true I cannot. It is true I must believe. It is true that my "cannot" resolves itself into "I will not." And I am in a strait. I neither find to will nor to perform. I therefore cry to God; for in my strait—in my very sense of unwillingness and inability between I cannot and I must—there is room for God graciously to interpose; and I know that there is room in his grace even for me. "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."

After all, what is it we have here to deal with? It is a strife between two wills or purposes. It is God's will and purpose, God's method, plan, and decree on the one side, and the sinner's will and purpose, the sinner's method, plan, and decree on the other side. Which shall yield? Eternal destiny hinges on that question or on the answer practically given to it. Shall it be put thus, God wills and the sinner shall; or the sinner wills and God shall? Is it or is it not reasonable that God's will should rule the sinner's? Or must the sinner's will dictate law to God? Reason, conscience, Scripture, experience, the saved and the damned, say, Submit, O sinner; submit thy will to God. Salvation is another name for this willing submission of the will to God.

What is this method of salvation by the decree or purpose of God? Is it such as precludes the action, free, spontaneous, gracious, here and now, of my Father in heaven? To say so would be to preach fatalism. But my God, my Father, is free. He is God, and therefore free. His purpose does not supersede my prayer; not only does it leave room for it, it opens the avenue by which it ascends from my sad and anxious heart to the eternal throne. The "now" of God must not be set against the eternal past, nor must the future be set against the same eternal "now." He calleth me to-day. He says, "now," to-day is the day of grace. Believe now on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Faith, prayer, hope, all climb up to our Father as he now is in Christ. This, my beloved brethren, is one main source of that ineffable tranquillity of soul, which, as some of you know, I have for a time enjoyed.

Why should it be thought unreasonable that God's will should prevail against and over the will of the sinner? And as God's plan is but the expression of God's will, and as in nature everything is adjusted according to a stupendous plan,—a plan as marvellous in its minuteness and microscopic nicety of detail as in its vastness; so in grace, when the Incarnate Son of God is to give his life a ransom for many,—when this little globe is to be the theatre of the most mysterious and miraculous display of divine wisdom, grace, truth, justice, weakness, and power given to the universe, why should it be thought unreasonable that

everything in this great interposition of grace from God should, from its grandest outline and purpose, idea and thought, to its minutest and most microscopic details, be governed, regulated, controlled, and determined by the will of that God who is infinitely, absolutely good ?

In this plan of salvation, or in the salvation from sin and wrath, and in the bestowment of eternal life upon men by Jesus Christ, everything is regulated and determined by the will, purpose, decree of God. For God has not merely in his wisdom and grace conceived and thought out the idea of redemption ; he has not merely given Christ to be the propitiation for the sins of men ; he has not merely brought men thereby into a salvable state, or rendered their salvation possible ; he has not merely given promise of the Holy Ghost to quicken, regenerate, and sanctify men ; but he has so ordered, arranged, and provided that what is offered, what has been procured, what is actually and most certainly bestowed is salvation, not salvability. A complete Saviour, with a complete salvation, is what is revealed in God's Word, and is what, with lisping and stammering tongue, I have sought and do seek to preach, offer, and, in God's name, commend unto you, as it is in that complete Saviour I myself confide, and in him find wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. God has not here, any more than in nature and in the kingdom of daily providence, set a mighty system of machinery—means and ends—in motion, and then withdrawn behind the scene of wondrous self-evolving phenomena, products, or events. All things around us in the realms of nature and providence indicate infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, in pre-adjustment and adaptation of means and ends ; and in the day by day and continuous evolution of ends there is evidence of the ever-acting, ever-working, constant intervention of a God personal, almighty, wise, good, sovereign, and free. God presides and prevails by his wisdom, goodness, and power, in the execution of his purpose, carrying forward the worlds in their ages, seasons, changes, in their grandest as in their least observable movements,—in pathways of suns and systems through immensity,—and in the most delicately and seemingly self-evolving

tints that mark the growth of the little daisy, that "crimson tipped" flower, to the end for which he has ordained—namely, that his glory shall be evolved from all, and shall be seen to be the tribute of universal creation to its absolute and sovereign Lord, Creator, God, and King. And in the reign and realm of grace salvation originates in God, is procured by him, is in him, and is dispensed by him. Nothing is here fortuitous. The cross has not been set up contingently or by accident. The end is predestinated by God. The means and end are infallibly linked together. To God they are as one. Even as a thousand years are as yesterday, or one day; and one day as a thousand years. God's will, purpose, decree, God's direct agency, by his eternal and gracious Spirit, prevails in the application of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus as certainly as in any part of the stupendous economy and administration of grace. Hence God is all in all by Jesus Christ. And as we only know and can only do in the world of science, nature, and art, according to the measure of our right apprehension and interpretation of nature and its phenomena, so is it here in grace. And as the law of all natural power and science is that man, the minister and interpreter of God's works, or of God's will, purpose, wisdom, goodness, and power, shall himself attain to natural wisdom, goodness, and power, by discovering and submitting to the will of God, written in the stones and strata of geology, and shining with most splendid illumination from the stars of heaven; so in grace we enter the kingdom, make progress in divine science, enjoy its divine privileges, rise and grow up to its divine holiness and blessedness by humbling ourselves and our will before God and his will. When we cease from our own wisdom, righteousness, life, ends, power, and glory, and accept and acquiesce in God's wisdom, righteousness, life, ends, power, and glory—in other words, when we consent to let God's will, and purpose, and decree become our will, purpose, and decree, we are not only in a salvable state, but we are, blessed be God, saved, and become possessors and heirs of eternal life, and are entitled to the most unrestricted use and enjoyment of the charter of our privileges in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. For now there is no condemnation

to us in Christ Jesus; and nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It was in the first temptation the aim and policy of the devil to insinuate the thought and to induce the persuasion that there was inconsistency between God's absolute supremacy and man's felicity or blessedness. For absolute supremacy involves as its correlate, absolute or entire dependence. Man was happy so long as this relationship was practically and consciously admitted by him. Man perished that moment when, listening to the suggestion of Satan the old serpent, he questioned and denied the rectitude and truth and goodness involved in this relationship. Ambitious to be independent of God, and to grasp at the sovereignty of God, man became the slave of his sin, and the vassal of Satan, and the child of wrath, being the child of disobedience. In destroying the works of the devil, Christ Jesus, by his cross and by his grace, restores man to his lost estate—yea, raises him to a state better fortified and secured, and drawing with it greater and better privileges than those lost and forfeited in Adam: but Christ Jesus does this, first, by becoming himself subject and dependent, obedient even unto death, that atonement for man's sin might be made, and righteousness and redemption for man procured; and, secondly, he does it by bringing man back to an acknowledgement of his absolute dependence upon God. From beginning to end, if we can speak thus where there is neither beginning nor end, the grace of God is so dispensed that God's will and purpose shall be supreme, and that man's will and purpose shall be none other than acquiescence in the will and purpose of God by Jesus Christ.

If these things be so, why, my soul, should the divine sovereignty or the divine decree be accounted or thought of as a bar and impediment to thy salvation? Rightly, humbly, devoutly thought of and considered, it is so far from being any bar or impediment, that, on the contrary, it is the spring, source, and guarantee of thy salvation. And yet who has not felt and, it may be, given at some time in life utterance to the words, "If these things are true, I'm a lost man." These were the words of a man of remarkable character and history,—so remarkable,

indeed, that when he lived without God, and denied and disowned God, the Mahometan soldiers or troopers of Hyder Ali, who caught him as he was attempting to escape from his imprisonment, exclaimed, when they heard the almost miraculous manner of his escape, "This is God's man!" After a very singular and eventful career, he returned to spend the evening of his godless day near Portsea. There, going on a Sabbath, with his niece, to hear the Rev. J. Giffin, he was so impressed with the sermon that he gave utterance to the words, "If these things are true, I'm a lost man!" These things were preached from the text in the eighth chapter of the Romans, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called," with the preceding words, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Listening to the evangelical exposition of these things, the sceptic's scoffing spirit was subdued. The big tear rolled down his weather-beaten face, and he said, "I'm a lost man!" His niece, a godly young woman, rejoiced that her uncle discovered for the first time that he needed a Saviour, and that if saved, his salvation must be of grace by Jesus Christ. He went home to pray over his Bible, and he was not long in meeting with that gracious Lord Jesus who came to seek and to save the lost, and to give his life a ransom for many. And with Paul, now striving to build up what before he had tried to throw and pull down, he offered his services to the London Missionary Society, that had recently been organized, to take charge of any ship they might entrust to him, with missionaries bound for any place in the world. And having commanded the ship "Duff," and landed in Otaheite the cargo of missionaries, the first from the British shores, Captain Wilson died in 1814, a director of the London Missionary Society.*

Say not, that if God has a purpose of mercy, you must therefore perish; but rather because God purposes and decrees to save sinners, and has declared that all things on his part are ready, avail yourself of the offered grace and mercy, and come

* Giffin's *Memoir of Captain Wilson*.

to God in Christ; for yet there is room in God's purpose—room for you—room for everyone who will let God have his way, according to his will, in the matter of everlasting salvation.

“We preach only to the elect here,” was a remark once made to Rowland Hill, when he was making ready to enter a pulpit in an ultracalvinistic congregation. “Very well,” said Mr Hill, “and so shall I preach only to them, if you point them out by head-mark, or otherwise, to me. But, in the meantime, I shall preach to sinners, that they may discover and make sure their calling and election of God, by complying with the invitation of the gospel, and by their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in Christ Jesus.”

Referring to the soul-ruining and fatal notions entertained by some concerning their election of God, Luther exclaimed on one occasion, “Lord, deliver me from a congregation of saints!” To save sinners Christ came into the world; and unto sinners, whether in the west end, or in the streets and lanes of the city,—whether in Judea, or among the Gentiles, Christ gave commandment that the gospel should be preached and offered. As a sinner, there is room in God's grace and purpose for you. Come, and welcome. Come, for he calleth for you.

Why stagger at the word Calvinism? What is it? What does it denote? It denotes and signifies God's plan of salvation. It is salvation offered to every sinner who submits his will to the will of God; who is willing to accept salvation on the terms according to which God offers it to men. Surely it is meet that we say, “Lord, not as I will, but as thou wilt; Father in heaven, thy will be done.” “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” “Come; for all things are now ready.” But, Lord, is there room in thy purpose? Is my name in the Lamb's book of life? Come, leave that to me. Have not I commanded thee. Come. But, Lord, I cannot reconcile thy mercy, and thy decree, thy sovereignty, and my duty. That is none of thy business: my call, command, entreaty is, “Come; for all things are now ready.” Leave all these questions to me. Only come, and believe, and all things are possible unto thee. Lord, amen. “I do believe: help me against my unbelief.”

Take away all my iniquity, and receive me graciously. Lord, I come, for thou callest me. Draw me, and I will run after thee; for thou sayest that yet there is room,—room for the guilty, room for the weary, room for me. No more, Lord, shall I question thy goodness in thy decree and purpose. No more shall I indulge the ambition of being an apologist for thee. Henceforth, for me to live is Christ, in whom is all thy purpose, all thy grace, all thy mercy, all thy glory, and in whom is all my salvation, all my desire. For thou sayest, “Yet there is room.”

ROOM YET IN THE MERIT OF CHRIST.

Yet there is room, where the mercy and the purpose of God meet and intermingle, unite, incorporate, and co-operate for the salvation of guilty and lost men—in the cross of Christ, and in the fountain opened in his blood for the cleansing and taking away of all sin. “For if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him unto the death for us all, will he not with him also freely give us all things?” He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. That cross was set up; Jesus the Son of God suffered on the tree of cursing; that blood flowed with water from his wounded side; that cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,” ascended to the Father with the prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Why? For this end, that the mercy and the purpose of God might flow forth as from under the throne of eternal justice, with life, righteousness, and salvation to guilty man. Christ Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and rose again, that, divine justice being satisfied, the divine law being magnified and made honourable, reconciliation being effected between God and guilty man, an everlasting righteousness being provided through the mediation and merits of the Son of God, the way into the holiest of all might be opened for all who come unto God by Jesus Christ. There is ample, infinite merit, virtue, efficacy, in the obedience unto death of the Son of God. In looking directly to Christ crucified, let not one

thought about the extent or destination of the benefit of his atonement distract or perplex you. At this stage in your experience, any such thought is not of God: it is of the devil. He is lifted up that, looking to him, believing in him, every sinner may derive from him, and find in him, everlasting life. This is the gospel of the grace of God. Here and throughout, let it be remembered that it is with CHRIST HIMSELF that we have to do. I know of no truth in the revelation of grace abstracted from Christ. I know of no atonement or righteousness apart from Christ making the atonement, providing and bestowing the righteousness. I know of no cross apart from Christ. CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED is the person in whom I believe,—the person, and subject, and theme, and topic of all my meditation, and of all my ministry. As a very humble young Christian woman, speaking to her companion, said, “Woman, don’t be so concerned about getting peace. You may get peace without himself; but when he comes into your soul he will bring peace along with him,”—so I preach, There is room in the merit of Christ crucified for thee, O sinner; and as thou lookest thou art healed, justified, saved. Look to ME, is his call. I refuse, as I hear him call, and as I look directly to him, to be distracted by any question whatever that would in any way, degree, or measure avert my eye from him, or in any way whatever mar the exercise of a faith reposing and finding rest, righteousness, endless life—all things in Christ crucified, Christ all-sufficient. The devil is the father of much of our theological and distracting controversies. He came into paradise with his “Yea, hath God said?” with his “Thou shalt not,” against God’s “Thou shalt,” and with his false and fatal plausibility. He approached Christ himself in the wilderness, on the mountain top, on the pinnacle of the temple, and on the cross, with his characteristic “If thou be the Son of God.” And when I look up to the crucified Son of God, Satan, the tempter, the murderer, and deceiver of souls, comes in the Geneva gown of an orthodox theologian, and whispers, Yea, hath Christ died for thee? What if he has not included you in the merit of his atonement? What if your name is not on the shoulder-plate, or on the breast-plate, of the Great High

Priest? In reply, as I look, for I dare not withdraw my eye from the atoning Son of God, I say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Here Christ destroys all thy works in my soul. Get thee behind me, with thy stolen Geneva gown. Calvin wore it not. Calvin I know. Christ I see: but thou, with thy stolen gown, and with thy false and lying tongue, art not only an enemy to my salvation, but thou art even here, so near to the cross, the devil that delivered up my suffering Saviour to be crucified. In the name of that Saviour, get thee hence; for my soul is escaped, not from orthodoxy, but from the devil's orthodoxy. Here I'll stay. And here, my fellow-sinner, come and stay with me; for yet there is room in the all-sufficiency—in the boundless and infinite merit of Christ, for every sinner that looks to him for righteousness, life, and salvation.

But you ask me, Are you not a Calvinist? Yes, I am a Calvinist. Do you not hold the definiteness of the destination of the atonement or redemption by Christ? Yes, I do. And because I am a Calvinist, and because I believe that Christ, in offering himself to me, or in entreating me to look to him, offers to me, not a possible salvation, but an actual and complete salvation, I refuse to accept Satan's lies and casuistries as the substitute for the Calvinism of John Calvin, or rather of the Spirit of God, just as I refuse to take a general, vague, or indefinite substitution of Christ instead of Christ himself, the substitute atonement, righteousness, and life of God for me, and for every sinner looking to him and confiding in him. O Calvinism! O my Lord Jesus! Often hast been wounded in the house of thy theological friends, who have forgotten in their theology that they are sinners, and can play at their theological game beneath thy cross! My Lord and God, thou Bleeding Lamb, preserve me for ever from this sportful theology! Are not thine outstretched arms on the accursed tree, are not thine hands lifted up to bless as thou art parting from thy disciples, index of thy relation to the world and to me? I see these hands wide-stretched to receive me, to welcome me to Calvary, and I see the same hands lifted up to bless me as I look up wondering, while Jesus, the Son of God, that loved me and gave himself for me, ascends to the glories, amidst the

light and splendours of which he is hid from the eye of blind unbelief.

The fountain opened in the house of David is a fountain, not a mere reservoir, not a walled-in or dammed-up enclosure to which only a few of the more select of sinners are invited ; it is a fountain for sin and uncleanness, and for sinners as sinners, and the unclean as unclean ; and as a herald in the kingdom of God, my duty is to say to every sinner—myself setting the example, “Come, let us wash and be clean ; for the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth from all sin.” “I saw a multitude, which no man could number, stand before the throne in heaven ; they had palms in their hands ; they were clothed in white ; and the song was on their lips, Salvation unto our God and to the Lamb, while they served the Lord day and night in his temple ; and to my question, Who are these ? and, Whence came they ? I received answer, “These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, *therefore* are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.” Come, my fellow-sinner, come as we are, let us wash in this blood, and our robes shall be white, and we at length, after a little more tribulation, shall be welcomed to walk in white with our Lord Jesus Christ, and with his redeemed, joyful, and triumphant church. We shall then hunger no more, thirst no more ; the sun shall not smite us by day nor the moon by night : want and weariness, sin and sorrow, sadness and mourning, sighing and grief shall pass away. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us, and lead us to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes : then, brother, we shall know, as we do not now, the Word that teaches us that Christ Jesus is anointed and appointed to give unto Zion’s mourners beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. For the ransomed of the Lord, those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, those washed in that efficacious blood, shall return and come to Zion with songs, and there everlasting joy as a diadem of glory shall be upon their heads.

“Wash thou me, O Lord, and I shall be clean; yea, wash thou me, and I shall be whiter than the snow.”

Sphinx-like figures, and wild, and monstrous theological creations have been set up at the entrance to this fountain of blood, and venturesome men have dared, as by forms like Gog and Magog, to add to the terrors of poor, polluted, perishing sinners as they draw near the blood to wash and be washed in it. Suspicions, possibilities, reasonable doubts, hints, inuendoes, *buts* and *ifs*,—oh, how, if to the ignorant they are but called Amyraldism, do they, in the mists of unhealthy and diseased theological imaginations, attain to the magnitude of lions, bears, wolves, and giants, barring the way to the fountain of Christ’s blood? My perishing and polluted brethren look with me. Is not that the sword as of flaming and fiery cherubim or seraphim? Does it not keep the way to this fountain? Yes, it keeps it, watches it, guards it, as with the consuming fire of our God; but keeps it, guards it, watches it, that the way may be, as it is, open for you and for me, now that we have said, “Let us wash and be clean.” The sum of saving knowledge for you and for me is this, “Go, wash and be clean;” for “God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The revival of an old heresy, or the raising unnecessarily the hue and cry of heresy, is second only to the original begetting or first propagation of heresy. But call us what they will, my brother, let us go to the fountain, wash and be clean. Nay, let us shout and publish, as with the voice of all the trumpets of Zion, Come, fellow-sinners, come; for yet there is ample room in the blood-merits and righteousness of Christ for every one who will come, using a godly violence against all opposition, be it of what kind, or sort, or decree it may. “Him that cometh unto me, I shall in nowise cast out.”

ROOM YET IN THE INVITATIONS AND PROMISES OF GRACE.

Yet there is room in the mercy and decree of God, as they stream forth from the foot of the cross, or come to us in the form of gospel invitations and gospel promises, dipped, steeped,

or sprinkled, each one of them, by the blood of Christ, and perfumed with the fragrance of the anointing oil of God the Holy Ghost.

Here I delight, as you know, to dwell. Yet there is room in the invitations of grace and mercy and good-will from God. The gospel, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, is in one grand aspect the gospel announcing the Saviour, proclaiming salvation, offering to men eternal life, inviting men to come to Jesus, and be saved from sin and wrath, and to sit down for ever in the kingdom and house of God. He does Christ no service who publishes these invitations with any restriction, with any *but*, or *if*, or condition whatsoever. The grace offered knows no such condition. It is divinely absolutely gratuitous—divinely absolutely free. And the invitations of the gospel are but the expression of that grace. Every invitation of mercy and grace in God's Word is addressed to me as a sinner. The Lord forbid that I should add sin to sin, evangelical damnation, with the wrath of the Lamb, to the legal condemnation, under which by nature I am already, as by nature corrupt, and a child of disobedience and guilt. An invitation of mercy from God, coming through the blood of Christ, and made by Christ, who died to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is a most sacred thing. It is the most sacred of all commandments spoken to the sinner by God. It is mercy, grace, love, in blood and tears, commanding, entreating, beseeching, compelling men to flee from **THE WRATH TO COME** and to lay hold of Christ, and in him of eternal life. It is as the hand of the angel of God taking the sinner by the hand to draw him out of the pit, and out of the city of destruction, and to conduct him to the city of God, and to the Father's house. My soul, my prodigal-like soul wilt thou, canst thou, darest thou to resist and withstand that infinitely condescending grace and mercy? Nay, thou darest not. But rather with the child Samuel, thou sayest, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" with the sorrowful Ruth thou sayest, "Entreat me not to leave, nor to return from following after thee: for thy people my people, thy God my God: where thou lodgest, I will lodge." This is my rest for ever; and with Saul of Tarsus, when struck down by infinite, omnipotent, exemplary mercy, and frustrated in his purpose

and expectations,—for in that day his old thoughts perished, and the old man in him died,—thou prayest, saying, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Yet there is room. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is yet room in the promises of grace. These are, in relation to the offers and invitation of mercy and grace, what an inner avenue, or hall, or chamber is to one who has passed through the wicket gate with dear Old Pilgrim, whom I joined in early boyhood, having asked my mother whither the pilgrim traveller was bound. She told me, homeward, upward, heavenward, by the way of the hill Difficulty, by the way of the valley of Humiliation, by the way through Vanity Fair, by the way that passes near by the castle and seat of Giant Despair, by the way that leads through Beulah land, and over the Celestial Mountains, and across the river, up to my home in my Father’s house. These promises belong not to us, my dear brethren—brothers, sisters—so long as we continue in unbelief, except thus far, that they are testimonies to the grace and good-will of God,—testimonies, therefore, against our unbelief, and continued estrangement in heart and life from him; and they are as heavenly chains let down, that we, laying hold on them, may by them be drawn upward into communion and fellowship with God our Father in heaven. IN Christ they are ours. Come, then, be the children of the promise. For to those in Christ all the promises of grace and glory belong, and in them they shall all receive accomplishment. The gospel is essentially a covenant of promise. Come and serve yourself heir to the promised gift of righteousness and eternal life. Then, for your present doubts, fears, solitudes, you shall be heard singing, “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” “O Lord, how great is thy goodness, how great is thy beauty.” “Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

ROOM YET IN THE CHURCH.

Yet there is room in the church here on earth. The Lord invites you to come and take your place in his house here

below. He has need of you ; but you have much greater need of him. Come, then. Be not ashamed to confess Christ before men in the membership, or in the office of his kingdom here below. Had I ten thousand lives, or ten thousand sons, I would ask no more for them than God's grace, and a place such I have in the house of my God and Father.

Yet there is room in the church above. Heaven's door is open. The house of God there is not yet full. There are places vacant not filled round the table spread above in our Father's house at home. These empty places must and shall be all filled. Are there among you candidates for these vacant offices of kings and priests in the house of God ? The voices of all that have gone home before us, the voices of dear, most cherished, and loved ones, could they be heard, would say to each of us, Yet there is room, come, and welcome : but we need not that our mother or sister gone before us should call to us from heaven, —they, being dead, speak to us by the example that they left to us, and the impressions produced on us in other days, and by the remembrance of their gentle and earnest counsels ; it is enough that Jesus calls us, saying, "Come ; for all things are now ready," and "yet there is room ;" for in my Father's house are many mansions, and in these mansions there is room for you. Will you not then with me say, Come, let us arise and go to our Father, saying, We have sinned, and are unworthy to be called thy children ; yet do thou receive us graciously, pardoning and taking away all iniquity, healing all our backslidings, and loving us freely ; for thou art God, yea, in Christ, thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not ?

In the bosom and on the breast of Jesus in glory many are resting, and many disciples, like John whom Jesus loved, are leaning ; but yet there is room for you and for me, my timid doubting child, my brother and my friend. Nor let us say, We cannot climb to that lofty height, or ascend to that high and holy place. Have you not seen the ladder which Jacob saw, and have you not said with him, "This place is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven ?" Yes, for you have seen the Son of Man who is in heaven, and who is

by his Spirit in your heart. He is the mystic ladder by which angels come and go, and by which you, my timid believing friend, shall climb from sin and misery, guilt and degradation, from pollution, poverty, and death, to righteousness, life, holiness, peace, joy, yea, even to the very fulness of God. Be not like the elder brother, in the parable that tells of the prodigal's return and welcome home, who, as he drew nigh to his father's house, and hearing the music and dancing there because of the joy of the father and all the servants in that the prodigal had returned safe and sound, was angry and would not go in, so that his father had to come out and entreat him, for he would not go in, and had no sympathy with his father's joy, and the joy of the entire household. Be not like him. Be not offended and angry, because Jesus receives sinners, and eats and rejoices with them. Stand not without in sullenness, with Cain-like fallen countenance, because a brother has been accepted; do not disown the brotherly bond, saying to the father, "*This thy son,*" as if he were not "*This thy brother:*" Do not accuse that restored brother, raking up his sins and his follies; do not wound the father's heart in the time of his gladness; be not a kill-joy, grudge not, envy not the lot of thy restored brother, who is fully sensible of the truth of what thou sayest, and has bitterly wept, because, as thou sayest to his father, he "*hath devoured the father's living with harlots;*" but rather come in, for yet there is room; come in, leaving outside the door thy Cain-like countenance; come in, make merry and be glad, rejoice, dance, feast, sing, with those who rejoice, feast, sing, dance, and are merry and glad in our Father's house. Come in, for yet there is room in a father's earnest loving entreating heart for thee, and room in the house for thee and thy restored brother; but no room for thy self-justifying, malignant, and most unbrotherly thoughts. Come in, and rejoice with the father and the household. For this thy brother, of whom thou hast thought and said so many hard things,—all true, but not becoming thee to say,—was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found. There is joy in the presence of God, and among his angels, and among the spirits of the just made perfect, when it is announced that one sinner has been brought to repentance.

Let thy mother and sister there, let thy father there, let Jesus Christ there, have joy over thee. Amen.

ROOM YET IN THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT.

“Yet there is room” in the love, mercy, grace, compassion, forbearance, long-suffering, not only of the Eternal Father and of his co-eternal Son, but also, and equally, and undividedly in the mercy, grace, compassion, long-suffering of God the Holy Ghost. The love of the Father is the love of Christ; and the love of Christ is the love of the Eternal Spirit. Into that name, love, and grace I was baptized. In that love I believe. For had not that love passed far the love of woman,—the love of mother, or sister, or friend,—I should not now and here be proclaiming to my dear fellow-sinners, “YET THERE IS ROOM.” Oh, who can extol adequately,—who can duly magnify, celebrate, proclaim, and praise the love of the Eternal Spirit of God! Writhing, tortured, in agony, as at the gates of hell, in very early life the Satanic suggestion lodged itself in my mind that I had sinned the sin unpardonable,—the sin against the Holy Ghost; and yet I could then, as now, challenge the world to stigmatize me with any marked offence. But, O my loved hearers and fellow-sinners, and my brethren beloved in the Lord, the Holy Ghost, much grieved, vexed, resisted, striven against, is slow to anger. He is slow to anger, and of great kindness; full of compassion; slow to leave a soul, and to give it up to the tenancy, and occupancy, and doom of the god of this world. He is not willing to say of any, “He is joined to his idols, let him alone.” He waiteth, hovering, brooding over our chaotic souls; waiteth to be gracious. But he will not always strive with man. To-day, therefore, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Harden not your hearts! Rather consider well the question put to me, in my boyhood, by a godly minister, in whose family I was afterwards tutor, and one of whose sons is now, and has been for years, a beloved brother in the ministry—“Have you yet got the new heart?” Pray, my friends, for that new heart. Resist not the Spirit.

Invite him to come into your souls. There is room in his love for you. Let there be room in your hearts for him. Have ye yet received the Holy Ghost? Or are ye yet sensual, not having the Spirit of God? Let the room in our hearts be a reflex of the room for us in the heart of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION.

Fain would I conclude without altering the language of entreaty and exhortation. But I must not, and dare not. The title of the revelation given in Holy Scripture of the will of God is LAW, GRACE, TRUTH. For "the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And I, as a messenger or minister of God, must to you, and to myself, declare law, as well as proclaim grace and truth.

There is another word of Jesus in another parable which has often moved the hearts of millions of mankind. It is in the parable of the ten virgins. What a parable is that? Shepherd's exposition of it may be, or ought to be, familiar to you all. But even Shepherd is far from unfolding all the wonders of that miraculous word-picture of Christ,—that marvellous medal of the new creation and kingdom of God. I have heard, with feelings of indescribable sorrow and sadness, the words sung, "Too late! too late!!" And, though supposed by some to have little appreciation of music, my soul has been moved from its profoundest depths by these words, "Too late! too late!! Ye cannot enter now." My Lord forbid it! Suffer me to come; draw me *now* to thee.

The word on which that most melancholy and most saddening and soul-moving "*too late*" is grounded, was read, in my hearing, on the last Sabbath of the year 1855, by the venerable, childlike, and elegantly eloquent, evangelical, and most polished Dr. Henry Grey, of Edinburgh, when I had the honour, which I greatly esteemed, of being assistant to him in his latter days,—"**AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.**" All that I remember of that day's service, beyond

the discourse that I myself preached, is the reading of the text, "And the door was shut," by that patriarchal man of God. The sermon was epitomized in the text. Again, on the evening of Sabbath, the 26th of December, 1869, I heard again the same text read by another, with his locks whitened by the snows of years, and very different in colour and aspect from what they appeared to me when year after year I worshipped as a member of his congregation, and enjoyed his highly valued and most prized friendship. The Rev. Dr. Robert Buchanan, of Glasgow, in opening the new Free Church here, at Bowling, which, with the grace and blessing of God, I was honoured to build, read the words, "And the door was shut." Again the words as read were to me more than a dozen of sermons. In the former case the great, almost extreme, age of Dr. Grey gave them peculiar and most impressive significance and weight. In the latter case, the hallowed associations and recollections of a time gone by, and of friendships early contracted, and sorrows early felt, served to bring home to my heart the words, "And the door was shut." The text in both cases was to me the sermon. It sounded in my ears, No more room, no more room, no more room in the mercy or purpose of God,—no more room in the fountain of the blood and merits of Christ,—no more room in the invitations and promises of grace,—no more room in the church on earth, or in the church in heaven,—no more room in the long-suffering and love of the Holy Ghost,—no more room. Room now only in the darkness and depths of despair,—room only in the opening and devouring mouth of hell, in the abysses of perdition, in that place of everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. My beloved brethren, let us not be candidates or graduates for a place in outer darkness. Slothfulness, unbelief, wickedness, these are the badges of distinction that mark the reprobate. Be it ours to be diligent, earnest, believing, trustful, walking in the truth, looking unto Jesus, departing from all iniquity, so shall an abundant entrance be ministered to us into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For yet there is room in that kingdom; and we

shall hear the voice of the Royal Judge saying, "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." For "yet there is room." Amen. Let us bless the Lord, and let all within us bless his holy name. My soul, bless thou the Lord; "for yet there is room." "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out."

Amen. Let us praise the Lord.

"O greatly blessed the people are
The joyful sound that know;
In brightness of thy face, O Lord,
They ever on shall go.

"They in thy name shall all the day
Rejoice exceedingly;
And in thy righteousness shall they
Exalted be on high.

"Because the glory of their strength
Doth only stand in thee;
And in thy favour shall our horn
And power exalted be.

"For God is our defence, and he
To us doth safety bring;
The Holy One of Israel
Is our Almighty King."

Hallelujah! Amen.

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