The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 3 (Doctrinal 1)

John Nelson Darby

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The Doctrine of the Church Of England at the Time of The Reformation

Of The Reformation Itself, Of Scripture, And Of The Church Of Rome, Briefly Compared With The Remarks Of The Regius Professor Of Divinity1 I shall first shortly state the reasons which induce me to take notice of, and comment on, the “Remarks “upon the sermon lately preached at St. Mary’s. If the Regius Professor of Divinity had simply undertaken to refute the sermon preached at St. Mary’s, to which his remarks apply, it might perhaps have been unbecoming, or at the least premature, for a third person to enter into the discussion, or do more than watch its progress. But this is expressly disclaimed, and a very different office is assumed. “I must now come,” says the pamphlet referred to, “to the exposition of the gospel; and I trust that I shall not be thought unreasonable or presumptuous, if I say at once that I am not entering into controversy.” It is true the author professes, at the close of the “Remarks,” “I am not entering into controversy, but am merely stating facts.” But for this purpose he has said a great deal too much. “When the doctrine of the Church is misrepresented,” he continues, “and there is danger of young disciples being misled, I feel it my duty as a faithful soldier of Christ to stand between the dead and the living, and to stay the plague.”

This itself were language a little strong for any supposed or real misrepresentation of the doctrines of the Church of England. But the author has indeed altogether said

too much or too little. If he meant to confine himself to the vindication of the doctrines of the Church of England from misrepresentation, he has said too much. If he meant to tell us what was not or what was the gospel, he should have surely said a good deal more. But that I may not leave it uncertain how much these remarks call upon every one to satisfy themselves on the whole principles of their faith, I shall conclude the quotation already adverted to. “The sermon now before me professes to contain an exposition of that gospel which Jesus Christ delivered to His apostles; but in the name of Paul, of Cephas, and of Christ, I say that this is not the gospel.” In saying this, the Regius Professor has laid the solemn responsibility upon every one concerned about his own soul of enquiring what his faith is; and whether it be founded in truth, if at all similar to what is thus authoritatively pronounced to be not the gospel; (for, what is the gospel? is a question of individual salvation, which men must judge of responsibly); and, I will add, responsibility to judge of that proposed to be substituted in its place, and to see what conclusions it will lead us.

This is no vindication of the doctrines of the Church of England from misrepresentation, nor a mere statement of facts. It is, in good truth, a standing between the living and the dead, if the author be right. If the preacher be right, and I follow the author of the “Remarks,” I am not, according to the former, in the way of salvation. If the author of the “Remarks” be right, in receiving the doctrine of the preacher I am departing from the gospel of Christ: I am not amongst the living but the dead. I am justified therefore in the fullest comment upon the evidence brought to sustain such a charge; and in enquiring what are the grounds on which

I am here called upon to believe that this is a deadly contagion, in which the Church of England has no part; and how far the Regius Professor is warranted in bringing the views which he does in these “Remarks” bring forward in opposition to, and as contravening, what he says is not the gospel. I am not here concerned to defend the preacher: with him the author says he will not enter into controversy; and it is his part, if he see good, to defend himself. But the author of the “Remarks” has thrown the whole question open, and forced it upon the judgment of every one who is interested in what the gospel is; for he has raised a controversy for every soul. I shall leave therefore the sermon itself unnoticed, and discuss merely the statements made in the “Remarks,” as bearing on the general subject.

I know not with what consistency with the injunctions contained in the preface to the Articles, I am led by Archbishop Lawrence and the Regius Professor of Divinity to travel into the mind of Cranmer, through the vacillating opinions of Melancthon. Those opinions we can judge of, according to the testimony of the author of the “Remarks” himself, only by the help of dates, and we must be certain of getting a right edition, before we can know what was that mind which he held, and which therefore Cranmer held, and which therefore the Articles are to be supposed to hold. I there read, that a person “shall not put his own sense or comment” on the Article, “but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.” The authority of this document I do not pretend to state: whatever it be, of this I am sure, that Archbishop Lawrence’s Bampton Lectures, especially the last two, are a very singular comment on it. For my

own part, I soberly think Article XVII to be as wise, perhaps I might say the wisest and best condensed human statement of the views it contains that I am acquainted with. I am fully content to take it in its literal and grammatical sense. I believe that predestination to life is the eternal purpose of God, by which, before the foundations of the world were laid, He firmly decreed, by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and destruction those whom He had chosen in Christ out of the human race, and to bring them, through Christ, as vessels made to honour, to eternal salvation. I believe therefore that those who are endued with so excellent a gift of God, are called according to His purpose working in due time; that they obey the calling through grace; that they are freely justified; that they are adopted to be children of God; that they are made conformed to the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ; that they do walk holily in good works; and that at length, through the mercy of God, they do attain to everlasting felicity. And, I might ask, does the author of the "Remarks" believe this? that is, believing as he does that the Church, that is, every baptized person, is predestinated and chosen, does he believe all this of every such person?

But as the historical enquiry has been started, I shall beg leave shortly to follow it, that we may, as far as a brief opportunity allows, investigate the grounds on which the author of the "Remarks states, that the Lutheran Church was the source from which the Church of England derives her doctrine; and that Calvinism was "a contagion flowing from the close contact into which those who fled from the Marian persecution were brought with the Calvinistic doctrines." And here I must

remark, that it appears to me that the Regius Professor of Divinity puts the Church of England into a very discreditable position. Choice between Lutheran and Calvinistic she may be allowed to make. That she drew her doctrines originally from Scripture; that her founders were themselves taught of God, so as to be able to teach others, or lay the basis of the Church they were about to rear or reform on the stable foundations of the word of God, is in no case suggested or supposed. In fact, when we would ascertain her thoughts and her foundation, we are directed to Melancthon. In the Bampton Lectures of Archbishop Lawrence, there is not an expression on which he remarks, of which he does not discover the words and the source in some German reformer. For my own part I cannot believe this: and it would seem to me an ill way of securing confidence in her doctrine, to lead the minds of students to so mazy and uncertain a path to discover her meaning and ascertain the foundations of her authority (however it may suit those who put their "comment on the Articles," instead of searching the authority of Scripture for their plain and grammatical meaning). But let us ascertain some of the facts. Peter Martyr and Bucer were Regius Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge respectively during the reign of Edward VI. "Bucer," the author of the "Remarks," states, "died in 1551, when Calvin had scarcely begun to propagate his peculiar opinions respecting predestination. His first public controversy was in that year, and his first publication on the subject in 1552." Let us now see what were the views of Bucer, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. After stating some of the difficulties usually objected to what are called Calvinistic views, he thus writes:

“But those who wish simply to follow the word of God easily free themselves from these. For, first, they firmly rest in this: that God Himself testifies concerning Himself, that out of the race of man, ruined by its first parent, He chooses some to re-form them to a new and blessed life; and has, or esteems the rest as vessels of His wrath, in whom he should shew examples of His just vengeance; whereby He should commend to the elect His mercy, because He translates them, born to the same death, into the inheritance of the divine life. This judgment of the Lord concerning men, the Scripture everywhere preaches and inculcates; as well in the history of the Lord’s acts, as in the oracles themselves; for Cain was rejected; Abel elected. In the time of Noah all were destroyed by the flood save eight men: and of the sons of Noah, blessing came upon two, a curse upon the third… And where do we not see, as in whole peoples, so in private men, and these otherwise most closely united, that some are taken, others rejected? From these examples, therefore, and oracles, witnessing clearly the same thing, of which Scripture is full (in which, namely, the difference which God puts between men is declared), the saints have the fullest persuasion, that, before the foundation of the world, some are elected to life, appointed also before their doing anything, to that to which God at length brings them, namely, that in them He should give an example of His wrath, and that in that way His name should be sanctified in them. And, when they see it thus to be pleasing in the sight of God, they render thanks with our Lord to God the Father for this very judgment, as well that He hides this mystery of salvation from the wise and prudent of this world, as that He reveals it to the elect little ones; however He may will that the revelation

of the mystery should be equally offered to both. Thence, whereas God nevertheless commands the gospel to be preached to every creature, and to call them to the communion of the gospel, be they who they may; the saints do not dispute why it is God's command to call them, whom nevertheless He will not have to come, yea, whom He hardens lest they should come: but they thus judge; it is the Lord who commands, it is our part therefore to obey, and to account it sufficient that in the meanwhile we so far serve the Lord as to the reprobate, that every excuse of their wickedness should be taken away from them, and they should be obliged themselves to confess that God justly condemns them."

Again, "When we speak of God, we all understand the Author of every good; and he who affirms that any good is not effected by God, does not hesitate to deny that He is God. For if ever so little good be not from God, then is He not the effecter of every good; therefore neither is He God. But, when these preposterous patrons of divine justice say, that all men are alike called by the gospel, and that like grace is offered and bestowed upon all, that they may follow, God calling them, and that men's embracing this grace of God is in their power, we will ask them, Whence is it that some, making good use of their power, embrace the grace equally offered to all—that some reject it, making bad use of their power? If they say, That is from man, not from God; now the chief good from which all the rest hang, the embracing the offered favour of God, is from man; and man has that which he has not received, nor is God now the effecter of every good; therefore neither is He God. This conflicts not only, as I have said, with Scripture, but also with common sense. But if it be from God that any one hears

effectually and follows God's calling, then in any case God does not give His grace to all equally. For to those who follow the call of the gospel He gives that very thing which He does not give to those who reject the gospel. It remains, therefore, as yet and always, that human reason is condemned in the judgment of God, if you permit it to judge about God, the judge of all. If therefore in practice it comes to this concerning the whole dispensation of our salvation, it is not wonderful if it happens, in that it so seemed good to God, that all mortals should be alike called by the gospel, although He may not wish that all should follow that calling: for many are called, few chosen.

"The saints therefore will ingenuously confess, yea and will preach, that God wills that the gospel indeed should be preached to all, and that thereby all mortals should be called to life; but that He does not will that all should believe the gospel, for neither does He bestow that on all, but hardens many, lest they should bear to hear it. It comes indeed, as He Himself says, to many unto judgment: and Paul teaches, that the gospel, which in itself is a power unto salvation unto all, is a savour of death unto death to them who perish. In that is fulfilled, that, 'Hearing, hear ye, and understand not; seeing, see ye, and perceive not.' When the blessed Paul preached Christ to all the elders of the Jews at Rome, undoubtedly he did it the Lord willing and commanding it: yet when many did not believe, he himself testified that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in them: 'Hearing, hear ye,' etc. God therefore willed that they should be called by the gospel, and yet should not come. So when Joab," etc.

He then enumerates other similar instances. “This, therefore is the method of God; thus it seems good to Himself, that all indeed should be called to Him by the eternal word, but not to draw all to Him by His Spirit; but howbeit that those who are not drawn cannot come to Him; nevertheless, whoever have been called, it is necessary that they should afterwards condemn themselves for despising the mercy of God.”

“Philip Melancthon,” he says, “is accustomed to say2 that man had a free will in the affairs of civil life, but not in the affairs of the life which God approves.”

Again: “For it is certain that any one’s obeying the call of God, which is the beginning of our whole salvation, is the gift and work of God, which God bestows on some, denies to others. For these He persuades that He may effectually influence, those not so; and these whom he effectually influences cannot but follow, and those cannot follow whom He does not effectually influence. He wills therefore altogether that some should hear, and hear effectually; some hear and despise. But why God so wills and does, blessed Augustine has only two things to answer: O the depth of the riches! and, Is there unrighteousness with God? adding, to whomsoever this answer is displeasing, let him seek more learned persons, but let him take care lest he find presumptuous ones: De Sp. et Lit. c. 34. Nor will those who are truly pious answer anything else.” Bucer on Romans 9.

In the same commentary on the Romans, he confutes the presciential or Arminian notion of election, quoting Augustine writing against the Pelagians, against Origen and Ambrose: saying, You say, not of present but of future works—that of future works Jacob was loved; but

you contradict the apostle, saying, Not of works that it might be by grace, etc.; bringing also the evidence of an infant dying after baptism to shew that it could not be in prescience of future works.

On Romans 8. “For the apostle in this place is occupied with teaching, that God destined us to salvation before we were, not merely before we had done anything good: and from this he sets about to prove, that this will of God concerning our salvation was certain and unmoved, which no creature could turn aside: as that which God draws from Himself and His own goodness, which cannot be changed; and without any respect to our merit which varies so miserably… Therefore… praefinition, which we commonly call predestination, is that designation of God, by which He marks out with Himself, and now singles out, and separates from the rest of men, those whom in their own time, brought into this life, He draws and grafts into our Lord Jesus; and thus drawn to and planted in Him, by Him begets again, and sanctifies according to His good pleasure.” “But then,” etc. He then states the appointment of everything by God to its own use.

“Hence also is the predestination of the bad. For, as God also forms these out of nothing, so He forms them to some certain end: for He does all things wisely, without any exception, even to the predetermined and good use of the evil. Also the impious are organs and instruments of God, as below, chapter 9. God made all things for Himself, the wicked also for the day of evil. But this theologians do not bear to call predestination, but they call it reprobation: but God does everything well and wisely. Therefore also everything has a determined

end” (nihil non destinatum). After adducing instances he proceeds:

“But whereas God formed these and all other wicked men, who will deny, that He knew, before He formed them, to what He willed to use them; and that He then ordained and destined them to this? What therefore forbids us to say that there is a predestination of these also?”

Again on Ephesians 1.

“The term election is used in two ways: sometimes for election to some external office, as ‘Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?’ Judas the traitor was elected indeed to the apostleship; but to the inheritance of eternal life he was not elected. Again, election sometimes means a designation of some men, out of the common lost mass, to the knowledge of the will of God, and at length to eternal life, of the mere favour of God; and it is of that election the discourse here is, and of that Christ also speaks, ‘I know whom I have chosen.’

“On the whole, election is the mere gift of God, and therefore favour, and not reward. Read Augustine; he certainly has the clearest and most evident testimonies. Election, therefore, is the destination and certain commiseration from eternity, before the world was constituted, by which God separated, from the universal race of lost men, those whom He was pleased to pity, to eternal life, out of His purely free mercy, before they could do anything good or bad. It is certain, I say, and immutable, through Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, and our mediator,” etc.

“And the words of the Holy Ghost are plain by which He ascribes the hardness of heart, the dulness of ears, the blindness of eyes, in Pharaoh, and therefore in all like him, not to the flesh, or the devil, but to God Himself, who owes no man anything, and does everything most justly. If, therefore, any one object, If nothing is done on the part of men, in what relates to election, which concurs with the divine work, God seems to be unjust, that He does not give the same reward to all: he is to be answered, There is nothing similar between God’s thoughts and ours.”

Hence we may estimate the value of the quotation of Dr. Lawrence3 from Bucer, appended to his own views of the subject. “He who doubts about this (namely, about predestination), cannot believe himself to be called and justified, that is, cannot be a Christian. It is to be assumed, therefore, as a first principle of faith, that we all are foreknown, fore-determined, and separated from the rest, and selected for this, that we should be eternally saved; and that this purpose of God cannot be changed.”

I have now only an historical remark or two to make before I turn to Peter Martyr, the Oxford Divinity Professor in the days of the blessed Reformation.

This Bucer was a man highly esteemed for his moderation and powers, and, having long resided at Strasbourg, was therefore invited over to assist in settling the Reformation in England, and was accordingly appointed Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. He had a very important share in the settlement of the English Liturgy, which was translated into Latin on purpose that he might revise, give his

opinion and corrections; and many and material alterations were made accordingly at his suggestion and by his advice. In fact, this may be said to have been the formation of the Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer: and from its validity the whole validity of the English succession hangs. For King Edward's first book was in truth (what King James was pleased, while a Scotch king, to designate the present Liturgy4 itself) little more than "an ill said mass": but in this it assumed substantially its present form. There were alterations in Queen Elizabeth's book, as since also; of of which some have approved, some thought that they were to conciliate the then Papists. But anyone who will take the trouble of comparing them, will see that the second book of King Edward may be considered substantially as the settling of the Liturgy. Moreover, all the first bishops of Queen Elizabeth were ordained according to this book; that is, on the principles of episcopal succession, in effect, all: and (some having called in question the validity of their ordination, it having been abolished by Queen Mary, and not legally revived) an act of parliament was passed against those who should dare to impugn the validity of what was done under that book.

One circumstance or two more may be mentioned to shew the estimation of Bucer, and, if need be, his intimate connection with Cranmer. It was by Cranmer he was invited into England: and, receiving triple the usual stipend during his life at Cambridge, he was buried in the University Church, the vice-chancellor ordering the members of all the colleges to attend his funeral.

A few more quotations from his commentaries on points directly before us shall close what relates peculiarly to him. On "Moreover whom he did predestinate," Rom.

8:30. “He repeats what he had said concerning the predestination of the children of God, and unfolds it more fully, using an elegant gradation. But what he wished to shew was, that they were already glorified with God: that is, whomsoever God had foreknown as of His own, and had already predestinated, they were certainly destined to the glory of the sons of God. For he calls them, and surely draws them unto the full faith of his Son: they are profited by that (that is, they certainly receive remission of their sins). But, their sins being pardoned, the glory of God is restored to them, of which but just now under sin they were destitute.”

“By faith therefore alone this will be the portion of all, that they will enjoy the love of God, pardon of their sins being received, that is, being justified.” …“If therefore the chief and proper effects of justification come to us by faith, it is manifestly collected, that we receive justification itself by faith, and that all our salvation consists in this, that we embrace with living faith the mercy of God offered to us in the gospel, in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

On “Called according to his purpose,” Romans 8:28.

“For that not only renders our confidence in God the fountain of all righteousness more complete, but will incite us also, freed from all solicitude for our salvation, that with the utmost endeavour we should endeavour with all our strength to answer to this so sure and blessed vocation.”

“But the predestination of the saints of which the apostle treats here is the election and destination of the saints to eternal salvation.”

“As to the question, In what respect are we to consider predestination? as to that Philip Melancthon teaches very religiously and diligently, for nothing else truly but that we should be more sure of our salvation, and more firmly rest in the promises of God.”

“In that security therefore by good right are we concerning the eternal love of God towards us, that we may boast most confidently about it.”

Here then closes what specially relates to Bucer, invited over by Cranmer to assist in settling the Reformation here. And having borne a very prominent part in the completion and settling of the Liturgy, he died, after exercising the office of Divinity Professor at Cambridge till his death; honoured in it as an eminent instrument in the establishment of the Church of England, when her faith was to be formed and her services arranged.

I shall now turn to Peter Martyr. The diffuseness of his style renders it difficult to quote from him; but the reader will, I dare say, be persuaded that the toil was at any rate more to the writer.

“We ought to know, that there are various elections of God: for some are to fulfil certain offices, as to a kingdom, or to the apostleship: but others are to eternal life. And these are sometimes distinguished … sometimes however they are united.”

Reasoning from Augustine, he says,

“Neither is it any objection to preaching, that the number of the elect, as in truth it is, is certain and immovable. For what we do in preaching is not to transfer men from the book of the reprobate to the book of the elect, but in order that those who belong to the

elect may be brought, by the ministry of the word, to the end destined for them; which same ministry, as it is useful to them, so it is destructive to the others, and takes away all excuse from them."

"These places, and very many other like ones, manifestly declare, that men are predestinated before they begin to be; which those who take from us, snatch from us along with it a great consolation,, which we receive from this, that we know that we are predestinated by God to glory before all eternity."

After much reasoning and scholastic discussion, in which, as Bucer, he says, "But since God does all things with a destined purpose, nothing by chance or fortuitously, beyond doubt whatever He creates and makes, He destines to some end and use. In this respect neither the impious, nor the devil himself, nor sins, can be excluded from predestination." Then distinguishing, however, between the predestination of saints, as Bucer did, and what he says is more properly called reprobation, he thus defines them:

"I say, therefore, predestination is the most wise purpose of God, by which before all eternity He fixedly decreed, to call those whom He loved in Christ to the adoption of sons, to justification by faith, and at length to glory by good works, whereby they might be conformed to the image of the Son of God; and that in them might be declared the glory and mercy of the Creator." "Purpose," he says, includes "will." "But this will we ought to understand to be that efficacious will which they call of a consequence, i.e., producing a consequence: by which is caused that the predestination of God should not be frustrated." "By which He fixedly

decreed." "By these words we are taught that the predestination of God is immutable. For Paul says, in 2 Timothy, The foundation standeth sure; the Lord knows those who are His"; and he quotes from the well-known conclusion of Romans 8; James 1:17; Isaiah, "I am God; I change not"; and Paul, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Again: "Let us define reprobation, the most wise purpose of God, by which, before all eternity, He fixedly decreed, without any injustice, not to pity those whom He did not love, but passed by; whereby in this just condemnation He might declare His anger against sin, and His glory."

After reasoning on the causes, saying, amongst other things, "Whereas predestination is the purpose or will of God, but that is the first cause of all things, … it cannot be that there should be any cause of it," he says, "For men who are predestinated, and those things which God hath decreed to bestow on the elect by predestination, such are calling, justification, glorification, may be called the matter about which predestination is conversant."

Again: "There is ambiguity in that word for (Propter), how it is to be understood. For if good works are understood, as in truth they are, and are done because God predestinated us to this end, that we should live rightly (as the epistle to the Ephesians has it, to wit, that we are elect, that we should be holy, without blame before Him, and that God prepared good works that we should walk in them), as to this opinion, the proposition is to be affirmed. But if that word for, is to be referred to the efficient cause, as if good works, which God foresaw

we were about to do, were as merits and causes which could move God that He should predestinate us, this sense we admit in no way… For vocation, which is the effect of predestination, is the cause why we should be justified: justification is the cause of good works: and good works, although they be not the cause, are yet the means by which God leads us to eternal life. But none of them is the cause or the means why we should be elected by God; as, on the other hand, sins are the cause indeed why we are damned, not however why we are reprobated by God. For if they were the causes of reprobation, no one could be elected; for the condition of all is alike, for we are all born in sin… These things being now thus settled, reasons are to be given, on account of which we deny that foreseen good works are the causes of our predestination."

He then argues, that justification would be of works if election depended on foreseen works; and that good works are the effect of predestination; and that if we were predestinated for foreseen works, Paul's exclamation about it would be nonsense. And he reasons, that foreseen works could be no such moving cause, from the cases of Tyre and Sidon, when God did foresee and did not spare. Then, again: "For it is useful for us, that our salvation should not hang from our works… But if we believe that our salvation remains fixed and certain in God on account of Christ, we cannot but be of good courage."

Both Peter Martyr and Bucer reason soundly and fully, that judgment is to be taken, not from the fathers, but from Scripture. I shall here just mention several heads of argument from Peter Martyr, drawn from several pages of his commentaries. He reasons on the words,

“many called, but few chosen,” to shew the distinction of the elect even in the called body. He reasons, that God could not have decreed what was not to have place; he distinguishes between His efficacious will, and His revealed will (voluntatem signi); and that Christ was the first effect of predestination.

He says, “We in no way say that grace is common to all, but that it is granted to some, and to others by the will of God it is not given”: and he reasons, that it is theirs only that are drawn, and peculiar to them; and declares it absurd to reason that all are drawn, and some will not come,” etc. That sufficient grace is not given to all—that Tyre and Sidon had not what was sufficient—that external vocation is common to predestinated and reprobate; and that thereby God does not mock them with general promises, but their damnation is rendered just. That all have not power to become the sons of God, but those who are born of the will of God, and that Christ is to be said to have died for all, “sufficiently, but not efficaciously.” That the reprobate subserve the divine purpose, to illustrate and declare the power of His sincerity; that the reprobate can do many good works to a certain extent, and, on the other hand, the predestinate fall into the grossest sins; instincing Saul, Solomon (who he seems to think fell away, “lapsus est, imo defecit”), Ahab, Joash, and quoting Ezekiel; and, on the other hand, David, Moses, Aaron: and that good works “sometimes subserve predestination, sometimes reprobation. Predestination through them brings the elect to life; and as to reprobation, they are sometimes reasons why the fall is made more terrible.” …“Sins also tend as to reprobation, so to predestination. For those who are reprobate, by them are drawn to eternal ruin.

Those who are predestinate, through them illustrate the glory of God, when they are snatched out of them."

As to perseverance, we may quote our author, on 1 Corinthians 1:8: "When he preaches a faithful God, he shews that He can be rendered false by no fault of ours. Therefore if He have called us by a just and efficacious calling, there is no doubt that He will perfect the work which He has begun, that we should be preserved by Him blameless in the day of our Lord (…): however often, which is our infirmity while we live here, we may have fallen.

"St. Paul seems to reason thus: Thou hast already obtained grace through Christ, and you have obtained many gifts through the same; that therefore which remains you will have, that you should be blameless in the day of the Lord. Nor does the same write otherwise in sense to the Romans: The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Wherefore we also use this kind of argument, if at any time we may be (as is the case) of a dejected mind. We have been called to salvation, we have believed in Him that calls, we have obtained remission of sins, and have obtained gifts not common to all: we shall be saved therefore; nor will God cast away the work of His own hands. You may ask, as to calling, How can I determine whether it is effectual or otherwise? or concerning the faith with which I am endowed, whether it be temporary? I say that the Spirit of Christ bears testimony with our spirit, that we are the children of God: which St. Paul to the Romans has taught the Church to be a mark of the elect. In the second place, from the effects, and, as they say, a posteriori: good works make our calling and election certain. For Peter, in his latter epistle, chapter 1, when

he had made copious mention of good works, adds, ‘Wherefore, brethren, the rather give diligence, that ye make your calling and election sure.’ But if, in the last place, you enquire, Whereas the spirit of one’s neighbour by no means appears to us, shall we be able to judge of him in any other way than by works? Certainly Christ has left no other criterion by which we may judge concerning our neighbours, for He said, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them,’” etc.

As to certainty of faith and hope, on Romans 5, “Hope maketh not ashamed,” he says, “For Paul wished to intimate, that the pious could not be frustrated in their hope.” There stating, that it could not depend on works, for they were uncertain, he says, “But that it is true and certain, Paul shews, not by one word only, but by three very significant ones; for, first, he uses the word, knowing (sciendi), which indicates a certain knowledge (cognitionem) of a thing. He makes mention also of making boast, which has no place with holy and prudent men, unless concerning those blessings which they certainly and firmly possess. Lastly, he adds, that hope maketh not ashamed; but, deservedly, he very often brings in the persuasion of that certainty, because hence especially consolation is to be sought in affliction.”

After reasoning against its connection with works actual or prospective, he says, “But it is worth while to see how they get on when they say, on the one hand, that hope is a certain expectation; on the other, however, that it is a most firm dogma, that none can be certain of his salvation, unless it shall have been individually revealed to him by God. Here they feel themselves at a loss: they confess that it is difficult to see how that is certainty of hope. Here they miserably fret themselves, sweat, and

use many glosses. First, they determine… that certainty of hope which flows from certainty of faith… But they go farther, and say, that we by faith believe generally and absolutely that all the elect and predestinated will be saved, but that hope causes us to trust that we are of the number of the elect: as if hope had a particular knowledge subordinate to faith: that what had been generally comprehended through faith, should be separately applied to us through hope… lastly, they conclude, that the certainty of hope is less than that of faith: we on the contrary make the certainty of both equal. As much faith as we have, so much also we have of hope, for neither does faith retain any certainty for itself which it does not transmit to hope… But they seem to me to do as those who, when they defend a city in a siege, diligently shut and fortify all the rest of the gates, but in the meanwhile leave one open, by which when the enemies enter and plunder everything, they may perceive that they have lost their labour; so they indeed labour extremely, lest there should seem to be any uncertainty arising from the goodness, power, and clemency of God, or the merit of Christ. Yet in the meanwhile they determine our will to be so liable to change, that no man can or ought to promise himself perseverance, even from the word of God: and so wholly take away all certainty, that the saying of Paul can have no place, ‘ Hope maketh not ashamed’; nor can the certainty, which they endeavour to establish, be of any profit. Indeed, if we consult the sacred scriptures, we shall understand that God is not only generally good and powerful, but also that He is good and propitious to our own selves, and therefore will confirm our will that it should never fall away from Him; for, as we have mentioned a little before, He will not suffer us to be

tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way to escape; and (1 Corinthians 1) He will confirm you unto the end blameless unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; for God is faithful, through whom ye were called. There are, besides, very many other testimonies in the sacred scriptures, which promise to us both perseverance and confirmation of will through Christ. Wherefore we say that that certainty of hope is a firm adherence in the promises offered to us, and received by faith, that we shall not fail of obtaining our ultimate end. Of so great virtue is this hope, that, as Augustine says to Dardanus, and in very many other places, it calls that which is about to be, done already… That certainty arises chiefly from the worthy judgment which we are able to entertain by faith of the constancy of God, which no unworthiness of ours can cause to fail; which if we look at when drawing us away from this confidence, we ought against hope to believe in hope; and, however much that may oppose its voice, trust that we shall be saved by Christ: proposing to ourselves our father Abraham, to whose steps we ought to hold fast by faith. He, etc… so, although we be unworthy, and our faith and our sins hinder us, yet let us not distrust that we shall be saved by Christ, unless we wish to be subject to infidelity, which Abraham specially abhorred; for he did not doubt through infidelity, says the apostle: whence the uncertainty of our adversaries is wholly taken away from pious minds." …"Wherefore," speaking of Job's expression, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' "let us imitate him; and if we have fallen, and our unworthiness sets itself before our eyes, yet let us not distrust. Let us detect, meanwhile, our vices, and let us amend them as much as we can: but on account of them let us by no means fail in our hope of

salvation. For if, when the promises of God are set before us, we will look at our own worthiness, we shall be led to despair rather than to any hope; for there is no one whose soul is not burdened with many and grievous sins. Besides, Paul teaches that we have peace towards God through Christ, and by faith which is in Him; which certainly is altogether done, or at any rate would be very turbulent, if we should perpetually doubt concerning His will towards us": and then he reasons on our calling Him Father in our prayers, and how unpleasing it must be to a father for a child to doubt his father's love. "Hope therefore is a faculty breathed in by the Holy Spirit, by which we expect, with a certain and even mind, that the salvation begun by Christ, and received by faith, will be in time accomplished in us, not by our merits but from the mercy of God." Then, after comparing the hope of present circumstances, as Paul's hope of escaping the persecution of Nero, etc., "That we may reply to this, we repeat what has been said before, that hope receives its certainty from faith: but faith has its certainty from the word of God; wherefore it is consistent, that both are as certain as the promises are which are set forth. But God promises us remission of sins and eternal life simply, and has commanded that we should believe and hope for these things without any doubt. In these things, therefore, neither faith nor hope can deceive us; but if at any time the minds of saints are disturbed, as if they should doubt concerning the promises of God or their own salvation, that does not happen through the fault of faith or hope; but that while we live here, we are not perfectly furnished. Therefore this doubt springs from the flesh and human prudence." And again: "These evils arise from our corruption"; and he then compares them

to mathematics, of which ignorance may doubt the certainty, but it is to be attributed to ignorance alone.

Here I close my quotations from Peter Martyr, the Professor of Divinity at Oxford. I have but few remarks to make upon these men. That they were honoured and blessed in the churches, is beyond controversy with those who are acquainted with the history of the Reformation in Germany, where Bucer was greatly blessed and looked up to for his moderation and depth of scriptural knowledge: or with that of the Reformation in Italy, where Peter Martyr took an active and leading part— we might almost say, save the preaching of Ochinus at Naples, the leading part; till the persecutions which hung over the Church drove him from Italy.5 Bucer, I may add, was converted by hearing Luther.

We have seen then the place they held in the Reformation: we have seen their doctrines. I have given them at the length I have, partly that it may be manifest that there is no forced interpretation of particular passages, but a regularly argued-out development of the principles they themselves sustained, and preached too; and partly, as affording matter bearing upon almost every point called into question by the author of the “Remarks.” The attentive reader of the foregoing quotations cannot but have taken notice of this—taken notice, I mean, that the conclusions met in the “Remarks “are here stated as the just, blessed, triumphant, and love-inspired consequences of truths held by them to be the objects of certain faith, and therefore affording the equal certainty of sanctifying hope; “for he indeed that hath this hope in him,” and he only, “purineth himself as he is pure.” He will see that they are equally and expressly opposed to the Arminian (so called, but

properly Pelagian) notion of prospective works, or the (new and if you please Melancthonian) notion of church election, as contrasted with individual. I am not here arguing the point of the truth of these things; but arguing on the facts of the history of the times.

And now, were these notions originated in the university by some unrecognized individual to which the Church is not a party? They were the argued published opinions of the Professors of Divinity of both universities. But were they merely the particular opinions of these individuals there, as a particular pope may sometimes err, and not give the opinion of the Catholic body? No, they were called to the chairs of divinity, because they were what they were, and because they held these opinions. They were called by those who were the ordering instruments of the reformation of the Church of England, that, in constituting it as it stands now, they might form its opinions, and establish its principles: her formularies were submitted to their correction, and their advice taken upon them. If, certainly, the testimony of the Professor of Divinity of our university be competent to state and vindicate the doctrines of that university, and declare the opinions of the Church of England (and I am content to admit that he is), them am I fully warranted in taking the matured testimony of the Professors of both, as witness of the doctrines approved by both, and as a declaration of the doctrines of the then Church—at least I will not say a vindication of them from misrepresentation: and all this, observe, when, according to the author of the “Remarks,” “Calvin had scarcely begun to propagate his peculiar opinions concerning predestination.”

There is one other person whom it may become us to take notice of, whose name is a host in the Church of England, and who was its pillar and defence, as far as man went, on its re-establishment; than whom no one could be mentioned as more a witness of its character and principles—I mean Jewell. It is well known his Apology was quasi-symbolical.

On 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14, he writes (Works, 143, title, A View of, etc.), “God hath chosen you from the beginning; His election is sure for ever. The Lord knoweth who are His. You shall not be deceived with the power and subtilty of antichrist; you shall not fall from grace; you shall not perish. This is the comfort which abideth with the faithful when they behold the fall of the wicked; when they see them forsake the truth, and delight in fables; when they see them return to their vomit, and wallow again in their mire.”

“When we see these things in others, we must say, Alas! they are examples for me, and they are lamentable examples. Let him that standeth take heed that he fall not. But God hath loved me, and chosen me to salvation. His mercy shall go before me, and His mercy shall follow in me; His mercy shall guide my feet, and stay me from falling. If I stay by myself, I stay by nothing, I must needs come to the ground. Although all the world should be drowned with the waves of ungodliness, yet will I hold by the boat of His mercy, which shall safely preserve me. If all the world be set on fire with the flame of wickedness, yet will I creep into the bosom of the protection of my Lord; so shall no flame hurt me. He hath loved me, He hath chosen me, He will keep me. Neither the example nor the company of others, nor the enticing of the devil, nor mine own sensual

imaginations, nor sword, nor fire, is able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the comfort of the faithful; so shall they wash their hands in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, saith Paul, you are my children, etc… Whatsoever falleth upon others, although others fall and perish, although they forsake Christ, and follow after antichrist, yet God hath loved you, and given His Son for you; He hath chosen you, and prepared you to salvation, and hath written your names in the book of life. But how may we know that God hath chosen us? how may we see this election? or how may we feel it? The apostle saith, Through sanctification and the faith of truth; these are tokens of God's election. Have you received the gospel? It is the light of the world; it teaches us to know that God is God, and that we are His people. The credit you give to the gospel is a witness of your election." Again, in his Defence of the Apology, Works, 67, Eng. fol. Lon. 1611: "Now concerning the assurance or certainty of salvation, the scriptures are full. St. Paul saith, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God beareth witness to our spirit that we are the children of God. I know that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor powers, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature else, shall be able to remove me from that love that God beareth towards me in Christ Jesus our Lord; Romans 8. But as these words perhaps have not the sense of the Church of Rome, without which," etc., and then he goes on to the Fathers.

Having quoted thus much, we may add that this Jewell was a great friend of, and during Mary's reign lived with, Peter Martyr abroad: and in a letter, dated the 5th

November, 1559, he states that there was much talk that Martyr would again be invited over; but he feared that the Saxon or Lutheran influence would prevail. Peter Martyr died just after the Apology was printed.6 I am not able to verify the references to the letters.7 And as further evidence how little then the Lutheran church was taken as the standard, even by authority, Bishop Cheyney was held in disrepute on account of his Lutheran opinions. If Jewell's letters to Peter Martyr and others be consulted, it will sufficiently appear what feelings he had towards the main-tainers of the Interim, that is, Melancthon's party in the Lutheran Church.8 It is said, I know not on what authority, that Jewell esteemed Calvin's Institutes so highly, that he learned the greater of them by heart: he was very famous for this gift of memory.

We may remark here, that, as the language of Article XVII may be traced through Bucer and Peter Martyr, even in the rapid translation I have here given, so it was not changed in the revision of 1562, save to omit the words, "Although the decrees of predestination are unknown to us, yet."9 But there were then those who, "in the name of Paul, and Cephas, and Christ," or however of Peter, and Paul, and of Christ, said that this was not the gospel; and came forward to stand between the dead and the living, to stop the contagion of this doctrine of assurance of salvation. The following is the decree of the council of Trent upon the subject:

"But although it be necessary to believe that sins neither are nor ever were forgiven, save freely by the divine mercy on account of Christ; yet to no one boasting his confidence and certainty of the remission of his sins, and resting in that alone, is it to be said that his sins are or

have been forgiven: since amongst heretics and schismatics this vain confidence, far removed from all piety, may be, yea, in our time is, preached, and with great earnestness against the Catholic Church; but neither is that to be asserted, that those who are truly justified ought, without any doubt at all, to determine with themselves that they are justified, and that no one is absolved from his sins and justified, save he who certainly believes himself to be absolved and justified; and that by this faith alone absolution and justification is wrought, as if he who does not believe this, doubted concerning the promises of God, and concerning the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ. For, as no pious person ought to doubt concerning the mercy of God, concerning the merit of Christ, and concerning the virtue and efficacy of the sacraments, so every one, when he considers himself, and his own infirmity and indisposition, may tremble concerning his own grace, and fear, since none can know with the certainty of faith, in which fallacy cannot exist, that he has obtained the grace of God."

I leave the contrast of these passages, with the question now passing before us, to the judgment of every right-ordered mind.

I add the following: "No one also, so long as he lives in this mortal life, ought so far to presume concerning the secret mystery of divine predestination, that he should certainly determine himself to be altogether in the number of the predestinated: as if it were true that, being justified, he could no more sin, or, if he sinned, he ought certainly to promise himself repentance; for, unless by special revelation, he cannot know whom God has chosen to Himself."10 The passages I have here

quoted are very strong evidence of the opinions propagated generally at the Reformation. Of this they are direct evidence, viz., of the views of the Church of Rome; as Bucer and Peter Martyr are evidence of the opinions taught in the universities, and sanctioned by the English reformers, as those on which the Church of England was founded: and it is a very simple question, to which of the two are the doctrines here discussed on either side most like?

But the author of the “Remarks “cannot but have been aware that the doctrine of assurance, as directly connected with consequentially, I will not say as being, as some hold, justifying faith, but that the doctrine of assurance in fact is taught, not only in the confession of the reformed churches in France, but also in that of Augsburg. I certainly should have stated the confession of the French churches to have been a much more formed and material document. This, however, of course, is matter of judgment. In this point the confession of Augsburg is as decided as possible; and this is material, as shewing, not merely the fact of its being taught in the church, but that it was one of the points on which, as essential to Christian truth, they separated from the apostate church of Rome: as if, as the council of Trent expresses it, “to doubt of it were to doubt of the promises of God, and the efficacy of Christ’s death and resurrection.” That the soul of a saint may be disturbed, as Peter Martyr says, we admit; but to make doubts which arise from the flesh and the corruption of our nature, the state in which a Christian ought to be, or the justifiable standard of the frame of his mind, is to make unbelief the rule of faith, to deny the power of Christ’s atonement as received by faith, and to affirm the

propriety of disbelief in its efficacy and in God's promises, or that being justified by faith we have peace with God. But we must not pass yet quite away from history. As to this appropriating character of faith, and consequently the connection of the sense of salvation with justification, we may quote what the author of the "Remarks "has already recognized as sound doctrine. He has commented much on, and indeed spoken of it as a leading error, the confounding of justification and salvation; but he is charging here not the preacher, but the reformers, nay, rather, the authorized formularies of the Church. "As is more fully declared in the homily of justification," is the language of the Articles. And where is this homily to be found? I suppose the author of the "Remarks "will not deny that it is the homily in three parts, entitled the homily of salvation. The homily of salvation is in fact a full treatise on justification: but I shall quote a passage from the third part, as evidence of their view, and also of the author of the "Remarks." "These articles of our faith the devils believe, and so they believe all things that be written in the New and Old Testament to be true: and yet for all this faith they be but devils, remaining still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true Christian faith. For the right and true Christian faith is, not only to believe that holy scripture and all the foresaid articles of our faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence in God's merciful promises, to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey His commandments."

And proving that profession with ungodliness cannot have this assurance, they reason: "For how can a man have this true faith, this sure trust and confidence in

God, that by the merits of Christ his sins be forgiven, and he reconciled, to the favour of God, and to be partaker of the kingdom of heaven by Christ, when he liveth ungodly? “Well, the author of the “Remarks” says now: “I dare not in this life count myself to have apprehended, or pronounce my sins to be forgiven.”

But I quote it now as evidence of the way in which the homilies identify salvation with justification (for they use them as identical terms, or rather assume, that in proving justification they were proving salvation), and how a true faith is made by them to consist in the confidence in God’s promises, that our sins are forgiven, and that we shall be partakers of the kingdom of heaven by Christ, and that both are at once concluded by faith.

Farther, as to the historic evidence of the alleged Lutheranism of the Church of England reformation, we may remark, that, when the persecuted English protestants fled to Germany on the accession of Mary, the Lutherans would not receive them into their cities at all; this was rather singular evidence of the Lutheran character of their views. It is evidence of this, that so far from the contagion being merely brought back, they were in the full Calvinistic disease before they left England. I am quite aware that the sacrament question was connected with this. But what other substantial difference was there? For example, what was the point on which the two parties of the Reformation finally split at the conferences at Marpurg?

Farther, an evidence of the estimation in which the Lutherans held the English reformers, we may quote Melancthon, quoted in a note to Mosheim: “Some vociferate that the English martyrs are martyrs of the

devil. I am unwilling thus to insult the Holy Spirit in Latimer, who has past his eightieth year, and in other holy men whom I knew." Note in Maclaine's Mosheim, vol. iv, p. 383. [Cent. XVI, sec. iii, part ii, chap. 2, xvii.]

Melancthon, indeed, it is evident, did not agree with them in this opinion, that these Lutheran English were martyrs of the devil; but even his language is a little gentle if he was the author of all these opinions for which they were burnt.

But as the Lutheran Church has been referred to and as we have been told that "the Loci Theologici of Melancthon in any edition after 1545 may be taken as speaking the sentiments of all the Lutheran divines," and the Church of England views are attempted to be rested on this basis; it may be worth our while to advert to the history of the Lutheran Church briefly. It is not perhaps astonishing, though it might seem odd, that the author of the "Remarks "has never once adverted to Luther as having anything to say to the opinions of the Lutheran Church. It would indeed have destroyed all the groundwork upon which the argument that the Church of England was Lutheran rested, and its object too: still we must be allowed to refer to them in considering the Lutheran Church. It is well known that one of Luther's principal and most laboured works was on the bondage of the will—its absolute and unqualified incapability of doing anything but sin. I shall confine myself to two quotations, exhibitory of his views: merely mentioning, that it is stated by historians, that declarations of Luther were extant, written many years after, in which he stated, that this and his catechism were the only things on review in which he could feel thoroughly satisfied. He thus writes: "It is a granted11 position that free-will in

all, is alike defined to be, that which cannot will good." "And indeed if it were not so, God could not elect any one, nor would there be any place for election, but for free-will only, as choosing or refusing the long-suffering and anger of God. And if God be thus robbed of His power and wisdom to elect, what will there be remaining but that idol fortune, under the name of which all things take place at random? Nay, we shall at length come to this; that men may be saved and damned without God's knowing anything at all about it, as not having determined by certain election who should be saved or who should be damned; but having set before all men in general His pardoning goodness12 and long-suffering, and His mercy, shewing correction and punishment, and left them to choose for themselves whether they would be saved or damned; while He in the meantime should be gone, as Homer says, to an Ethiopian feast. It is just such a God as this that Aristotle points out to us," etc. Bondage of the Will, p. 281 (of Coles's translation).

Again, he says, quoted by Milner, IV, 461, "You undermine at once all the divine promises and threatenings; you destroy the faith and the fear of God; in fact, you deny the Deity Himself, unless you allow a necessary efficacy to His prescience."

I shall now give a quotation from Melancthon, from his Loci Theologici before 1545, when in the state in which Luther speaks of it so strongly in the opening of his "de servo arbitrio," as incomparable. I give the quotation from Milner, who says the book is rare. "The divine predestination takes away the liberty of man; for both the external actions and the internal thoughts of all created beings whatever, take place agreeably to the divine predestination. The judgment of a carnal mind

resists this sentiment; but a man of a spiritual understanding approves it. Moreover, the mind which is deeply affected with a sense of the divine predeterminations will always have the profoundest reverence for God, as well as the most steady dependence on Him." (Phil. Melancthon's Loc; Theol. ap. Milner, V, p. 300.)

I suppose only the author of the "Remarks "would appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. But we will have his thoughts after Calvin's views were presented to his mind. I quote from the same source, p. 333.

Melancthon writes to Calvin. After stating his hypothesis on the subject, he says, "I do not write these things to you in a dictatorial spirit; it is not for me to dictate to so very learned a person, and so very well skilled in the exercises of piety; and indeed I am satisfied that these views of mine agree with yours, but they are stated in a ruder, less refined manner, and are adapted to use."

Do we say, then, that this steady basis of the Church of England doctrine did not change his opinion? Far from it. The above sentence disappeared from the Loci before 1545: but that all the Lutheran doctors followed his opinions, is one of the most monstrous statements that could be made. Did the author of the "Remarks "ever hear of the Interim? of the convocation at Torgaw? or the Form of Concord, which itself again divided the whole Lutheran Church? Why the university of Jena owes its origin to the resistance of the Lutheran doctors to the new opinions of Melancthon. Nor let it be said, this does not apply to the Loci Theologici; for at the conference at Torgaw, where Melancthon advocated submission to the Interim, the statement of these his

later views gave occasion to the divisions of the Lutheran Church.

Mosheim (a man, I suppose, latitudinarian enough not to bear hard upon Melancthon) gives the following account of his changes: and if we are told he was as a Lutheran jealous for the credit of Luther, it does but further prove the point.

In the question of indifferent things, or, as it is called, the Adiaphoristic controversy, arising from the Interim, we have the following: “But in the class of matters indifferent, this great man and his associates placed many things which had appeared of the highest importance to Luther, and could not, of consequence, be considered as indifferent by his true disciples. For he regarded as such, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, the necessity of good works to salvation, the number of the sacraments, the jurisdiction claimed by the pope and the bishops, extreme unction, the observation of certain religious festivals and several superstitious rites and ceremonies.” Mosheim, Cent. XVI, sec. iii, pt. ii, c. I, xxviii.

Is this the basis on which the Church of England is founded? For this is Melancthon after 1545.

Again: “The Synergists, whose doctrine was almost the same with that of the Semipelagians, denied that God was the only agent in the conversion of sinful men; and affirmed, that man co-operated with divine grace in the accomplishment of His salutary purpose. Here also Melancthon renounced the doctrine of Luther; at least the terms he employs in expressing his sentiments concerning this intricate subject are such as Luther would have rejected with horror; for, in the conference

at Leipsic already mentioned, the former of these great men did not scruple to affirm, that God drew to Himself and converted adult persons in such a manner, that the powerful impression of His grace was accompanied with a certain correspondent action of their will, etc. But this representation of the matter was far from being agreeable to the rigid Lutherans. They looked upon it as subversive of the true and genuine doctrine of Luther, relating to the absolute servitude of the human will, etc., and hence they opposed the Synergists, or Semipelagians, with the utmost animosity and bitterness." Flacius was the leader of the other party. Such was the way in which Melancthon may be stated "as speaking the sentiments of all the Lutheran divines." The history of the Lutheran Church, after the death of Luther, is the history of its divisions and controversies, occasions by Melancthon's holding these very opinions in which he departed from Luther.

But there is one remarkable circumstance which I cannot refrain from noticing—that the same opinions in Archbishop Lawrence produced the same result; and (not to refer to public acts, as they are not written) his published charge of his views as Archbishop was direction to his clergy to cultivate reciprocal feelings with the Roman Catholic priests, as there was no difference between the churches in any material point. He here at least was a genuine Melancthonian Adiaphorist.

I have now done with the historical part of this enquiry. If any one wishes to see a foreigner's view of the settlement of the English Church, he may consult Mosheim, Cent. XVI, sec. iii, pt. 2, c. 2, xvi. We have seen the doctrine of the professors of divinity in England

who were called over at the Reformation. We have seen the views of Luther, and the real character of Melancthon and his views. I suppose we need not attempt to prove Calvin a Calvinist. That is, we have seen not merely the doctrines upon which the Church of England was founded, but we have seen the principles on which the Reformation itself was founded, and arose as the assertor of truth against the errors of the Church of Rome: and we have seen this confirmed by the Church of Rome's stepping out to meet them as a fundamental point of difference, as the primary turning point which upset their errors. And accordingly we have found, in more than one instance, that when these are departed from, acquiescence in the principles of the Church of Rome in material points has been held indifferent; or that there was no difference at all. Such is the state of things which history presents to us: and I think the attentive reader will have already found every point called in question by the author of the "Remarks" fully stated in the affirmative in the *** retracts from the Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge. As to justification in baptism, everybody knows that the Roman Catholics were baptized in all that the Church of England holds essential. If therefore the reformers held this to be justification, how they could have turned the world upside down by their arguments with the Church of Rome on the point, is hard to tell. Surely, if this had been their view, all their arguments, nay their lives, for the doctrine of justification by faith (the Articulus stantis or cadentis ecclesiae), would have been very little to the purpose.

For my own part, I cannot discern one single jot of difference on this head between the statement of the

author of the “Remarks,” and the doctrine of the Church of Rome. The Church of Rome held, that righteousness could not be imputed without faith, as well as the author of the “Remarks.” The Church of Rome held, that “it were necessary to believe that no sins are, or ever were, remitted, save freely by the divine mercy on account of Christ,” and that “no pious person ought to doubt of the merit of Christ’s death,” as well as the author of the “Remarks.” The Church of Rome held, and does hold, that past sin is put away in baptism, only a little more clearly stated than by the author of the “Remarks,” that is, original sin in infants, or actual also in adults: so that a person is therein called, pardoned, accepted in Christ; while subsequent evil was to be put away by subsequent repentance. They hold the necessity of good works, and the freedom of the will, as well as the author of the “Remarks.” But what the did not hold, and what the author of the “Remarks” does not hold, was, such a reception of the value of Christ’s death by faith as gives peace and assurance of conscience, so the “gloriemur confidentissime,” as a former Professor of Divinity at Oxford expresses it: which the reformers did hold, and preach, and did profess; and that so universally as to be made a special matter of condemnation as their opinion at the council of Trent.

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With some remarks on this point I shall close this trs as it has extended to so great, but, I hope, not unprofitable extent. And here I must remark, that while I have canvased the facts, I have abstained from any observations on the sp manner, or expressions of the “Remarks “in question. I am not disposed, nor did I feel it my object, so to do, though I think there was ample

opportunity. I do not think it remark of a frank or honest-minded person to comment i the expression “added another word,” when the author know, as every one else, that this was a mere question c structure of language, and that the idea is as much add the Greek word, as it is in the English word freely: I c think this worthy of a mind estimating things in the great purposes of God’s glorious gospel.13 And here I feel myself at liberty. I cannot but feel it one of the singular evidences of the way in which our spiritual thoughts can be cramped by a system, that when the question is as to the whole plans and counsels of the invisible God, and our entrance into them by the glorious gospel of the blessed God, for we have the mind of Christ, and our reconciliation into His communion of love, so as to enjoy all His counsels and see them accomplished in Him who is the brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His Person; and be enabled to say in Him, “Grant thee thy hearts* desire, and fulfil all thy counsel”: I should find myself brought down to the enquiry of what five or six men held —saints indeed, from whom I should be willing to learn, but who, as individuals, were but the objects of the everlasting counsels and glory of Him, who hath gathered us also into the same inheritance. I traced this indeed, not as regards their individual opinions, but the great broad facts on which the work proceeded, for the sake of those who may be accustomed to walk in their steps, and to have assumed very different facts from those which are indeed true. But the truth of God receives no testimony from man, though He may give it to them and honour them thereby. May we in this day be honoured as faithful to that which is given us.

I shall close by very freely discussing the principles advanced by the author of the “Remarks,” as principles in which the peace of God’s children is concerned. Because the statement amounts to this: that a justified person, justified by true faith (for I suppose the author will not say that hypocritical faith justifies, in the teeth of James, and indeed, in the plain sense of his own statement), may be damned. Observe, that a person justified by true faith, may yet be damned. It is not that a man may be deceived by a false faith, etc., but that a man whom God has justified by a true faith may yet be damned: nay, as we know that the world around us are nominally Christians, and actually baptized, and yet that it is a strait gate and a narrow way that leads to life, and few there be that find it; that most of those whom God has justified will be damned: and this is the doctrine they would give us as comfortable. This is the point which men are anxious to prove—this strange fatuity of self-will by which men will claim the title, after God has actually taken them in hand, yea justified them by the power of His grace in Christ, though they were ruined sinners, to damn themselves. Strange comfort! Whether the statements of page 19 are consistent with the views of the English and German reformers, they will judge who have read the extracts already given. But I must remark, that I am not here arguing the question of election. The author has brought it to a much nearer and closer personal point. How and in what is a man justified? and what is this justification worth to him? As to justification by baptism, I find nothing in the Articles about it. It is not mentioned in the Article on justification; and in the Article of baptism, justification is not mentioned; it is called a sign of regeneration. But let us see first the consistency of these views.

God will not impute righteousness to any one who has not faith;

But God imputes righteousness to every baptized person;

Therefore every baptized person has faith.

Again:

Every baptized person has faith;

But every infant in the Church of England is baptized;

Therefore every infant in the Church of England has faith.

But this faith is manifestly genuine faith, or else a man may be justified by virtue of being a hypocrite; therefore we may say, Every infant in the Church of England has genuine faith;

But he who has genuine faith works in love;

Therefore every infant in the Church of England works in love.

Such is the genuine and necessary consequence of the proposition of the "Remarks": and let not this be thought idle. Two things essentially distinct being declared identical, one may, nay must, affirm of one, what is true of the other: but in doing this the absurdity of the identification is shewn, and in truth nothing but pure Antinomianism can result from making baptism justification, if justification have anything to do with faith; because then justifying faith may be without any fruits at all. In truth these views are the height of Antinomianism: or anything which justifies, or puts a man actually and efficiently amongst the children of God, without any reference to a total change in the principle

of his will. What a child's past sins are which are blotted out, I know not; save that this idea was necessary to the notion of justification; but what the author means when he says, figuratively, i.e., spiritually rises again, it would be hard to tell.

But let us see the consistency of fact in which it results. "Every baptized person feels," observe, not ought to feel, or is in fact, but feels, "assured that he is called, pardoned, chosen, and accepted in Christ." This I can call nothing but a funny assertion. Did the author ever meet with a poor broken-spirited Roman Catholic? I mention them, because anyone conversant with them knows their principles to be identical with the author's, as here expressed, save that a priest lets the Roman Catholic, and a Protestant quietly lets himself off. But will the author walk through the streets of Oxford and ask any of the inhabitants of it, except those who hold the principles which the author condemns, Do you feel assured that you are called, pardoned, chosen, and accepted in Christ? But these things are trifling with religion. Peace is something real; to be chosen and accepted, ay and pardoned too in Christ, is something real; and to feel it is something real; and it is adding mockery to misery to tell a man that he feels pardoned and accepted, when he neither knows nor cares one farthing about the matter, or perhaps is groaning under a sense of sin which he knows not how to get rid of.

But the inconsistency of those who speak of these things from theory, without any acquaintance with men's conscience (though it is there generally that the utter folly of their notions comes out to light), was never more glaringly manifested than in these "Remarks." We are told in one page, that every baptized person feels

assured that he is pardoned; but in the next, the author says, “I dare not say my sins are forgiven.” I suppose the author is not a baptized person; or if he tells me, Yes, but I may have committed sins since I was baptized, then I suppose he felt assured he was pardoned when he was an infant, and felt nothing at all; or at any rate it results, that every baptized persons’ feeling assured that he is pardoned comes to this, that nobody does in point of fact. There was peace preached by Jesus Christ, and the atonement of Christ was not only for original but for the actual sins of men: there can be no application of this in faith when all are baptized in their infancy, save that in which I can say, My sins are forgiven. Theory, the theory of a Roman Catholic, can apply it to original, and therefore there every unbeliever rests.

But sin is a thing which affects the conscience when a man thinks: and it is only the direct exercise of faith in the blood of the atonement, which can give knowledge of actual forgiveness, which purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And here consequently is the association of salvation with it; because the redeeming love of God is personally known, the Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. And hence persons holding these general views can go along with the world as others, because they have never personally come to God. And, I add, its thoroughly Antinomian tendency cannot be too strongly pressed; because what is it that is to be got over in man? The enmity of his heart against God; the carnal mind, which is enmity with God; and the friendship of the world, which is enmity with God. But how is the enmity of the natural heart to be got over but by bringing in love? And how? By knowing that “he

loved us." And how shall we know this? but "hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us." For observe now, the enmity is a real thing, and the love must be a real thing: as Paul expresses it, "by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (or, if you please, "atonement"): and to be produced it must be by practically knowing "he first loved us," which is known by the value of Christ's death received by faith, and the Father's love as manifested in it. If I rest in a pardon received in baptism, I can feel assured that I am pardoned without ever personally coming to God in my conscience, which is the root and essence of Antinomianism; whereas if it hang on the exercise of personal faith in Him, this brings me directly into His presence and subjection. But if I now exercise faith in Christ's death as an atonement and reconciliation, now that I am writing this; I must believe that my sins are everlastingly forgiven and rejoice in the Father's favour, or I do not believe in the efficacy of Christ's death, or the Father's manifested love therein.

I say, that not to see it is neither more nor less than unbelief. A man may be brought afterwards to believe, but at present he is not properly a believer in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I can see that he really believes in His Person, but Satan is clouding his mind, then I may feel a good assurance that he is a forgiven sinner, though he cannot. But I am not to sanction his unbelief, but minister the sure mercies which I may be given to know myself. But if I am told, True, if it be so with you, you are very happy; but how do you know you will continue to believe? This is still unbelief. I may wait on a person's weakness of faith, but cannot preach it: it is simply getting back into distrust of God, which is the

devil's greatest triumph. "I knew thee (said the unprofitable servant) that thou wast an austere man." "I heard thy voice in the garden," said Adam, when the devil had effected his first self-ruining purpose, "and I was afraid, and went and hid myself." The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is not of their perseverance, but of God's faithfulness. Their confidence is, not that they would not fail, but God; it is a trust in His promises, as the opposite is unbelief. "They have known and believed," as John expresses it, "the love that God hath to them": and they rest and hang upon this as a child upon a parent, yea, much more. Nor is this present enjoyment, or confidence in the favour and known love of the everlasting God (how better known than in the gift of His only and glorious Son?) merely stayed by the witness in their own hearts, but it hath also the stable foundation of testimony which they dare not disbelieve, yea, which it is sin not to believe, and a great dishonour to God. They believe that God did not shew them this love in the gift of Christ, and the earnest of the Spirit, to leave them as uncertain, as they were before of their estate. They read, "who also shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ." And they believe it; and bless God that to such poor and mere sinners He could have destined such things and shewn such love. They believe that, if any man sin, they have an advocate with the Father; and that He is the propitiation for their sins; and they do therefore believe that if they should fall, through mercy they will rise again.

They reason, with wondering faith, “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” If “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Observe here the singular and marked contrast between the argument of natural unbelief, and of that holy faith which believes in God. It is plain, says the author of the “Remarks,” from this passage, that salvation and justification are distinct things; and therefore, though we be justified, we are not made thereby sure of salvation; I suppose, because of our own weakness and sinfulness and infirmity. But faith is that which sees the intervention of God’s power, and leans on it; it knows that it has been justified, and from its justification concludes infallibly its salvation: one indeed has taken place, says unbelief, which it cannot help ascribing to God, but that is no proof that he shall obtain the other. God reconciled when we were enemies argues faith: certainly, having reconciled us, He will now save us from wrath; and again, if we were reconciled by His death, surely His life shall save us. Thus, while unbelief sees nothing but that they are distinct things (and they are distinct only because we are in the body, and therefore the latter is matter of faith and not of sight), faith sees yet the certainty of one from the other, as proving God’s love with an even stronger argument, and the certainty yet again of the same from the power of the Instrument now exalted in life, who reconciled us by death. The sinner doubts no more about his falling than

his standing: he knows certainly that he would fall instantly if in himself; but he knows that God has promised, and that God will perform, and that He cannot fail; and that none, not Satan himself, can pluck him out of His hands; nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord.

The comparison of the argument of Paul, and of the author of the “Remarks “gives the key to the whole of the sentiments expressed, be they in whom they may. The saint is persuaded, “that he who hath begun a good work in him, will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ.” Unbelief is not so persuaded. The scripture hath said, “Faithful is he which hath called you, who also will do it”; and the saint believes it. Nay, but I cannot be sure of it because of my infirmity! That is, you do not believe the word of the testimony of God: you are making your weakness a greater evidence of the result than the power of God! Such precisely is unbelief. But a justification without the exercise of a personal faith in Christ, the sent of God, the Saviour, cannot possibly be accompanied with any knowledge of salvation, nor can it either be accompanied with any renewal of heart, for the heart is purified by faith. But the love of God, and God who is loved, are known by faith; and therefore we can say, “who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” But indeed it were endless to quote passages, for this simple reason, that this is the gospel. The Jew could be circumcised and brought into the covenant of God; nay, the Jew could, if

so given of God, walk uprightly. But the Jew could not know, what in faith he might hope for and trust in, what is the essential distinction of the Christian— the finished work of the atonement, and the earnest of the Spirit shed abroad till the redemption of the promised possession. This is Christianity, and received into the heart by faith; and this therefore unbelief can never know anything about. “Blessed is the man whose unrighteousness is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” There is not a man in the world that is not a hypocrite, that has not guile in his heart, till his conscience is washed in the blood of the Lamb. But what blessedness, what reconciliation, what purging of guile, if the forgiveness of sins be not known?

But the author of the “Remarks” says, “I bless Him, that He has taught me, not to trust in my own works, but in the assistance of His Holy Spirit.” What will the Holy Spirit assist him to do, according to this view of the case, except to work? So that he trusts in his works after all, and the Holy Spirit is a mere assister or helper of him in this. But He never taught him to put his trust here; but they shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace, who have trusted in Christ. And they who have so trusted have ever, according to His promise, been sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of their inheritance. There is not such a thing in Scripture, as trusting in the assistance of the Spirit, contrasted with trusting in works; nor in common sense either. And Christianity is a fable if it does not enable one who believes in the atonement to pronounce his sins forgiven. I do not say but there may be doubting souls

under gracious influences; but I say as to this, It is unbelief.

Let us put the case of the jailer at Philippi: “What must I do to be saved?” What would the author of the “Remarks” answer? Why, as to being justified, if you are baptized you will be justified; but perhaps you will not be saved at all; nor can I give you any assurance of this, nor indeed will you be able to pronounce at any given time subsequent whether your sins are forgiven or not: the former will depend on how you receive the Spirit; as to the latter, nobody knows on what; in short, I dare not pronounce as to myself. Was this the answer of the blessed and believing apostle? No: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Well then, supposing God gave him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, would the man be warranted or not in saying in his heart, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be saved. People became Christians because they believed that it was the salvation of God, and that they had there what they had not elsewhere, namely, salvation. Again, what is the testimony of Peter? “We believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” So in Peter’s account of the message to Cornelius, Acts 11, “Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.”

But there is one idea which runs in the strongest way through the writings of the Reformation, and is one great hinge of this matter—the acceptance of the person. “By the which will we are sanctified,” says the apostle, “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” And what then? Why, that, “by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” As to our salvation depending on the manner in which we

receive the Spirit, though the sentence be sufficiently obscure, as the person is supposed to be justified already, if it mean anything it is Pelagianism, or at least Semipelagianism; for the manner of my receiving the Spirit must depend on my will previous to the Spirit's influence, if it has any meaning, which is just Semipelagianism.

This part of my subject I feel fully to be most feebly treated: I know that none but believers can feel assurance; but I know that it is the direction of the apostle to "draw near with full assurance of faith." I know that believers will supply infinitely more than any pen could write, or tongue of men or angels could tell: if it be made the instrument of strengthening any soul or convincing it there is such a thing as peace (a peace which, having received forgiveness, is able to rest with undoubting assurance on the promises of the God who gave it, when its possessor was in his sins), I shall be satisfied, yea, abundantly thankful. The hope of the Christian is, not of forgiveness, which the hope of one who cannot pronounce his sins forgiven must be, unless he be a madman; but because he can, of glory. "Beloved," he says, "now are we the sons of God." For, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And he that hath this hope in him" not a vague estimate of the portion of somebody or other, "purifieth himself, as he is pure." He who throws down the assurance of salvation, throws down all Christian progress; for I affirm, that there is not one atom of Christian holiness in the person who has it not, nor any purification which is truly of the

sanctuary. “He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not hath made God a liar, because he hath not believed the witness which God hath given concerning his Son. And this is the witness, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Well, but after all, though he have this life, he may lose it and perish. “My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand.” “He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, shall not come into condemnation,14 but is passed from death unto life.”

There are two points fully stated here, and on which we have seen Paul exercising faith, of which Christ, given, dead, and risen, is witness to us by the Spirit. First, inasmuch as we are justified by it, no condemnation. Secondly, that we have eternal life, and so, further, that we joy in God. How a man can do that who dare not say that his sins are forgiven, I know not. But there is this ignorance, further, of the very place of the Church; namely, that they are redeemed and risen in spirit, and are thus, their bodies being not redeemed, a witness of God’s power in the midst of and over sin, to the praise of the glory of His grace; whereby, according to His counsels, the glory of the Son, and the power of the Spirit are displayed, till the redemption in those who are kept by the power of Gcd until salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

I have stated many texts. The question is, does the author of the “Remarks” believe in them? For example, does he believe that the sheep of Christ shall never

perish and that no one can pluck them out of His hand? If he say, I feel so the strength of my flesh warring against me, that I cannot believe this, then I say, It is indeed unbelief; but it is unbelief through which many a child of God has passed, and here are the promises which apply against it. But if he deny and reason and preach against them, and the faith of God's children in them; then I say, however softly expressed, or guarded by gentleness of manner, It is impiety and presumption. He must deny God's willingness or power; for it is in that they trust: and he must deny God's testimony and word; for on that they rely, upon the carnal suggestions of nature. He must preach the power of sin and Satan, against the power of God, in spite of the testimony of God's word, which, because the children were under those, has declared this; and bears witness to the deliverance by Christ. For the testimony of this is the gospel. And, to conclude, God hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son: but "whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say then to these things? "It is simple question of the power of God; we know through faith in Christ that God is for us: if God be for us, who can be against us? "He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? For I am persuaded," etc. Who is he that condemneth? why not reckon upon salvation as to this? If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead dwell in us, God shall also

quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us: why not reckon on salvation as to this? In a word, we know that we are alive in our souls and spirits; we know that there is no condemnation for us; and we know that our mortal bodies will be quickened; what are we to doubt of? It is a poor office to make God a liar in the assurance of His grace towards His children.

But there is one other sentence to which (as exhibiting the inconsistency of these views in the light of the Scripture, and how little they flow from this as opened to us by the Spirit of God) I must advert: “It is a mistake to say, that a free gift excludes conditions; on the contrary, the very nature of a covenant implies conditions.” If one merely had to cavil in argument, one might reason on this as as extraordinary a sentence as could be written; but I must go a little deeper. Take it on the surface, and the argument is simply nothing, and the expression “on the contrary “makes it almost ridiculous. But if we are to assume that there is a latent idea which takes away the absurdity, namely, that the free gift of the gospel is a covenant; then I say, that the argument flows from a direct contravention or ignorance of the whole statement of Scripture on the subject. In the first place, the argument proceeds on there being a covenant with man. There is no such thing in Scripture. You may call the law on Adam one, if you please, by which he fell (though I think incorrectly). And the covenant which God made with Abraham, and confirmed to Christ, has no conditions: and the difference of this as a pure promise is at length argued by the apostle on this very ground, to wit, that there was no second party but as a receiver, as contrasted with the one at Sinai; and

therefore simply received by faith, which believes in a thing done by someone else.

Thus in Genesis 15: the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, etc., and Abram said, What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? etc. Then the Lord promised him his seed should be as the stars; and he believed the Lord, etc. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? Then God directed him to take the pieces of the heifer, etc., and divide the birds: and when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between these pieces. In the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, etc. Now here we have a covenant of gift, where the only party was simply God; who condescendingly entered into it, that man might know the solemnity and immutability of His promise. And here, accordingly, Paul contrasts the difference of the law, and the gift of the inheritance. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise, which the law could not disannul. The law was conditional, and therefore was forfeited (yea, before its conditions were declared) by the making of the golden calf, and was temporary: but the inheritance was of promise, and therefore secure. Why? Because it rested upon the unity of God. When a second came in, it was not merely of promise; and of this the mediator was evidence, shewing that it was not of one. But the inheritance is simply of the promise of God, and therefore of gift: and His covenant was a solemn pledge merely, as connected with the promise, of the security of the gift, and not including two parties at all; save as a Giver securing the faith of the receiver by His solemn

engagement of mere mercy to assure, which none could claim; and the receiver of the thing promised waited for by faith upon the assurance of the promise and covenant. To pursue this subject into all its branches would carry us too far here; but the simple perusal of Genesis 15 (if the reader find difficulty in following the argument of Paul in the Galatians) will amply demonstrate the point in question. I shall close the subject by two passages from Melancthon,15 as he has been so much insisted on. From the Confession of Augsburg 5. [a.d. mdxl.—Ed.]

“They are condemned who teach nothing concerning this faith by which remission of sins is received, but command consciences to doubt whether they obtained forgiveness; and add that this doubt is not a sin.”

I do not give the reasoning on this subject, it would be to transcribe pages, merely their opinion. The following is from the Saxon Confession (a document prepared for the council of Trent). It may be seen in the Sylloge Confess., or in Op. Mel., 123, on “Credo remissionem peccatorum.” “Here many and great corruptions are brought in by the adversaries: I believe, that is I doubt, they say: also, Then I will believe when I have sufficient merits: also they do not say, I believe the remission of sins to be certainly freely given on account of the Son of God.”

Again: “As therefore from what has been now said, it is manifest, what the word faith means in this proposition, we are justified by faith; hence it may be understood, that the monks err perniciously, and others whom, converted to God, they command to doubt whether they are acceptable to God. Lastly, the error concerning

doubting is altogether a heathenish imagination, and abolishes the gospel, and [on the other hand] takes away true consolation from those who feel the anger of God."

That no notice is taken of the prospect before the Church, I am not surprised. One would think that the progress of infidelity, and everything which might obliterate the peace of mankind, and separate him from God, were calculated to awaken even the unbeliever: not one nation scarcely in Europe not in a state of insurrection, though all are trying to keep peace; while even at home every opinion that could agitate the state is forcing itself into notice, however men may wish for rest. But there was one sign yet wanting to complete the picture to the believer, the unbelief of the body; and that also stares them in the face. The Lord deliver many souls, yea, He will deliver every one of His sheep, before the time of helpless judgment leave no room for repentance, and the Lord awake, as it were, out of sleep to the judgment that He hath commanded, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, when the Lord shall make it empty, and turn it upside down, and it shall reel to and fro like a drunkard. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the way, if his wrath be kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."—

1 Oxford, 1831.

2 This, which was part of the Article on free will in 1553, was omitted in 1562.

3 In the appendix to his Bampton Lectures, Dr. Lawrence gives this as a sort of conclusion to his view of election. Having seen what Bucer's own was, we shall see how suitable such a sentence was to Dr. Lawrence's.

I give it as Dr. L.’s quotation, because I cannot lay my hand on it in Bucer; but I do not doubt his literal correctness.

4 The alterations of 1662 were made subsequent to this, and some additions in King James’s time; many were projected after the revolution.

5 Peter Martyr’s leaving Italy was much called in question by many then as a desertion. However, it appears many of those who boasted most fell away in the time of trial.

6 [Jewell sent Peter Martyr a copy of his Apology on February 7th, 1562, just after it was published. Martyr died November 12th, of the same year, in his sixty-third year.—Ed.]

7 [The following extracts (translated into English) from the Letters of Bishop Jewell in the fourth volume of his works published by the Parker Society supplies the needed reference, pages 1221 and 1222.]

“As to what you write about religion and the theatrical habits, would that it could be accomplished! For our part we have not been wanting to the good cause. But those who are so mightily pleased with such things have followed, I believe, the ignorance of the clergy; and since they found them to be nothing but logs without ability, learning, and morality, they were willing that they should be made agreeable to the people by a comical dress… These are indeed, as you very well write, relics of the Amorites. Who can deny it? And would that some time or other they may be taken away and extirpated even to the lowest roots!… The queen, however, diligently inquired of the messenger, what you were doing, where you lived, what your state of health

and what your circumstances were, and whether your time of life would admit of your undertaking a journey: she altogether wished that you should by all means be invited to England; that, as you had tilled the university by your voice, so you might by the same voice water it in its present disordered and wretched condition. Since then, however, somehow the Saxon deliberations and the embassy from Smalcald have put an end to those counsels. Yet, whatever be the reasons, nothing is at this time more talked about than that Peter Martyr is invited and daily expected to come to England."

From Strype's Annals (i, 382) it appears that Martyr was invited to England in 1561, but pleaded his obligations to Zurich as his excuse for declining the offer.—Ed.]

8 [Thus in Jewell's letter to Peter Martyr, dated London, November 16th, 1559, he says:

"Many of our chief men, and these not unknown to you, think of you and desire that you should be invited at the earliest opportunity also, spite of all the Smalcaldists."

Again, in his letter to Peter Martyr dated Salisbury, February 7th, 1562, Jewell writes:

"But as to what you write, that a sort of interim and farrago of religion is sought after by certain ones, may God avert it! "—Ed.[

9 Perhaps "fervently "for "frequently "was a change, "vehementer," in 1562. See Bishop Sparrow's Collection, or Burnet.

10 The reader will find anathematising canons as to the connection of free-will with justification in Canon 3, and a following one of this Session, "De Justificatione," Sess. 7, I think.

11 That is, by the opposite party, as represented by Erasmus in his Diatribe.

12 These expressions refer to some expressions of Erasmus, in which he speaks of God having used all goodness towards Pharaoh, etc.

13 The observation on the other word (received) I think just, as far as negativing any argument from it, as used in that text.

14 In full truth, judgment. Our Lord is contrasting His two characters of life and judgment; He exercises His power towards the saints in giving life.

15 The fact is, Luther composed the Confession at a previous meeting of the confederates, by desire of the elector: Melancthon dressed them up for the diet.

The Covenants

The covenant is a word common in the language of a large class of Christian professors, and also of many true Christians; but in its development and detail, as to its unfolded principles, much obscurity appears to me to have arisen from a want of simple attention to Scripture.

The giving of the Church to Christ before the worlds, and the consequent giving to us of the blessings therein involved, seem to me indeed to be most clearly declared in Scripture, as in 2 Timothy 1:9, 10. But little heed seems to have been given to that which is really contained in this covenant, as administered in dispensation, in its connection with the character and hope of the Church. Without weakening, then, the foundation whereon all rests, or pulling stones out of it to polish or carve for less needful and appropriate uses, while that whereon they should rest is gone, let us see the plain revelation afforded by the blessed word, on what, in their great branches, the covenants are founded.

The mystery of God’s will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself, He hath made known unto us; even that He should gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. This (however consistent everything was with it, or even typical of it) was hidden from ages and from generations. In fact, however progressive the intimations might be (better hopes sustaining believers in greater darkness, as was the case in prophecy), the limits of the actual dealings of God, as to dispensation,

were narrowed, and the terms of them lowered with the falling condition of man and that growing darkness.

The promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, had a wider scope and was a more comprehensive promise, than was any subsequent revelation of resulting details, in the sphere subject to his power; it took the character of the work higher up. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." The call and the promise to Abram again had a wider and a fuller meaning and purpose than any dealings with the Jews, not only at Mount Sinai, but even the previous deliverances which constituted them a nation—a people marked by God as the favoured subjects of His strong hand and mighty arm, however more immediate and manifest the hand of God might be. It had therefore a more immediate and determinate object; not the out-reaching prospect of faith, but the visible actings towards the subjects of present deliverance. The law, given from Mount Sinai, took entirely another ground; and whatever was contained in it (as a figure for the time then present) was based upon the obedience of man, as to its terms of promise and blessing, and not in the supremacy of God, however flowing from it.

If we turn to the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb, we shall see at once the characteristic difference (even in the subjects of praise) in the dispensations. The whole song of Moses, most beautiful as it is, is about the hand and power of God doing wonders. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power." So in Revelation 15, "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty." The song of the Lamb is, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."16We have the mind of

Christ; and as Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God, so is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God; and so in the resurrection, when the Lord returns, shall in the Church also be manifested the power of God in Christ, “according to the working of his mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue even all things unto himself.” And then, in fact (as now known by faith) being indeed quickened, shall be manifested “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 heavenly places.”

But now let the Church learn, and let the saint learn that, if it looks with marvel and admiration at the deliverance wrought by the right hand of the Lord at the Red Sea, it too shall ere long sing even in higher and more blessed strains; but now it has a more intimate and distinct lesson to learn—a peculiar, a privileged lesson—the ways of God, the mind of God; and therefore it must be content to suffer. It is not the time, properly speaking, for power to be exercised in its behalf, but for “being renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Now in this there is often found in us that which savours not of the wisdom of the holy and graceful ways of God; there must be suffering; this must be wrought out in the understanding of His mind. Often we have so to learn it. For the rest, the sufferings are the occasions of the perfect display of this grace in a spirit and character altogether beyond the wisdom of man. He, who through death destroyed him that had the power of death, is the pattern of the wisdom in which the Church is led forth into beauty. So we find in Psalm

139, in which the wisdom and knowledge of God, shewn in power manifested in weakness, is illustrated in the fashioning of the members of Christ17 out of the lower parts of the earth, and in “awaking still with thee”: the wicked are afterward to perish. Hence, in leading forth the people which He had redeemed, He led them not in the triumph of power, altogether above the circumstances through which they passed, as was the case in the deliverance from Egypt (even the present destruction of their enemies by power entirely above them, which they knew only in effect); but, “when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them and they follow him.” “It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” I mean our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus, having the quickening of that eternal life which was with the Father; a place, not merely of effects in deliverance, but fellowship with Him who so delivers. Hence, I say, Jesus having led the way in grace, and the grace being thus fully manifested, let us not shrink from the sufferings in which we are formed inwardly; for it is communion with, and being conformed to, the image of the Son.

But in looking at the Church’s introduction into the knowledge of this image, and fellowship with it, I have, perhaps, wandered too far from the simple question of the covenants. Now I say that this fellowship with the

Head triumphant formed no part of the revelation of the covenants, though clearly purposed and formed before the world was, before the ages or dispensations which came in meanwhile, but was reserved for the revelation of the Holy Ghost, sent down upon the exaltation of the Head into the place, according to the character and glory of which the fellowship itself was to be. And this was manifestly necessary; for until the glorification of the suffering Man, there was not that to which the Spirit could testify as existent; nor that accomplished by reason of which the sinner could righteously apprehend fellowship with the glory of the holiest. Indeed this glory was consequent upon the wages of sin, as it was acquired by the exceeding excellency of that by which sin was put away. It was not the perfecting of the creature, but his change into that which by nature he could not inherit, for flesh and blood could not inherit the kingdom of God. It was not the fashioning of creature glory, but the result through death of redemption and higher glory. It was not blessings of creature things conferred on the creature, but the communion of the creature with the Creator: a new and clearly an infinite truth; not casual, nor medial, but infinite and supreme; the knowledge of which is the Church's present portion by the Holy Ghost; known in Jesus, known in communion with Him; the highest link of the supreme glory; a new, a very glorious truth, in which God is revealed (as not otherwise), manifest in the flesh, revealed without in personality.

Now I would enquire in how far the covenants unfold these things. The Abrahamic covenants (though wider in the scope and testimony, as we have seen, than the local blessings and promises to Israel, as the apostle also so

fully argues) contained none of these things. They proposed the person of the Redeemer, the promised Seed; they proposed the blessing of all nations, but they went not beyond Abraham's being the heir of the world. This may disclose brighter things now that the veil is rent; but in the promises and covenants given to Abraham, he did not outstep as yet in expression the limits of what belonged to the first Adam, because the second Adam (who was also the Lord from heaven) was not revealed, and was simply testified of as the seed of Abraham in whom this blessing should come, whatever it was.

These promises and covenants are in Genesis 12 and 15, and confirmed in chapters 17 and 22. The first promise runs thus: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless him that blesseth thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Afterward the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, "To thy seed will I give this land": here we have nothing beyond the earth and the families by whom it has been divided.

In chapter 15 we have the promise of a seed, numerous as the stars of heaven, and (after stating the circumstances in which they would be intermediately placed) the giving of the land to them, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, confirmed by the covenant of the Lord passing between the pieces of the victims.

In chapter 17 this is established as an everlasting covenant with Abraham (his name being changed), and with his seed after him, throughout their generations—

that God would be a God to him, and to his seed after him; and that He would give to him, and to his seed after him, all the land wherein he was a stranger, for an everlasting possession; and that He would be their God. And circumcision was given to Abraham as a seal.

In chapter 22 we have the confirmation of the promise to the seed. “In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is by the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” In the latter part of this promise we have the confirmation of the blessing of the families of the earth to the seed, that is Christ; which was (in chap. 12) made originally to Abram. Still (whatever be the manner of its accomplishment), it reaches not beyond the original promise to the families of the earth; nor is He, in whom it was to be fulfilled, revealed otherwise than as the seed of Abraham. The other promises, and the formal covenant, are all of the land, and of a seed numerous and prosperous, who should inherit it, and be a blessing. In all this (however unconditionally it establishes that) we have nothing beyond that which is earthly. The promises and covenants in Abraham are established upon grounds which cannot be shaken—not the stability of a professed obedience, but the stability of the declared promise of God—two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, His promise, and His oath. Whatever intimations of circumstances or gathering of hope there might be, the covenants themselves expressed no more. They were confirmed to Isaac, chapter 26, and to Jacob, chapter 28; but no

particular remark is called for as to the terms of the covenants in them.

We then come to Mount Sinai—the first covenant made with Israel as a nation. And here, as the covenant was of course confined to the nation or literal seed recently delivered, so the subject matter of the promises was honour and blessing before that God whose all the earth was. This was the old covenant, as we afterwards read of the new covenant, which latter implies (as expressed in its terms) that it was made with the same people: both (whatever their character) dealing with them as a people—i.e., in reference to earth, although putting them as on earth into relationship to God. The new covenant (however its terms then might introduce new principles applicable to strangers) could not be said to be "not according to the covenant I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt," were it not a covenant made with Israel—the same people with whom the former covenant was made at Mount Sinai. Whoever will but examine Jeremiah 31, from which this very important testimony is quoted, will at once see that the new covenant is to, and with, Israel; as moreover it is not quoted by the apostle in any epistle except that to the Hebrews.

The first covenant, then, was a covenant made with Israel; the second covenant is a covenant made with Israel, but not yet accomplished in its effects. The use which the apostle makes of it is to shew that the old covenant was faulty, and they should not rest in it—that it was ready to vanish away, thus leading them on to the Mediator of the new, in the manner which I shall now just attempt to set forth; but without in any way

speaking of the covenant, as made with the nation, being brought in as to the effect therein described, or that they had come under it, although God's part in it was sealed.

We have, then (passing by, at present, the wider Abrahamic covenants) two covenants with the house of Israel on distinct and different terms: the first, at Mount Sinai; the second, with Christ as its Mediator and its seal.

Now, as to the covenant made with Israel on Mount Sinai, its terms were these: the people undertook to obey all that the Lord should command. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation… And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." Nothing could be more distinct and express than was this condition, "If ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, ye shall be," etc.; and the people undertook the terms explicitly. Now it is remarkable that the previous condition of the people had been unfolded as resting entirely upon grace. As such it was manifested in their deliverance from the power and prince of this world; in the healing of the water which they had to drink; in the giving of the sabbath in which the manna would be an abiding portion —bread given daily otherwise, the needful and surely apportioned supply of grace; in the waters given in the time of their need, though they murmured and tempted the Lord, yet freely given to them from the stony rock; in the power of mediatorial intercession against their

enemies, with their discomfiture, the Lord being their banner, and Joshua their leader; in the ordering of needful government in the household of God, though this was not of principle but from a stranger.

But though the real ground on which they were the people of God, and were known and shewn to be such, was thus of grace before the terms of Mount Sinai and its covenants came in at all, yet for God's sure and wise purposes, and the sure (I do not say the whole) wisdom of which we can see in the exhibition of man's failure and the progressive unfolding of dispensation—in this wisdom the conditional obedience is proposed to Israel; and on that stipulation they take all the promises. How long it lasted was displayed by the noise of those who sang. The first principle and foundation of the whole system was broken and laid low before the mediator returned with the order of that obedience which was pledged in it. The covenant was gone. So much for the covenant of works of man's undertaken obedience. "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." But the Lord was not only shewing the failure of man in obedience, and the characteristics of the perfection required under the law, but there was also, however narrowed the scene in which they were displayed, the progress therein of unfolding dispensations. The first covenant had ordinances of divine service, a holy order. It is remarkable to observe here that, coincident with the failure of man under natural principles, there arose the testimony of another foundation, and other and gracious ordinances of divine life. When I say coincident with the failure, I mean rather with the exhibition and evidence of the failure; and then is seen the evidence of the scheme of grace.

Progressively had the character of the connection between God and man lowered, and progressively had man sunk to the hopeless state of having a broken law, a rejected God of glory, whose hand had been itself shewn in their favour as a covenant God. But as the natural portion of man was thus evidenced to be hopeless, the dawn immediately arose with coincident and answering clearness of that work and order of grace on which the divine purpose and mercy could stand.

The covenant of Israel at Mount Sinai at once contained the proof that the obedience of man was a hopeless ground, under any circumstances, for relationship with God to rest upon; and it also contained the complete typical development of that on which it surely would and could rest—on which comfort and peace and divine blessing could refresh the heart of man, weary with his own way; and this is the use which the apostle makes of it. It is not, Behold here the effects of the new covenant on earth; but the old covenant is a defective, faulty covenant. But the foundation of the new has been laid in the blood of the Mediator. It is not to us that the terms of the covenant, quoted from Jeremiah by the apostle, have been fulfilled, or that we are Israel and Judah; but that while the covenant is founded, not upon the obedience of a living people (to whom the blessing thereupon was to come, and the blood of a victim shed by a living mediator) but upon the obedience unto death of the Mediator Himself, on which (as its secure, unalterable foundation of grace) the covenant is founded.

But, as we have seen, in the very act of forming the covenant, that the obedience of sinful man as its foundation was evinced to come to failure, and that

therefore it carried with it, in the good mercy of our God, the testimony of another and a stable foundation; so did it also of the place into which we were to be brought by it. The holy order which accompanied the covenant (or which the covenant had) was the type of heavenly things. It was not “the days come in the which I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah”; but a hope which entereth into that within the veil; and to this, I repeat, the apostle immediately turns. I am not, of course, denying that practical righteousness will accompany this through the love of it in the heart: surely it will; but the manner in which we are associated with the bringing in of the new covenant is the revelation of that of which its holy order was the pattern and type. That is just this—we have seen the covenant sealed in the death of the Mediator, and therefore the end to us now of all hope from any earthly association with Him, or any blessing on earth; the Mediator’s own death to this world being the foundation of our entrance into, or portion in, the place we hold with God. On this, in Hebrews 9, the apostle laboriously insists, and it is indeed a distinctive characteristic of the dispensation. Then, if we turn from the Mediator, as the foundation in giving or sealing the covenant to us, to consider Him as maintaining it for us toward God, we shall again find in the pattern of the heavenlies (introduced in connection with the old covenant) the place belonging to us by virtue of our connection with the Mediator. The high priest enters, by virtue of the blood of the mediatorial victim (which in accomplishment we know to be Himself), into the holiest of all; hence, in the antitype, necessarily in resurrection and ascension life. This is His special place of high priesthood, that in which He

exercised it as distinctively such, where Christ is now entered for us, even into heaven itself.

This, then, is our portion in the new covenant, so far as we have any ordered interest in its being sealed in the blood of the Mediator. That Mediator, being gone into the heavens, into the holiest of all, has not accomplished the actual new covenant formally with Israel and Judah, as it shall surely be fully and distinctly accomplished. But as the patterns of the things in the heavens were given when the old covenant, dependent on their own obedience, was given from Mount Sinai; so now, when the new covenant has been founded in the blood of the Mediator (not yet accepted or owned in grace by the nation), the heavenly things themselves are disclosed to faith by the entering in of the Mediator into the holiest through resurrection. The veil being rent in His flesh, and the Mediator Himself dying (the exercise of His priesthood, and the offering of His blood in the holiest, by which we have access there, being necessarily a resurrection and ascension work), we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way through the veil (that is to say His flesh). During the first, this way was not yet made manifest; nor, moreover, was the conscience so purged once for all as to have a portion there. Both these blessings are now the portion of the children of God; and the whole of our portion now is not in the formal accomplishment of the new covenant with Israel and Judah, but entirely in the heavenlies with Christ, according to the pattern of the then tabernacle, with this only added—that the veil is rent from the top to the bottom.

It is, then, the annexed circumstances of the covenant with which we have to do, not the formal blessings

which in terms have taken the place of the conditions of the old, though some of them may, in a sense, be accomplished in us. Thus the heavenly and distinct character of the dispensation is most plainly brought out; and we find that our place is to be identified with the Mediator, as gone within the veil, not in the blessings which result to Israel in consequence of His title and power to bless in grace therefrom resulting. It is generally stated that the high priest came forth and blessed the people on the day of atonement, when he came out of the most holy place; but there is nothing of the kind in the account of it in Scripture; and to me it seems rather to involve mistake, for his place on that day formed no part of his kingly office; but on that day it was either humiliation or ascension to glory, or offices purely priestly—death, confession, intercession, and the like.

There is a passage in Leviticus 9, which (being of a more comprehensive character) seems to embrace this part of the subject more distinctly. This chapter embraces the offerings of the high priest on entering on his office. Then Aaron offers his offerings, and, having gone through each several kind, he blesses, and then comes down. This was a priestly blessing after the offering, but before he came down from the offering; and then Moses and Aaron (who shew forth the union of the kingly and priestly office) went into the tabernacle of the congregation (not necessarily implying the holiest of all, but the house, including the holy place and holiest), and came out and blessed the people; and then the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people; and then was the complete and public witness of the complete acceptance of the burnt sacrifice by the Lord. This, as it is a more

general statement of all connected with the institution of the priesthood, seems more definitely to set before us both the priestly blessings from the offered sacrifice; and then (after the return from that) the royal and priestly blessing of the people; whereupon the full glory came in public witness. This, however, I remark by the way, for, though to me it is a deeply interesting type of the order of these things, that which I now desire to rest on, and to present in its brief heads for the consideration of others, is that the place into which the founding of the new covenant in the blood of Christ has brought us is, not that of the terms of the covenant made with Israel and Judah, nor yet of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for that the sphere of their ministration was the earth; but it is into the revelation consequent upon the death of the Mediator, and His assumption of the high priesthood in resurrection and ascension glory—a heavenly state of things, a place in the heavenlies, in which we have fellowship with Him gone within the veil, previously unrevealed, though founded in the death of Him that was promised and typified by the ordinances given with the old covenant as to the constitution of the tabernacle of the congregation —the veil only being as yet unrent, and the way into the holiest not yet made manifest, nor the communion of a purged conscience with it established (the identity of the body of Christ with their Head, and their privilege there to sit, as now represented in their Head, being as yet unknown); thus confirming in the distinctest way, in the ordering of dispensations, many principles often alluded to in previous papers. There are many subjects and principles of the deepest importance connected with the covenants, which are here barely or not at all alluded to (such as the difference of the very nature and terms of

the two, whatever their application, on which in fact all our practical peace rests; the unconditional character of those made with Abraham, as the ground of the infallible warrant of Jewish hopes, not dependent on that in which to their own present sorrow and the instruction of mankind they have so entirely failed). All this, though I would not pass it without allusion thereto, I do not lengthen this paper by entering into substantively, having very briefly, and I fear superficially, endeavoured to touch upon those heads which bring out the covenants into their proper place, and which shew our position as connected with them.

There is one passage connected with this subject which I have omitted, to which I would allude. In the statement of restored blessings to Israel, in Ezekiel 36 the detail of earthly things is most distinct; it is, all of it, restored Israelitish blessing. Amongst them, however, we find a work to be done in them to qualify them for the holding and enjoying of those blessings before God. “I will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

This is not expressly the new covenant, but it is in fact a more explicit statement of the manner of the blessings contained in it, and connected with it. Hence the

reproach of Nicodemus by the Lord, when (stating in terms tantamount to these, what was needful for a man to see, to enter into, the kingdom of God) He was met by the uninstructed question “How can these things be?” The Lord indeed shews the universal character of the operation: “So is every one that is born of the Spirit.” But its application in the conversation is Jewish; it was that which was necessary for the enjoyment of the earthly things of the kingdom of God, of which the promises and the covenants with Israel and their forefathers were the pledges and assurance from God. Hence does our Lord add the observation, “If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” —even of these other and higher things, which belong to the kingdom entered into by the new and living way: and hence our Lord, though not then revealing these things at once, introduces His death—the death of the Mediator, the Son of man, in whom the earthly things were expected, which was the door that opened the way into any heavenly things whatever (as yet undisclosed), and ordered by the rejection of the Son of man (then beginning to shew itself) by those to whom He came in present earthly blessing: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up”; but founding every hope of eternal life then on this lifting up, and its opening to the world. For as sent on an errand of mercy had He come; and thus was the distinction between the earthlies and the heavenlies.

I scarcely feel it necessary to add that I take the whole of Hebrews 9 as having one uniform subject, the covenant; and that the terms testament and testator are but accommodations to the English reader which

obscure or destroy the sense.18 16 [It is well known that for “saints “the best authorities read “nations,” though some have “ages.”—Ed.]

17 [Striking as this analogy of the language may be, it is certain that neither type nor prophecy revealed the mystery of Christ and the Church. This I add to cut off any wrong use of these words.—Ed.]

18 [This is true of all the epistle, and indeed of the New Testament as a whole, save in the parenthesis of Hebrews 9:16, 17, where “testament” and “testator “appear to be called for, and naturally flow out of the last clause of the preceding verse (that is to say, “the promise of eternal inheritance”). One insuperable objection to taking these two verses as maintaining, like the rest, the reference to “covenant” is that the Greek work cannot mean covenanting victim, but one who disposed things (i.e. a “testator”). The death of the covenanter is in no way an axiomatic necessity; whereas the condition of men being dead is essential to bring a testament into operation. Such, too, is the judgment of the author in his German, French, and English versions of the New Testament, as well as in the “Synopsis of the Books of the Bible” (in loc.).—Ed.]

Remarks On Light And Conscience

Editor's Note 19

Allow me to say a few words on a very simple principle, connected with the exercise of men’s hearts before the Lord, and with questions which are now occupying the thoughts and anxieties of a body of persons, who must at present be the object of the deepest interest to any real Christian, even if not within the reach of those kindly affections by which so many are united to them. It does not appear to me that, in the agitation which the introduction of long neglected truths has produced among them, any body of Christians has presented an adequate or satisfactory exhibition of Christian truth and practice; nor has anything more struck me as to the extreme defectiveness of the views of the most noted Christian teachers at present before the world, than this manifest failure.

I am not about to enter into diffuse reasonings, but present a few considerations for their thoughts and consciences.

The first in importance is the light in every man.

A little simple attention to Scripture I think will make this very plain. It has been confused, it seems to me, by systems of doctrine current previously in the mind. As to mere argumentative refutation, Wardlaw has, with the ability of mind with which God has endowed him, plainly shewn the inconsistency of their doctrines in their most favourable point of view, and, I think, however courteous and polite in his statements, plainly shewn Joseph John Gurney to be by far the most inconsistent of all. For in

Mr. Gurney's system, while he holds justification in an evangelical point of view, he still makes the mediation of Christ to be the procuring cause of that light from which accountability springs—that is, that the mediation of Christ created the guilt which it put away; and, consequently, that there was no guilt in man previous to the mediation of Christ. This is clearly an untenable position, and I cannot help feeling that the position held by Mr. Gurney is the most inconsistent and unsatisfactory of any engaged in the anxieties which press upon Friends.

But, while Dr. Wardlaw has refuted very ably in many respects the views he opposes, it does not appear to me that he has given anything on the other hand, upon which a sincerely anxious soul could rest; and it also appears to me, that his view of "Christ in us"—"Christ's dwelling in our hearts" is as objectionable as that of the Friends itself; and that in his anxiety to avoid mysticism, he has destroyed in statement the living power of Christianity itself as a present thing. His view of the law written in the heart, his substitute for this inward light, I believe to be most unsatisfactory, almost as unsatisfactory as the inward light itself. For if the law (of which he, with many others, speaks) be so written, it is not merely a knowledge of the divine will without, but that which in some instances at least (for of such the apostle is writing) produces the effects of the law done; and moreover, it is spoken of (I take their use of the sentence) not as a law known externally, which is their ground of defence, but written in the very language, we may say, of the power of the new covenant. It appears to me, then, I confess, that this law written on the heart of unbelieving Gentiles, is, at the least, as objectionable, if

not more so, than the inward light of Friends, and as untenable from Scripture.

As regards the passage in John 1:9, I cannot but think that a calm attention to its statements, and inquiry into its import, will shew to any mind taught of God that, while the divine perfectness was there as the Light, our Lord is spoken of as a Person coming into the world, One to whom John the Baptist bore witness. This was surely Jesus Christ come in flesh— the expected Messiah of the Jews, of whom there is this double testimony— that "he was in the world" (for the testimony was not confined to the Jews, nor was He merely their Messiah, but an universal object of faith—"he was in the world)"; and, further, that He surely was Jesus, the Messiah, "come to his own [the Jews], and his own received him not." How could it be said that any inward light came to His own and His own received Him not, and that, as distinct from, and additional to, His being in the world, and the world not knowing Him? If this were the inward light, would it not prove that this light was in the world, and men completely unconscious of it? which would refute itself. Both are simply and plainly true, and the whole passage most intelligible and to the purpose, as relating to the incarnate Son of God, who was intrinsically light, and as living, as a man, a light to man, and was both in the world and made the world, and the world knew Him not, and came specially to the Jews, and the Jews received Him not; though to as many as did receive Him He gave authority to be sons of God, not servants as they were (even though godly) under the law; and to whom John bare witness, as sent before Him. As the Lord Himself elsewhere designates Himself,

“While ye have the light, walk in the light. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Further, as to the law written upon the heart, perhaps I shall startle some in saying that the scripture never speaks of “a law written on the heart.” God puts His laws into the heart in the new covenant, but this is another and a distinct thing. Nor is sin ever said to be “the transgression of the law,” but the contrary. I am aware that expressions in the English scriptures may carry such a force; but it has no such force in the original scripture.

The passage on which accountability is made to rest on a law know, which is after all inward light, is I John 3:4: “Sin is the transgression of the law.” Then it is argued further, “Where no law is, there is no transgression”; still, “until the law, sin was in the world”: therefore, as there was no outward law, there must have been an inward law, as elsewhere, “These, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, and shew the work of the law written upon their hearts.” To follow this reasoning in Scripture—

First: “Sin is the transgression of the law.”

The law is not mentioned in the passage. It is a reciprocal proposition. Sin is lawlessness. Sin is equivalent to the spirit of selfwill and unrestrainedness. This may be, and was, whether there was a law asserting restraint on this will or not. When there was, its acts were actual transgressions; but without this, sin was there, though there were no such actual transgressions till “law entered.” And sin was not imputed where law was not. Not that God will not judge the secrets of men’s hearts in that day, according to the

gospel; but that the times of this ignorance God winked at, passed by, in His dealings of retributive justice, not having a law by Him revealed to their consciences, on which He could deal with their conscience. On the contrary. He gave them up to a reprobate mind. They did not discern to retain Him in their knowledge, but set idol-creature gods (all the argument is of the world after the flood); and therefore God gave them up to an undiscerning mind, as to that which related to lower things of good and evil in themselves, and towards others. It is astonishing, in the face of this positive testimony, to hear the abstract reasonings of men.

On the other hand, as to this imputation of offences, we have the prophet's witness: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities," Amos 3:2.

Now He calls all persons everywhere to repent, seeing "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge this habitable earth in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," Acts 17.

In the day when God judges the secrets of men's hearts, they that have sinned without law, shall perish without law: and they that have sinned under the law, shall be judged by the law; Romans 2.

This general review of the passages may clear the point as to the fact of the first text quoted not being the transgression of the law. I insert the Greek: "he hamartia estin he anomia" Sin and lawlessness may be reciprocally affirmed one of another. Next, I state that the law is not said to be written on men's hearts. Were it so, I do not see that we are a step removed from the

inward light, save downwards—that is, we have the law written upon the heart instead of Christ there. But as to the fact, there is no such sentence as “the law written in the heart.”

The apostle states, that in these particular instances, in which the Gentiles did the things contained in the law, they shew the work of the law written in their hearts. The law is not said to be written there, but that particular act which the law required was shewn to be upon their conscience. For when the Gentiles who have not law (it is not the law at all) do by nature20 the things of the law, these, not having law, are a law to themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts. Written agreeing with work, not with law at all. These are the only words in which the law is said to be written on the heart, an expression which ought in itself to have awakened suspicion in one acquainted with the truth. The expression, “law written on the heart by nature,” is surely one which should startle anyone who knew the truth of God. Dr. Wardlaw gets out of this difficulty by saying nature does not exclude grace, and that the law could be known responsibly without any subjection or conformity to it. It is a laborious effort for which the statement gives no occasion. The force of the sentence is, that there was something written proved by the deed done.

Next, as to the assertion of the contrary. It is stated, Where no law is, no transgression is: but the apostle is there shewing that sin and transgression of law are different things, but that there was no present imputation of it where there was not the latter.

Between Adam and Moses death reigned over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; for Adam was disobedient to an express and positive command, and there was present imputation and punishment, besides the effect upon his soul. Sin was in the world, and death reigned by sin until the law, thus expressly distinguishing sin from the law and transgression; sin being there when the law was not, and when consequently transgression was not, and giving afterwards the respective consequences of sin when there was and was not law. Sin is anomia but it is not transgression of law, although that is the character of sin when the law comes in, and it becomes then an imputable transgression.

Where then is the universal accountability of man which Christ met as light and life, and the way of peace by atonement in contrast with their state?

It is most strange to me how the students of the scripture should have passed over this plain and all-important statement, to look for confused and reasoned notions of a law in the heart, or a light in the heart, which amounts to pretty much the same thing.

"The man (the Adam, the race man) is become as one of us, knowing good and evil." This is God's account of fallen man. Satan never deceives by a mere abstract lie; he tells much attractive truth, but never leads to obedience by it. What he gave as a promise to man, God pronounced to be true, but he had it by disobedience. He knew evil in guilt, he knew it in disobedience, he knew it in the admitted power of sin over his soul, he knew it as a creature over whom it had power, he knew it by and with a bad conscience. God knows good and

evil, but He knows it by the infinite and intrinsic possession of good, and Himself being good, and therefore knows evil as that which is infinitely repudiated by Him; and in this, therefore, His holiness is infinitely seen. A creature knows not so, as a mere creature, for he is not supreme. Evil known to a mere creature is known in conscience; he is subject to judgment in the knowledge of it, and hates the judgment and the Judge; because selfishness cannot like its own condemnation, nor can it like to be subject to any, and cannot therefore please God. This knowledge of good and evil may be darkened in its judgment, because a false rule or guide may be introduced; God may give up to a reprobate mind, or Satan introduce a law of darkness, having power to deceive and blind, which is not God's, and which may be made its estimate of right; but the knowledge of good and evil is inherent in fallen human nature. Man unfallen was not, properly speaking, holy:21 he was innocent, he knew not evil, but only beneficent good. Fallen man knows evil, with a conscience subject to judgment, and hating God. Here then is the revealed accountability and condition of man as man. There may be a false standard. The law of God is the true one, evil having come in. Paul thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and the time was to come when those that killed the disciples would think they did God service. However wretchedly and inexcusably false the standard assumed from men, there was the sense of good and evil, and of obligation thereupon. It was still lawlessness to God, and sin. Subjection to God is now shewn in obedience to Christ, and honouring Him in everything.

The law of God given, which surely is perfect for its purpose, could not have been the law to Adam; for it is conversant about evil, and implies the knowledge of it. Adam had a law, which he broke, which implied no knowledge of evil—"Thou shalt not eat of such a tree"—a command which He who knew all things gave him. Adam fell with the knowledge of good and evil, for he got it in disobedience; but he had that knowledge then, to which the law, when it came in, applied the standard and prohibitory restraints, though it gave no new life so that righteousness could be by it. In the meanwhile, sin reigned by death, with the knowledge of good and evil and a guilty conscience, however Satan and man's lusts might darken and debase it. But none of these things gave life, nor was it their object; the fall certainly did not, yet in this came the knowledge of good and evil, conscience, so as that God said, "The man is become as one of us," i.e. as to this. Yet death came in with this. The law, which gave a standard of actual accountability to this, did not give life, nor pretend to it; on the contrary, wrought wrath, entered that the offence might abound, was a ministration of death, of condemnation, and the strength of sin; not through any fault of the law, but the contrary, being just, and true, and good; if it did not give life, sin by it only became exceeding sinful.

But under all and any of these circumstances, God, who is the author of life, could and did give life; and Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Eli, and Samuel, and David, and Hezekiah, and Anna, and Simeon, and others whom we cannot number, but who are written before and live unto God as from Him, all in various circumstances are witnesses to His quickening and justifying power. They have "obtained a good report

through faith.” I do not enter here into the power of darkness, which is most important in connection with this subject, and the active instrumentality of him who rules the darkness of this world, because I desire to confine myself to the points under consideration; but in any general view of the state of man it is most important, all-important, to be taken into the account: indeed without it our general estimate must be false: just as three sums, however correct, will not make a right result if there be a fourth left out. From the beginning, till peace and glory be brought in, this the power and deceit of the adversary has been, as still is the case, the leading source of evil and alienation from God, however man’s estate may help him and his efforts to dishonour the Lord.

I would present then this sentence, “The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil,” as a very simple and easy solution of many difficulties most elaborately constructed by man’s wit and reasoning, and draw attention to what the law really is, as presented to us in Scripture in the passages referred to, and its connection with the accountability of man. It never gave life—God alone could do that: and I do entreat those who teach, who have the knowledge of the original, to weigh the force of the passages on which they rest so large and important a system. I would also urge upon them the difference of sin and sins—two things never, I believe, confounded in the Holy Scriptures.

As to the rule of faith, primary and secondary, the Spirit and the Scriptures, this question has really also been raised, though under different apparent circumstances, by the Roman Catholics; and it has appeared to me always in that controversy, that there was a sophism

scarcely ever noticed, which was at the root of all the difficulty; and that is, confounding a rule, or standard, with the means of communicating, or power that communicates, anything to our minds: the tacit assumption that one was equivalent to another. All Milner's "End of Controversy" hangs upon a statement concealing this false assumption. "The rule of faith, or means of communicating Christ's religion," he says, "must be such, or such"; which he then shews Scripture not to be, having identified these two ideas. Admit their identity, and no one can answer him; separate them, and his argument comes simply to nothing.

The Friends, it appears to me, have made the same mistake. The Scriptures are the only rule or standard of faith and practice; but the power that applies them to our minds is the Spirit, and the instruments may be many. To make a rule, or standard, we must have the whole thing fully out and expressed. A parent, a teacher, a friend, may communicate truth, but none are a standard.

My use of the standard may be ignorant or imperfect; still it is a perfect standard in itself. I, as a teacher, may have stated perfect truth, but it is no standard. The whole truth having been communicated:, no fresh revelation to an individual soul of part of the same truth is a standard. The Bible may be the means of communicating truth; but its great value is, that it is the standard as well as the depository of all truth. A truth may be most perfectly communicated to me, as a measure of corn may be most accurately weighed; for the ascertainment that it is so, a standard is required. The Spirit of God may enable me to use the standard of the word, but this does not make the Spirit of God the

standard, any more than the perfect skill of the weighmaster or measurer makes his hand or mind the standard.

I may have spiritually learned truth, and may, as far as known, use this known truth as a test to all presented to me, and so far the intelligence of the Spirit may be a guide. But a standard must be a standard of everything, and for this it must be the whole record of truth, and the perfect record of truth. Moreover, there are principles of universal application implanted in every regenerate mind: God is righteous; holiness is the thing which characterizes God and the saint in communion. But what righteousness is, how sinful man is placed and led in it practically, and what is holy in conduct, is another thing. And if this be not in the mind of man naturally, it must be revealed; and if revealed to be a standard, it must be revealed with authority for all, or it is not a rule or standard which every one must be responsible to; and individual responsibility, and mutual sense of righteousness, is destroyed, and manifest fruits of righteousness cease to be of avail as a test of conduct and fellowship, because there is no standard, or common subject of reference, to which they are to be brought. For to be a standard by which man can act before God, it must be perfect, common to all, perfect with God’s perfectness; the necessary consequence otherwise will be the destruction of individual responsibility, and the setting up of authority without any perfect rule.

I have spoken of these things merely to illustrate the difference between a rule or standard, and the power which perceives, uses, or may have learned or appropriated part, but which part, though useful to

communicate, cannot be a standard to another; or authority abstractedly is set up, and we lean upon man as infallible at once. No man, or any but God, is infallible —no apostle, no prophet: he may be absolutely right at any given time, but not infallible, for that is the impossibility of being wrong. To receive what a man says without a standard must be to suppose him incapable of being wrong. And the question therefore really is, whether there is a standard at all, not what it is. Because a standard is a complete communication of divine truth, by which everything can be tried; and therefore every and all truth necessary for the guidance of those to whom it is proposed as a standard must be there, or it could not be such a standard.

Any subsequent communication of divine truth has nothing to do with being a standard, as is evident, however certain the perception of it in the Spirit; and though truths may be impressed upon the soul of any man, and as an instrument at any given time for the communication of them, this has nothing to do with being a standard.

If it be contended that the Spirit in each man is the rule or standard on every particular occasion, and consequently must perpetually communicate the way of truth and the truth itself, then it is an assertion that everybody is infallible, and that there is no standard at all—that men are not responsible, but automatons. If I am told that the Spirit always does suggest, and is always right (and this would apply to practice alone, for truth must be expressed to be a standard), but that men do not always listen to it, then I say, How is this to be known? Where is the ground of judgment? What is the rule or standard of this? Or, is each man the warrant of

all possible conduct? or, are others the irresponsible judges of him? The question still evidently is, Is there a standard, a perfect revelation of God's will at all—in a word, a complete revelation? If there be, let us humbly admit, that the Spirit, in its active divine operations, takes any scope you please, our judgment of which must be subject to this same word of revelation; but we have to acknowledge that it has given us a perfect rule by which we judge of the pretensions to its operations, and any alleged truth in, or proposed by, any. If there be any such revealed authenticated standard, it is manifest that the written word of God is that standard.

I would make a few remarks as to the communication of it. How was it to be judged of, or how was the communication of it authenticated, if any operation of the divine Spirit in an individual be not such standard? It will be still remarked that this is a question whether there be any standard at all. But I say, in reply, that God having been pleased to communicate any revelation authentically, as the communication of Moses as having His authority, whatever should afterwards be revealed is always triable by consistency with this. It might be revealed with equal authority, and would be necessarily, as from God, consistent therewith; no apparent authentication would be sufficient to excuse the reception of anything inconsistent with the original revelation. Though God might afford and did afford some superior authentication, as in the case of our blessed Lord, He always took care to validate a previous revelation by that, and appeal to it, as Christ, though perfectly competent to reveal, ever appealed to the word (so the apostles), and thus there was mutual authentication. Nor would a prophet have been to be

received, had he spoken anything contrary to the law and the testimony; he acted in solemn warnings as to present conduct, but always applied to conduct upon the ground of the existing law and testimony. Then Messiah coming, authenticated and sealed the authority of predictions, by sealing the prophecy, whether all the particulars were fulfilled or not; and with the words of the apostles22 and companions of the Lord, the Church was left to the written testimony as the law and standard. In a word, faith recognizes that the Lord has provided in His great mercy a perfect and common standard of His mind and will in the revelation of His word. And there cannot be a greater or more signal mercy, nor one more worthy of a beneficent God; an imperfect one would be but a mockery, and throwing them into the hands of designing men, and necessarily destroy responsibility to it or any standard at all, or make it an unholy and blind responsibility to man.

The communication, the apprehension, the application of truth—of all contained in the word of this whole of truth—is by the constant living operation of the Spirit of God. It appears to me there is a vast difference between the revealing operations of the Spirit of God and the communicative operations—that the one are to conscience when they are more than external testimony; the other, not. A revelation may be by an ungodly unconverted man; and when by a saint, as usually, though by his understanding, they are not to his conscience, there is nothing personal in them; he may afterwards, as we read in Peter, search and inquire into their application, and who is interested in them, like any other person, and find it not to himself at all. This is not the case in any internal operations of the divine Spirit

for our good and personal guidance; immediate responsibility arises therefrom. On the other hand, when the Spirit of God is pleased to use us as a means of communicating truth, it does not necessarily act on our conscience at all; it may not be applicable to my conscience in its present state at all; nay I might preach to others all truth, and be a castaway; I might say, “I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh.” “How goodly are thy tabernacles, O Israel!” And this shews a distinctive difference in the operation even when the Spirit does operate. When a revelation, it is not as such a communication or operation on the conscience or will of the instrument at all. There is an operation of the Spirit by truth on both, which may be of the same truths as have been long revealed, and are no proper subject therefore of revelation at all, though they may be new to him in whom the Spirit works. I put no limit then to the Spirit’s operations. But I say He has Himself given a standard, a rule, by which we can judge all pretensions to them, being ourselves spiritual.

There is a point yet unnoticed, in which Dr. Wardlaw’s statements seem to me most ruinous of the real living power of Christianity. He states that Christ in us is equivalent to Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith—that is, having Christ as the object of our heart’s affections, as the apostle says, “Inasmuch as ye are in my heart,” etc. I confess this seems to me most pernicious, and that the Church has lost the indwelling of the Spirit, as a truth, most sadly.

The life which we have of and from Christ is a life of union with Him. “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.” Faith is the mean or instrument whereby these things are wrought, because it is by the word He begets

us; but there is a life: “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” as much and as truly as “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” And to assert that Christ by the Spirit dwells really in no man, is quite as great an error as to assert that He dwells in every man; and the word of truth refutes both. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”; and “if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” To see how the word of God teaches us in this, that we are born, quickened of God by the Spirit, is recognized by all, we may say, who hold the truth: but I fear confusedly by some, being looked at as a mere operation on the understanding and will, and not the communication of divine life, born really of God. As we have seen, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, the seed of the divine life which thereon abideth in the soul. While this is of the operation of the Holy Ghost and is of God, it is not the Holy Ghost nor God, as needs scarcely be said. It enjoys, apprehends, is cognizant of, has a taste for, divine things, as being of God; but it knows and has the revelation of these things only by a superior power, which guides into truth, shews things to come, and takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us. Besides this there is a partaking of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost cannot dwell in a defiled uncleaned place. He could dwell with Jesus, speaking of Him as an anointed Man, because He was intrinsically pure, perfect, and spotless.23 How then with us? The scripture says, “we are quickened together with Christ”—that is, as out His grave, “wherein also ye are risen together with him, through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Christ,

having borne our sins, met Satan, and undergone death, His resurrection is a power of life, clear from, and paramount to, beyond, and having left behind all these—beyond the reach of all these. But we are risen with Him: that is, the life which we have of God, as quickened of the Holy Ghost, is as the life of Christ after the sins are completely put away. It is communicated to us consequent upon His having borne and put away the sins, yea, is the witness of His having put them all away (as he says, therefore, "hath quickened us together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses"); for His resurrection is the witness that they are gone. Now, the blood being the life, which He gave for them, and shed, having given His natural life in the energy and perfectness of the divine life in obedience, the shedding of the blood is the characteristic term and expression of this; and we, as washed in His blood, are cleansed from all sin. Our quickening, then, by the Holy Ghost being then our quickening together with Him, implies our absolute justification thereby—that is, by what He has wrought. Hence the Holy Ghost not only quickens, but can take up His abode in and with us, because He views us according to His value of the blood of Jesus (that is, infinite or perfect cleansing). Thus the high priest was anointed without a sacrifice, the sons of Aaron after and upon the blood of the sacrifices, typifying the same truth.

The Holy Ghost, then, consequent upon faith wrought in our souls by His divine and quickening operation, dwells in us, as consequent upon, and witness of, the blood-shedding of Jesus; by virtue of whose resurrection, as having borne our sins, we are quickened. And here and hence is assurance; nor is it till we thus see clearly the

power of the resurrection that we have this assurance. The resurrection is the triumph over all the results of sin, and him who had the power of it.

Thus, consequently, the Scriptures speak of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost: “Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God?” “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption; in whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

And that we might not think this to be merely what are called miraculous gifts, we are told how “He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, is God; who also hath sealed and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”; and therefore we are told that “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs” (for it is “the earnest of our inheritance”), and afterwards “helps also our infirmities,” as in trial here, “making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

So in Galatians 3. “Ye are all the children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus”; and then in chapter 4, “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,” etc.

How the Holy Ghost manifests itself, whether in connection with the life of Christ, as risen, or with the ascension of Christ as glorified, is another thing very important and valuable, but not my subject here, but the actual presence of that other “Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him,

for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"; and He was to "abide for ever." I now speak of it as connected with the Hfe of Christ, as belonging to the sons, the earnest of the inheritance, a well of water in us springing up into everlasting life. He who weakens this, weakens, I believe, the great stay and blessing of the gospel. If I dwell in love, God dwelleth in me, and I in God. If I confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in me, and I in God. And if it be disconnected with the sacrifice of Christ, and faith in Him, in those quickened by His Spirit, it is but an ignis fatuus, leading into misery and confusion. To deprive those of it who have been given this living faith, is to deprive them of the living power and blessing of both the sufferings of Christ and the glory that is to follow. The possession of the Holy Ghost is the distinguishing characteristic of the believer, of the Church of the living God. The love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. Nor do I know anything which has reduced and degraded the Church into the world, or given occasion and opportunity to delusion and spiritual pretensions, so much as the neglect of the plain scriptural truth given us on these subjects. If a man did not believe in the truth of the Holy Ghost's dwelling in him, as an additional privilege and blessing to being born again, and his, because he was so connected with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Scriptures are so full of passages speaking of it, that he might easily be thrown into the hands of designing or misguided men, who could use all these passages which had no force in his mind to mislead or bewilder.

The uniform effort of those who make pretensions to gifts now, for example, is to deny the power of the child

of God as individually having the Spirit to judge of and understand the word of God, and know its force, and so judge them. So precisely does a Roman Catholic priest; so would any carnal man.

Let us then thankfully receive the word of God as an infallible standard by which to judge, and know that the power and capacity by which we can do it is the Spirit of God dwelling in us, revealing these things to our new man, so as to act on our conscience, and guide our feet into the way of peace, and to reveal to us the glory of that fulness which makes us abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Let us know that the knowledge of good and evil is our ruin, taken by itself: for we are guilty, and must dread therein and dislike our Judge. Then the law cannot help us, because it does not give life, and therefore only further works wrath.

But being quickened, we are quickened with Him who, as rising from the grave, hath put for ever away all our sins—if not all, none; and are made partakers therefore of the Spirit, a witness to us of the efficacy of this work, and earnest of the inheritance before us, a revealer too of it to our souls, taking of the things of Christ (even all the Father's things, for He is heir of all things as Son), and shewing them to us, and guiding us in the way, guiding our hearts and feet; for as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And let us adore Him who hath done these great things for us, and be thankful and humble under such great and exceeding mercies, in which our God is glorified. To Him be the glory, by Christ Jesus our Lord, for ever. Amen.

The full doctrine of the Holy Spirit, though the principle of it has been stated, has by no means been entered upon here. If the Lord permit, I may go into it more fully when He gives occasion.

To avoid ambiguity, I would say, that the graces of the Spirit seem connected with Christ risen (His life in us, as the fulness and headship, being in Him); and the gifts bestowed, in whatever measure or way they may be manifested, with Christ ascended and glorified.

19 These remarks have chiefly reference to Dr. Wardlaw's Friendly Letters to the Society of Friends.

20 Nature is opposed to law and dispensation simply, abstract from all question as to grace or power.

21 Holiness is separation from that which is evil; but from what could Adam separate, where all was very good?

22 The apostles were the authorised orderers of the Church: and in the Gospels we have the Lord's own ways, if they be admitted to be authentic. And my controversy is not here with infidels, or those who question the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament. If men wish to do this, let them avow it, and it may be reasoned on its own grounds.

23 The difference of the Holy Ghost in fulness in His nature, and the anointing, was typified in the pure flour mingled with oil, and the unleavened wafer anointed with oil, in the meat offering, which was the type of the human nature and faculties of Christ the Lord.

Operations Of The Spirit Of God

I would desire to say a few words on the operations of the Spirit of God—the connection of His working in us with Christ; and the separateness too of the operation of the Spirit in us, from the work of Christ as wrought and perfected for us already.

I do not assume, by any means, to give a full or adequate view of the operations of the Spirit—"Who is sufficient for these things?" I see enough, indeed, to see the paucity and dimness of what has appeared to my mind, compared with the glory of what is still shewn to be onward. Blessed that it is so—most blessed—eternal blessings! Still I would speak of that which the scripture seems to make clear. If others have learned more, they can be led forth to communicate it; if less, they will not begrudge what I do: what I hope is, that it may lead into more searching and attainment of the power of these things.

Christians, and real ones, are too apt (though this may seem a strange assertion) to separate, and too apt to confound, Christ and the Spirit. That is, they separate Christ and the Spirit in operation in us too much; and they confound the work of Christ for us too much with the Spirit. The consequence of both is, uncertainty, meagreness of judgment, and doubt.

The work of the Spirit of God in me, in the power of life, produces conflict, labour, discoveries of sin, and need of mortifying my members which are on the earth; and the more what "Christ is" is revealed in my soul, in the comparison with the discovery of what I am, the more do I find cause of humiliation—the more do I find, by the

contrast of Christ looked at as in the flesh here sinless, God condemning this evil root of sin in the flesh in me. And much more, by the discovery of what my blessed Lord is, as glorified, do I see through the Spirit, how short I am of “attaining,” though I may be still changed into the same likeness, from glory to glory. Hence, though at peace, hope, perhaps animating hope, and joy betimes filling the soul, yet there will be exercised self-judgment and sorrow of heart at the discovery of how every feeling we have towards God, and every object spiritually known, is short of the just effects they should produce and call out; and hence, too, in case of any allowance or indulgence of evil, deep self-abasement and utter abhorrence. Hence, when the fulness and finishedness of our acceptance in Christ is not known, anxiety and spiritual despondency arise, and doubt, sometimes issuing in a very mistaken and evil reference to the law—a sort of consecrating the principle of unbelief, putting the soul (on the discovery, by the Spirit, of sin working in it) under the law and its condemnation; and not “in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”24 We hear of God hiding His face from us, and the like language, which faith never could use; for faith knows that God ever looks on His Anointed, never hides His face. And if we have such thoughts, they are to be treated as pure unbelief, and dealt with accordingly. Every believer must acknowledge that it is not true, if he believe the full and perfect acceptance of the saints in Christ; and therefore to account it true is the lie of his own heart, and unbelief.

The Spirit of God judges sin in me; but it makes me know that I am not judged for it, because Christ has borne that judgment for me. This is no cloak of

licentiousness: the flesh would indeed always turn it to this, it would pervert everything. But the truth is, that same Spirit which reveals the Lord who bore my sins, as having purged them, at the right hand of God, and which therefore gives me perfect assurance of their being put away, and the infiniteness of my acceptance in Him—that same Spirit, I say, judges the sin by virtue of its character as seen in the light of that very glory; and when this is not done, the Father (into whose hands the Son has committed those whom the Father has given Him to keep) as a Holy Father chastises and corrects, and purges, as a husbandman, the branches. Here, moreover, the discipline of the Church of God, as having the Spirit, comes in, the disuse and neglect of which has much ministered to the distrust of the full and happy assurance of the believer. For the body of the Church, as such, ought necessarily to assume itself (for such is the portion of the Church according to the word) as a sacred people—a manifested sacred people; and then, through the Spirit dwelling in it, to exercise all godly and gracious discipline for the maintenance of the manifested holiness of that sacred people. The Church is the dwelling-place of the Spirit. The Spirit reveals the condition of the Church in Christ, and of the individuals who compose it ("In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you"), and effects, maintains, and guards the character of Christ in the Church in grace and holiness: "Ye are the epistle of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God."

If my soul rests entirely on the work of Christ and His acceptance, as the One who appears in the presence of God for me, that is a finished work, and a perfect infinite acceptance —"as He is, so are we in this world": so that

“herein is love made perfect with us, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment.” Now, what men substitute for this is, the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me: the effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest, in lieu of redemption; whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despond when I see the flesh working; and having put the work of the Spirit in place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished—the sure (because finished) resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God. If it be said, “Yes, but I cannot see it as plain, because of the flesh and unbelief,” this does not alter the truth. And to whatever extent this dimness proceeds, treat it as unbelief and sin, not the state of a Christian, or as God hiding His face. The discovery of sin in you, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for doubting, because it was by reason of this, to atone for this, because you were this, that Christ died; and Christ is risen, and there is an end of that question.

But it will be said, ‘I fully believe that Christ is the very true Son of God, one with the Father, and all His work and grace, but I do not know that I have an interest in Him this is the question, and this is quite a different question.’ Not so; but the subtlety of Satan, and bad teaching, which would still throw you back off Christ. God, for our comfort, has identified the two things, by stating “that by him all that believe are justified from all things.” In a word, to say, “I believe, but I do not know

whether I have an interest," is a delusion of the devil; for God says, it is those who believe who have the interest—that is His way of dealing. I have no more right to believe that I am a sinner, as God views it, in myself, than that I am righteous in Christ. The same testimony declares that none is righteous, and that believers are justified.

I may have a natural consciousness of sin, and a Spirit-taught consciousness of sin, and what it is. If I rest in this, I cannot have.peace: in Christ's work about it, I have perfect peace. But am I not desired to examine myself, whether I am in the faith? No. What then says 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith?" etc. Why, that if they sought a proof of Christ speaking in Paul, they were to examine themselves, and by the certainty of their own Christianity, which they did not doubt, be assured of his apostleship. The apostle's argument was of no value whatever, but on the ground of the sanctioned certainty that they were Christians. But I have dwelt longer on this than I had any purpose; but the comfort of souls may justify it. It is connected with man's seeking, from the work of the Spirit of God in him, that which is to be looked for only from the work of Christ.

If my assurance and comfort or hope be drawn from the experience of what passes within me, though it may be verified against cavils thereby, as in the first epistle of John, then it is not the righteousness of God by faith; for the experience of what passes in my soul is not faith. I repeat, that by looking to the work of Christ the standard of holiness is exalted; because, instead of looking into the muddied image of Christ in my soul, I view Him in the Spirit, in the perfectness of that glory

into the fellowship of which I am called; and therefore, to walk worthy25 of God, who hath called me to His own kingdom and glory. I forget the things behind, and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and my self-examination becomes, not an unhappy inquiry whether or not I am in the faith, never honouring God in confidence after all that He has done, but whether my walk is worthy of one who is called into His kingdom and glory. But the disconnection of Christ from the operations of the Spirit is an evil, and tends to the same point, though the application be not so immediate.

In the teaching of ordinary evangelicalism, a man is said to be "born of the Spirit," its need perhaps shewn from what we are, and its fruit shewn, and the inquiry stated —Are you this? for then you will go to heaven. These things have a measure of truth in them. But are they thus presented in Scripture? There I find these things continually and fully connected with Christ, and involving our being in that blessed One, and He in us; and consequently not merely an evidence by fruits that I am borne of the Spirit of God, but a participation in all of which He is the Heir, as the risen man (in the sure title of His own sonship), as quickened together with Him—a union of life and inheritance, of which the Holy Ghost is the power and witness.

It is thus expressed in the epistle to the Ephesians: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. And you hath he quickened… even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together

with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." So in Colossians 2:13: "And you hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." "If ye then be risen with Christ."

The operation of the Spirit of God, while acting in divine power, is to bring us into living association with Christ. His operation in us is to make good in us, to connect us with, to reveal to us, and to bring us into the power of, all that is verified in Christ, as the second Adam, the risen Man, in life, office, and glory—" he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." We are "heirs together" "suffering together that we may be glorified together" and thus finally "con-formed26 to the image" of God's Son, in that God "hath quickened us together," and "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together," etc. (Eph. 2:5, 6). And the Spirit of God works in us thus in life, and in service, and suffering, and lastly in glory, in the resurrection of our bodies also.

I would trace, briefly, the testimony of this through Scripture. It may be seen there, both individually, and besides that, also corporately, as in the Church. The Spirit is spoken of first, as quickening; and secondly, as indwelling. We are born of the Spirit. As regards individuals so quickened, as indwelling, it associates them with the glory of Christ, as it sheds abroad also God's love in the heart, and with the power of Christ's life, as having eternal life—life in Himself as Son of God; and it also reveals and makes them, according to His good pleasure, instruments of the revelation of His glory as Son of man: this consequent upon ascension, as the former is declared and witnessed in resurrection. The special subject of which He is witness in the Church

corporately, constituting the Church the present faithful witness, is, that Jesus Christ is Lord, which is immediately connected with the glory, “to the glory of God the Father.”

John 3 first brings the subject of the operations of the Spirit before us at large. “A man must be born again,” born of water and of the Spirit. But while this is generally taken simply that he must be regenerate to be saved, the passage states much more. He cannot see nor enter into the kingdom of God, a kingdom composed of earthly things and heavenly things, of which a Jew must be born again to be a partaker (however much he fancied himself a child of the kingdom) even in its earthly things, which Nicodemus, as a teacher of Israel, ought to have known, as from Ezekiel 36:21-38; and to the heavenly things of which the Lord could not direct them then, save as shewing the door, even the cross, a door which opened into better and higher things: wherein (as, in the Spirit’s work, being prerogative power, “so was every one that was born of the Spirit,” and Gentiles therefore might be partakers of it; for it made, not found, men what it would have them) the Lord declared that God loved not the Jew only, but the world. In this passage itself, then, we have not merely the individual renewed, and fit for heaven, but the estimate of the Jew, a kingdom revealed, embracing earthly and heavenly things, which the regenerate alone saw, and into which they entered—to the heavenly things, of which the cross, as yet as unintelligible as the heavenly things themselves, formed the only door wherein was exhibited the Son of man lifted up, and the Son of God given in God’s love to the world. “In the regeneration,” of which the Spirit’s quickening operation in the heart

was the first-fruits as His presence was the earnest of the heavenly part, “this Son of man would sit on the throne of his glory.”

The principle, then, on which men dwell, is true; but the revelation of this chapter is much wider and more definite than they suppose. It is not merely that the man is changed or saved; but he sees and enters a kingdom the world knows nothing of, till it comes in power; and, moreover, that such a one receives a life as true and real, and much more important and blessed, than any natural life in the flesh. It is not merely changing a man by acting on his faculties, but the giving a life which may act indeed now, through these faculties, on objects far beyond them (as the old and depraved life on objects within its or their reach), but in which he is made partaker of the divine nature, in which not merely the faculties of his soul have new objects, but as in this he was partner with the first Adam, the living soul, so in that with the second Adam, the quickening Spirit. And we must add, that the Church, in order to its assimilation with Him in it, is made partaker of this, consequent upon His resurrection, and therefore is made partaker of the life according to the power of it thus exhibited, and has its existence consequent upon (yea, as the witness of) the passing away (blessed be God!) of all the judgment of its sins; for it has its life from, and consequent upon, the resurrection of Christ out of that grave in which, so to speak, He buried them all. It exists, and has not its existence but consequent upon the absolute accomplishment and passing away of its judgment.

This, then, is the real character of our regeneration into the kingdom, where the charge of sin is not, nor can be,

upon us, being introduced there by the power of that in which all is put away. The life of the Church is identified with the resurrection of Christ, and therefore the unqualified forgiveness of all its flesh could do, for it was borne, and borne away. The justification of the Church is identified with living grace; for it has it, because quickened together with Him, as out of the grave, where He buried all its sins. Thus are necessarily connected regeneration and justification; and the operation of the Spirit is not a mere acting on the faculties, a work quite separate from Christ, and to be known by its fruits, while the death of Christ is something left to reason about; but it is a quickening together with Christ out of my trespasses and sins, in which I find myself indeed morally dead, but Him judicially dead for me, and therefore forgiven and justified necessarily, as so quickened. The resurrection of Christ proves that there will be a judgment, says the Apostle (Acts 17). It proves that there will be none for me, says the Spirit by the same blessed apostle; for He was raised for my justification. He was dead under my sins; God has raised Him, and where are they? The Church is quickened out of Jesus's grave, where the sins were left.

Then, as to the power of this life and the other operations of the Spirit, I find, in the Lord's account of his own testimony, the statement of communion and displayed glory. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." He testified that which He knew in oneness with the Father, which He had seen in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

The operations of the Spirit, in giving us life in the Son, and revealing the glory (ours therefore withal) into

which He has brought His manhood, and which consequently is revealed in it, answer just to this statement of the Lord concerning Himself. Our communion—living communion with Him and the Father—and our apprehension and expression of the glory which is His; of these two John 4 and 7 speak. In these chapters and elsewhere we have to remark, that we are taught, not of the Spirit's operating on, but dwelling in us. The Spirit of God does operate on (whether in mere testimony, for the reception of which we are responsible, as in the case of the rulers of the Jews and Stephen—"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye"; of which I do not speak now at large or efficiently), in convincing, renewing, and quickening us. This being done by the word, it is by faith wherein (that is, in the reception of the word) we are quickened (that is, the revelation of Christ). "We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." These are sufficient to shew the manner of the operation: how, being a testimony, the natural man rejects it, though guilty for so doing, for it is God's testimony; and how it is effectual, in the quickening power of the Spirit, but is by faith in consequence of the instrument employed. The power of it I have already spoken of; whence we see, while they that believe not make God a liar, they that believe have the witness in themselves; for they are made livingly partakers, in communion, of what they believe.

But the work (in virtue of which they are thus made partakers of life and fellowship with God) being a perfect work, the Spirit, who takes up His abode in the believer, is a spirit of peace and joy, a spirit of witness of

all that Christ is and has done, and, we must add, of the Father's perfect acceptance of both.

That the natural man rejects these things and receives them not, we shall see; but the conscience being awakened, and peace made, the Spirit is witness to the renewed soul of them.

Now, in John 5 we have the Spirit's operation, wherein, as to the manner, the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear live; and though, by the Spirit, it is still the Son speaking from heaven (as before on earth, i.e. on Mount Sinai, which was by angels, as far as mediately, not by the Spirit). As to the manner and character of the testimony, I would speak more when I come to John 7, where it is the witness of the glory of the Son of man, as thus given and present among believers.

I turn now to the instruction which chapter 4 supplies, where it is compared to the living water; and we see at once the stupidity and incapability of the flesh to receive the things of the Spirit in the repeated replies of the woman to the statements of the Lord, which, one would have supposed, must have awakened her to something beyond her ordinary thoughts. It is not the capacity of the flesh to receive it, but the revelation of the Lord concerning it, that I now refer to. It is not as a quickening agent He now speaks of it, but as a gift—that which was given by Him. Here, we must remark, Christ is the giver, not the gift. "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him" (it is spoken of as indwelling), "it shall be in him a well of water." Given as the energy of indwelling life, divinely given—the gift of God (as afterwards) that J shall give him— it springs up into

everlasting life. It is divine life from the Son, enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; not as the Spirit of God revealing His glory; but the power of life, having its communion and result in the eternal source from which it flows. Whether Jesus were in humiliation, or whether Jesus were glorified, this power was in Him; and though the expression of the power may be different, still it was the same power. He had life in Himself, as the Son of God. He might raise to natural life, or He might raise in resurrection life, and hence the difference; for now it is in the latter, being, in ultimate purpose, that in which power conforming to Himself is, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. It is life more abundantly, even if they were alive before.

With this new life withal, specially the Spirit dwells and bears witness. He might communicate the life then; but it could not be in the revelation or character which belonged to Christ as risen, or as the Head of the body. It was this great truth that was breaking through the clouds all through the Lord's discourse to His disciples; while He was affording to the nation to which He came, not only this, but the most ample evidence of every prophecy fulfilled, and power exercised, which left them without excuse as to His actual reception, whether we regard His character or Person. Through this operation of the Spirit, so indwelling, with our new man, it is that God is specially known and enjoyed; but being the Spirit of the Son, in that we are quickened of the Son, God specially enjoyed and worshipped as the Father. This is the great result of the revelation of the Son, and our life in and by Him. And herein is eternal life; John 17:2. God was known in a measure to a godly Jew; but if He were sought in an especial manner of relationship, it was as

Jehovah. To us the special manner of relationship is, “My Father and your Father, my God and your God.”

We know Him as sons; but it is God who is known and enjoyed. This we find hinted at in this fourth chapter of John: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth”: but it is said just before, “shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” This communion with and knowledge of God is matter of exceeding joy—I mean, knowing Him and enjoying Him as God. There is a depth in it which, in that we do it in the peace and communion which is the result of all question of sin being laid aside, is, perhaps (it is hard to compare things in these subjects), beyond all other of our thoughts, and lasts through and beyond the actual covenant blessings which are our portion to enjoy as children. These chastenings may remove for our need: “If needs be, we may be in heaviness through manifold temptations.” But though the joy may be weakened, the spring of righteous confidence in God is there; and, indeed, we are thrown more abstractedly and essentially upon God. We should joy in God at all times; but we are apt to turn to the blessings conferred, and in a measure to forget the Blesser. See Psalm 63. Hence the deprivation, that we may remember Him. But properly, this well of water springing up into everlasting life is that partaking of the divine nature in which (“having escaped”) we joy in God, repose in Him, delight in Him, are filled into His fulness, know Him indeed in the blessedness of actual revelation; but still in the name of God, as such, the power of this communion is conveyed, being rooted and grounded in love, knowing God, and known of Him, it supposes all the rest of truth, and it is found in Christ.

“He hath given us an understanding that we should know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, that is, in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God and eternal life.” Of this we have the perfect exhibition in Jesus, in spite of all trial; for how should the Spirit, which dwelt in all fulness in Him, even as a man, be grieved with divine perfectness? “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” “That the love [says the Lord, speaking of the converse, and therefore the power of this] wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them”; and so, as to the form of it, as it were with us: “In that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” But now we speak of it as specially knowing God. I think, if the Psalms be studied, what Christ’s Spirit passed through and teaches us will be deeply learnt in this—there, of course, among Jews it is Jehovah, when He speaks of covenant-blessings, as we have more specially to say, “Father.” But not resting here on this distinction, if the Psalms, and parts of Psalms, in which Jehovah is used, and in which God is used, be referred to and compared and studied, the deepest practical instruction will be derived as to this power of communion from the Spirit of Christ itself. Only we must remember that, for us it is founded on an accomplished work, and that which He passed through, as accomplishing it, is to us the fellowship of His sufferings, or loving chastisement. We may look to Psalms 42, 43, as an example of this. But, further, if we turn to our Lord’s personal history, and note the difference between that word, “Father, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but thine be done,” and “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” we shall see the deepening entrance into another character of communion, in which the whole power and

character of God were called out, borne indeed by Jesus our most glorious and blessed Head; that to us in that day, that power and character might become infinite and eternal joy; and is now to us all as sons, through the consequent gift of God by virtue of His resurrection; for such is the power of eternal life to us consequent on Christ's death.

O that the Church more entered into these things—walked more in the power of unseen communion with God! I say not this, as though I did; but I say it only as so knowing the blessedness of it in Him, as to pray and desire it for the Church, in the sense of the lack of it often.

Hitherto I have spoken, either of the quickening power of the Spirit of God, as introducing us into the kingdom; or, as dwelling in the individual, as the power of eternal life, through which his communion with God is carried on: this there must be where there is life according to Christ Jesus. There remains a wide field to treat of, on which I feel almost deterred from entering; not because I fear there is not boundless joy in passing over, and learning it in one's own soul, entering into it; but because it is boundless, and that I feel deeply my inadequacy to do so properly, even to satisfy my own mind: and I will add, especially when one considers the responsibility of being a communicator, and, as it were, teacher of these things to others. The deep interest and importance of the subject is my excuse: I would not have done it if it had not been pressed on my own mind. It is the largeness of the subject which deters me.

There is one thing I feel it important to notice ere I pass on: though the Spirit is life, and he that is joined to the

Lord is one spirit, and Christ as quickening Spirit is our life, yet the Holy Ghost is also spoken of as personally acting in power on our souls—acting in blessing; for He is God; and while we are made partakers of the divine nature, and have this life of God in us as born of Him, yet this is not the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost is God. Therefore we read, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs”; and therefore, the scripture speaks of the inner spiritual man being strengthened, renewed, as “strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” Though our outward man perish, our “inner man is renewed day by day”; so “the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

The next point, before I pass on to its character and operation, is to advert to the fact of the special indwelling of the Holy Ghost: I mean in individual believers. I do not speak of this as if it were new to many who read this paper, but because I daily find it is new to many who inquire: and it puts the subject in entirely a different light. We shall see that it is connected with, and consequent upon, the ascension and glorifying of Christ; but we must remember that, while the coming down of the Holy Ghost is witness of ascension-glory and divine righteousness, and that our association in it was consequent (in the necessary course of the divine ministrations) upon Christ’s entering into the glory, yet was it withal the power to us of all that whence it came, and into which, and association with which, it brings us; and so we shall see in the texts to which I shall refer, closing with the one

which more especially introduces me into my present subject; “In whom “(we read in Ephesians), “after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” I know that this has been referred to gifts merely. To these I hope to refer before I finish this subject: but that it is not confined to these is manifest, however these may display it, because, in that case, where there were no gifts, there would be no earnest of the inheritance: but the Comforter Himself was to abide for ever. Besides, gifts are not spoken of here, but the Holy Spirit itself as the earnest; but to confound them, is to confound the Giver and the gift; for the Spirit distributes of these to every man severally as He will, and they are only the manifestation of the Spirit given for profit; and confounding them (unconsciously perhaps) undermines the personality and deity of the Holy Ghost, and confounds the power of witnessing to others (which may be with no vital or sanctifying power) with the blessed and sanctifying communion with, and anticipation of, things hoped for and treasured up in Christ as ours, and to be displayed in that day. In a word, the Spirit which distributes the gift is not the gift He distributes, though He be displayed in the gift; nor are the things in which the given power is displayed necessarily any earnest of the inheritance at all; as in the gift of prophecy, as in Balaam’s case, and as Paul states the possibility that a man might preach to others, and he himself be a castaway. And though their characters in some instances are indicative of the dispensation, and their number and circumstances may be different, yet the existence of extraordinary powers and acts in themselves were not characteristic of this indwelling and earnest of the

Spirit. Many and remarkable miracles were wrought, and great power exhibited in service, before this came, before the Son of man was glorified. But these did not constitute the indwelling of the Spirit in the Church, for there was none such; nor in the individual as an earnest of the inheritance, for they might be there, as in the case of Balaam, already adverted to, and the individual not be an heir. The Spirit in them might search, and find the things they administered were not unto themselves. I propose to return a little to this, and would now pursue my more immediate subject.

In the Galatians we find—having shewn that they were sons through faith in Christ Jesus, not servants—"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"; clearly distinguishing between the regenerating power and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and speaking of one as a consequence of the other—that it dwelt in an individual who was (and because he was) a son of God. We also see its distinction from a gift, for it is put in the heart to cry, Abba, Father. Further, we see that, as in such sort, there, it is proper to, and characteristic of, the dispensation. For it is not the portion of the heir when an infant, and as a servant, under tutors and governors, which they, even if heirs, were previously, not in immediate communion with the Father personally. They had not the mind needful for it, not having the Holy Ghost thus. But it is their portion when they take properly the place of sons, which they do in this dispensation; and though they do not as yet enter upon the inheritance, yet are they to have the mind renewed in knowledge concerning it, and enter into the full interests of the Father's house.

Again, says Peter, “We are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, which is given to them that believe.” We find it in similar language in Ephesians, and Romans 8:

“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and if Christ be in you,” etc.; and in Ephesians: “That ye may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” These are connected with communion, and mark it as an individual thing in which the heart has its portion by faith.

Again, where the connection of things hoped for, and the power of communion in which they are enjoyed in the certainty of God’s love, are brought together, “hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.” Again, in 2 Corinthians 1, “For all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”—a very full and blessed passage: God, the great Author of it all and power by which it is wrought, establishing us in Christ, our glorious and blessed Head, in the communion of all like glory with Him; in the communion of that in which, by the fulfilment of all the promises in their amazing blessedness in Christ Himself, God is glorified: and this, while we are assumed in grace into a portion with Him, we being the very subjects of the blessing, not merely in consequence but in association, and therefore having all the consequences. It is ours, the promises being in Christ, to the glory of God by us. Now God stablishes us in this portion: how do we know it? How is it marked?

How enjoyed, and the earnest possessed, while we have it not, when the glory is not yet come? God hath established us in it: that is the assurance and security. He hath anointed us with that unction from Himself—the Holy One—whereby we know all things (compare the whole of 2 Corinthians 1:7 to the end, where this is fully explained); but then the having the Spirit is the seal or mark whereby we are significantly denoted as belonging to God, as His heirs: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"; but being given us to dwell in us, in that we are heirs, we have it as an earnest in our hearts; abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; knowing that we are sons, and delighting in the thought of the inheritance, and of being like Him who is "the firstborn among many brethren"; and in this joy of the Holy Ghost, filled (it may be in the midst of much affliction) with all joy and peace in believing, the soul entering, as associated with Christ (and in this lies much, and that of the very kernel of the joy, though not all), into all the glory in which the promises of God are fulfilled in Him. I say, not all the joy; because it is not only (with what riches are we endowed, yea, beyond all thought!) "As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you": a blessing known, had communion with by the Spirit, as our portion, of which the glory is the display, as enjoyed along with Him; but "that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me"; and therefore they are not only companions with the Son of man in the glory, but in adoption sons of God, as brethren, being brought into this joy, as in the Father's kingdom, more properly the Father's house, where the place is prepared for us by the great Firstborn. Thus the Son's rich and unjealous love (for it is divine), in giving us the glory which was given to Him, displays us in the

glory, which approves before the world that the Father has loved us as He loved Him. Was ever anything like this in love? Does it not, in its very conception, prove it altogether divine? None could deal, act, or know in such sort but God; and the very possession of these things in our hearts is the witness that God is there, if they be known in love, holy love; for “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” And these things we have now, not in possession indeed, but in (the earnest of the) Spirit; as the same Spirit by the apostle speaks: “These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full,” “that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” This is a very holy place to dwell in, one that becometh saints—one that nothing but the blood of Jesus could purchase—none but God by His wondrous work in Christ present us faultless in the presence of. Yet, blessed be His grace (and the more blessed because it is holy and enjoyed), in that we have the Holy Spirit revealing it, giving us a divine spiritual communion with it, sealing us as heirs of all of it and the power of our joy in it; this is our place, our portion: O my soul, dwell there in joy—joy with Christ. You will note, He says, “His Son Jesus Christ”; which is not only the expression of faith, but presenting our blessed Lord in that character —the Saviour, the anointed Man—in which He has brought us into fellowship, and associated us with Him in this sonship, and given us fellowship moreover with the Father as sons; ourselves sons, though in Him. And the converse of this is met in that expression, “I say not that I will pray the Father for you [as if the Father did not Himself love you]; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” This they had believed, but knew

not yet in its fulness, known thus by the Holy Ghost (the Spirit of sonship given), namely, that He came forth from the Father. In this they were dull: it is the life of the saints. And this it is that makes the notion of sonship in Christ only when incarnate so destructive to the very elementary joy of the Church, and abhorrent to those who have communion by the Spirit in the truth.

But the joy and blessedness of which I speak leads me at once to the statement, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Here again, you will remark, it is an individual matter —the believer’s portion, however it may be ministered. “This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given], because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Now this statement (as I think we shall see) is one of extreme importance, and connected with the whole character and state of the dispensation, as being that of God’s blessings, which are beyond all dispensation, except the fact of giving the Spirit as the power of divine life and worship, inasmuch as they lead into communion with Himself.

John 4, of which I have already spoken, though it involves, does not rest on dispensation; but that, on the passing away of” this mountain,” or even of that on which Jerusalem stood, the living power of communion with the Father everywhere, even with God as a Spirit, should take place. Hence it was a quickening power, shewn in humiliation, as well as in glory; yea, according to love in gift proved in humiliation: and the hour then was, as well as was coming. Not so, though they may include these things, chapters 3, 7. Chapter 3, as we have seen, contains the kingdom, and shews what must

belong to a Jew to enter into its earthly portion, the quickening which alone could bring even the nominal children into the kingdom, because it was God's kingdom.

But here, in chapter 7, we have the gift of the Spirit consequent upon the ascension-glory—on the glorifying of Jesus. His brethren, representing in their unbelief the Jews, had proposed at the feast of tabernacles that Jesus should shew Himself to the world. Jesus' reply was, their time was always ready, His time was not yet come. On the eighth day of that feast, and peculiar to it (the day of resurrection, the feast of the new week, the beginning of a new scene), the great day of it, Jesus stood and cried. And as the water out of the rock (and that rock was Christ) followed and supplied the children of Israel through the wilderness, they came to keep the feast of tabernacles as at rest in the land; so Jesus, His people being united to Him their glorified Head, would so fill them with the Spirit, that out of them should flow—not merely out of Him to them, but out of them should flow —rivers of living water, even of the Spirit which believers should receive. But it is said, "out of his belly." Now this is to me a blessed expression: the use of it for the thoughts, feelings, condition, of the inner man, is familiar in Scripture. On this the peculiar blessing all rests; and herein the essential difference of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost as now, and when operating on prophets before. The possession of* the Holy Ghost rested now on union, and consequently was a constant thing, and an earnest to the person in whom it dwelt of his own interest in the things it communicated. He was brought into communion, as united to the Head, in all the things in which that Head was revealed; and he had the Spirit

by virtue of his being so united—the necessary witness therefore of his interest in them. And as this union was connected with a divine nature communicated, the mind, thoughts, feelings, joys, sorrows, interests, consolations, fears, hopes, and streams of love which that nature entered into, were now the portion of the saint, and that, withal, according to the power of the energy of the Spirit, which, though indwelling, still acted independently (i.e., as regards us), though, according to the order and revelations of the dispensation of which He was the power, speaking what He heard. I am not now speaking of the conflict still, and therefore, existing with the flesh (and, I must add, with the world, for both are the consequence of this very thing), but of the thing itself. This earnest of the Spirit is in connection with the glory of Jesus, therefore full of victory and full of hope. And yet (as it was the glory of the man witnessed, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in those not yet glorified, though sanctified to God) it became, on the one hand, the complete witness of the highest possible assurance of understanding, because Jesus was on the throne who had entered into the whole conflict, and of the Father's acceptance of Him in divine righteousness: yet withal, on the other hand, it entered into all the circumstances through which that righteous Man did pass; so giving the pattern and formation of knowledge, the tongue of the learned, in all the trial through which the saints as led of the Spirit had to (and must) pass—their portion—and therefore a Spirit of perfect sympathy, the sympathy of the Spirit of Christ, as knowing the glory, and therefore sensible, according to God, of the extreme misery, and sorrow, and degradation, into which, as to circumstance, those in whom (as the witness of Jesus) He dwelt were plunged; and what their trial on the way

to that glory and the path of patience towards it. Also was it witness of the Father's love as shewn in the glory; and hence it passed, as the river of that divine refreshment in the wilderness, through them, as flowing in their hearts, for they were united to Jesus, to refresh all to whom its heavenly and blessed streams came; that drinking in this as the parched ground, a desert land, they might spring forth in green and refreshing fruits, which the great Head of the Church might find delight and joy in; while their joy was full in communion with that from which it flowed. For wherever the river is received, it is the river still.

Doubtless, not shewing Himself as amongst the Jews, His natural brethren, to the world, any individual amongst them, believing then, took the place of substituted and anticipative blessing then proposed; but, being a matter of faith, it is, if "any man thirst"—and thus it is the portion to any man of faith. Then we have to enquire, on what this depended, whence this flowing stream came. It was sent from the Father by Jesus glorified, and becomes the witness of all the acceptance, which the glorifying of Jesus, the great responsible Man under our sins, declares; and of all the glory to which He is entitled, and all that is displayed in His Person, as there sat down (which is our hope, for we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him); and, moreover, of communion with Him, not according to that glory in which He will appear to earth, (for I know not that that will need the Holy Ghost, though communion vitally with Him in any way does and will, but of this in the previous chapter); but according to the glory in which He sits on the Father's throne, in which we who are sons shall know Him in that day, and the Church knows Him now as

sitting on the Father's throne. There is a glory which He will take—His own glory as visible Lord and Son of man, in which every eye shall see Him: but there is a glory in which the Spirit now reveals Him, in which the Church knows Him, in which, though Son of man, He is one with the Father; a glory which He has taken as man, a glory with the Father (John 17:5), and which in itself He had with the Father before the world was, but which He has now taken as man, and which the Spirit communicates to us who are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and gives us communion with Him; and which forms the power and object of hope to our minds. As it is written, "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness through faith." That righteousness is established for us in Christ upon the throne; for He who bore our sins is gone to the Father in glory. The reward and end of that righteousness is this glory. Hence we see that this is our portion in hope, for the righteousness is ours. And as in Christ, the glory is ours too, although the oneness with the Father (which gives Him the place in which the glory is now) is His only, yet is not this without its blessing, for the Church knows it in Him; and the full divine source of the glory is manifested. As now Christ is in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us; so, in the day of His appearing, shall it be Christ in us, and the Father in Him, that we may be made perfect in one.

But this is not all of these streams of living water, though it may be the great source and fountain, the glory of the Man on the Father's throne. For, as the feast of tabernacles was on the accomplishment of the promises held in the land, and as Solomon spoke of it on the great typical celebration of it, "The Lord hath performed with his hand all that he spake to David my

father with his mouth”; so to Christ Himself all the promises are made, as Heir of all things, as Son of God, as Son of man, and Son of David. As many as are the promises of God, in Him are they Yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us. Now as that which we have spoken of is for the glory of God manifested in Him, so, as it is by us, He takes the promises as man, that, having purged and sanctified the children by His blood, He might introduce them in witness of the Father’s love as co-heirs. Hence as to them also, that which He is heir of as the glorified man (in title as Son of God) is, in knowledge and communion by the Spirit, part of these living streams. Therefore it is there added, “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ is God, who hath anointed us, and hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” It not only then reveals the glory of Jesus as now on the throne of God as man, but also that which He takes when He appears in glory, when all shall be blessing, we being called to inherit a blessing; and therefore the moment the earth comes into blessing, it becomes a portion of our inheritance in Christ. “The Lord shall hear the heavens,” etc. Whatever there is promised to Christ as the seed and great purpose of God (see Gal. 3); whatever things there are in which the glory of God is displayed, and is the furniture, and reflection, and exhibition of that glory by Christ (and all things are for Him); is to that glory by us. Of this—in its wide and fullest blessedness as second Adam, Lord from heaven withal, the witness in blessing, evil being conquered, of all the Father’s love unfolded in and on the creature taken into the inheritance—of this, I say, the Spirit is the joy to us in hope. And, as the promises are to us in Christ, and we see Christ, though all things be not yet put under Him, crowned with the

glory and honour, in which He is the securer of them all (sustaining all things), the firstborn of every creature, as well as Firstborn from the dead, and Head of the Church —we, being in Christ and partakers of the Spirit, have all these as abounding in hope; for they are witness of the Father's love and blessing, contributing to these rivers of living waters (that is, the knowledge of the glory of Christ as in them), enjoyed within by the Spirit; and, where so enjoyed, flowing over; for no human heart ever, when so enjoyed, could contain them.

And this surely is a joyous thought—for now we must take the promises in the widest sense—all things in heaven and in earth, all are Christ's as heir; for indeed He made them all, and all are to be reconciled in Him; and if reconciled to God, how full the blessing! Well may the streams flow through the desert when Israel is there passing, for desert it shall be no longer when Israel is owned: the streams were not indeed thence, but they were there for the firstborn when the firstborn were there. A most blessed picture this of divine favour and exalting hope! The wilderness shall flourish and blossom as the rose, when in divine favour Israel obtains its inheritance: so, when Israel passes through it, for Israel (though the wilderness be unchanged by it) the streams which would renew and gladden it flow—refresh Israel blessedly through it. Thus beautifully does the song of Moses, when he would as his God prepare Him a habitation, and as his father's God exalt Him, declare, on his emergence from the Red Sea, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." To God they were already brought, so we. Afterwards: "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in

the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." The place of Israel, as the redeemed tribes in hope, was Canaan, and Canaan strictly within Jordan—so that Moses chode with the two and a half tribes when proposing to stay without; and the rest only are then called the children of Israel. So of the Church. But the promises to Abraham were all from the river of Egypt to the great river; and there was a day coming when the wilderness and the solitary place would be glad for them, and the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose, and see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of their God; yet still the sanctuary which God had prepared for Himself to dwell in was the place where they were to be brought in. Blessed portion! So with the saints now: they have their place in heaven, and they know it now in spirit and in hope; know it as theirs, though evil spirits may yet for a very little season be to be resisted there, and have their hold till the great conflict comes which shall exclude them for ever. Thus they have their place, their seat in the heavenlies beyond Jordan; blessed inheritance, where to them Christ has set the glory— the glory of the Father, and His own!

Yet though it be thus, the world and all things are theirs, though it be a wilderness and they strangers in it. The moment they are redeemed, though they be not in the rest of Egypt, nor have the leeks and cucumbers, and the onions, and the bondage; and though the world be a wilderness to them, a dry and barren land where no water is, they are called out into it as theirs—theirs, yet only as a wilderness—but called out to hold a feast to

the Lord there. And be it so, that they have holden a feast to the golden calf, while Moses is in the mount to receive the given law, it does not alter what it is to the heart of faith. They have been led forth, and not only do they know in spirit that they have been brought to God (so in spirit to be in the heavenlies), but they find, and it is because they find, Jesus there; and finding Him they find all things theirs, even where they are; and they can be fed only from heaven, guided only by what is heavenly, drink only thus from the rock, or rather have the river of God flowing in themselves; but in Jesus they know their inheritance. “All things are theirs, and they are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” The wilderness is now only to pass through; there is nothing in it for them, yet all is theirs. But when Israel is in the wilderness, when the Church is thus passing through the world, which is its inheritance, the river is there, yea, it is in their hearts; and they sing (for the redemption-work is complete in title, though not accomplished as to the creature in power), “But you hath he redeemed… reconciled”; “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation.” When the water revives the wilderness itself, when the Son of man actually takes the world as His inheritance, and the Spirit is poured out, shall it not then be glad, and rejoice and blossom? Well, it fills the heart of God’s people, of him that believeth in Jesus now, and does so because he is in the wilderness: and shall he not rejoice and blossom? Yea, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and though often the heartless sand may drink it in and give no return, but be parched, and arid, and fruitless as before, yet wherever the earth of God’s hand

and the seeds of God's planting are, there shall they also be refreshed and spring up through it.

I feel it very important to remark here the individual character noticed before, because it is the saving principle in the midst of desolations and evil, whatever common good it may produce. It is not, They shall drink of the river from the rock, or drink of some common river, but, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"; it is the personal possession and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. So the gospel of John (which gives what is essential and uniting, and not consequences) continually treats of it.

There is another point of view in which this indwelling of the Spirit has its peculiar feature and character in this dispensation. It results from the exaltation of Christ. The position in which He is the witness of all things being accomplished; and He Himself is personally in possession of the result of that accomplishment, and we united to Him in it, He being there continually. Consequently, it is as different as possible from any previous testimony of what was to be, let it be ever so blessed; as indeed the mystery was not fully revealed, nor (as I have already remarked as to the fact) had the testimony they had any necessary connection with enjoyment of the things witnessed, no, not even where the witnesses were saints, as 1 Peter 1 shews. It was as different also as possible from any operation of the Spirit producing fruits, even as the living Spirit of. Christ (though this was ever surely saving), because it never witnessed, and never could witness, a living Christ and glorified Man in the heavens, with whom they were one, who had accomplished all the things they were to enjoy, and which gave the title to, and ground of, their

enjoyment of them. This could only exist when Jesus had accomplished them, was in the glory, and thence sent down the Holy Ghost, the power of communion to those united to Him. The thing itself did not exist, the work was not accomplished, and Jesus, as a man, was not in the glory. Therefore we read, “The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” The fact is, the union of the Church with Him as one body was not yet even revealed, but was a mystery hid in God (as Christ now is), known therefore and enjoyed only by the Holy Ghost given to them which believe. It was not, of course, that there was any different work by which man could be saved (a believer knows this is impossible), nor another Spirit, for there is but one. But that Spirit could not then testify that the believer (to whom He witnessed and whom He influenced) was then in union with the risen Jesus, with the Man who was actually glorified as a present thing, as He does now to a believer’s soul; for the thing did not exist to be testified of. If it be said, It was true to faith; I answer, It was not as true to faith that they were in union then, and knew Jesus as now glorified; for Jesus was not glorified, and therefore the Holy Ghost had not, on the footing of this union, taken up His abode in a believer’s heart—“was not yet,” in the sense of dwelling as the witness of the glorified Man, in those who were united to Him. This made all the difference between being free, and hoping to be free on the certainty of a faithful man’s word, who never lied, and was able to perform. Both were certain; but they were not the same thing. “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” This was the better thing reserved for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. This is that which made the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than the greatest born of

woman—this presence of the Holy Ghost with and in believers, as the result of the accomplishment of Christ's work and the witness of their union with Him. This, too, I apprehend, is the difference between the general assembly and church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect. The children of Israel might have believed the Lord's promise, and did, as Jacob shewed—as Joseph shewed, when he gave commandment concerning his bones (Gen. 50:24): but, however surely this faith was exercised, they could not say, "Thou, Lord, in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation"; for the work of their redemption was not accomplished. They could sing that when they were brought out of Egypt through the Red Sea, though they were only brought into the wilderness where there was no way, nor food, nor water; for they were redeemed. I now take in the whole course, not any particular type.

I dwell thus much upon this, because many find it very difficult to understand how, if the way of being saved is the same, the state of those that are so can be different; whereas "the heir, so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors," having no free and immediate intercourse with the father's mind, nor understanding of the father's interests.

Known sonship with the Father, and union with Christ, seeing what Christ's title is, are primary characteristics of this indwelling of the Spirit; and though we see not yet all things put under Christ, yet we see Him crowned with the glory and honour, so that we rejoice in the

prospective title, knowing that “He is not ashamed to call us brethren.”

Thus, in Romans 8, where this presence of the Spirit as the very character of this dispensation is much brought out, after shewing His moral operations (i.e., as life in the soul), and the quickening of the body, then spoken of as personally dwelling in present witness with us, He bears witness that we are children, therefore heirs, “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together.” Now, in this we have the whole case—children, the assembly of the firstborn, put, as Israel, was in the wilderness. Israel is My firstborn. Next, Canaan before us, heirs of God; for that was His land, and His title in Israel reached from river to river—Canaan and the wilderness, heaven and earth; “joint-heirs with Christ,” as they of Immanuel’s land; and “if so be that we suffer,” they must pass through this world as a wilderness simply. Now the Holy Ghost takes up all this, and in its two great characters—the glory and the suffering; the glory belonging to us as children and co-heirs; and this we have in hope. When our prospect is dimmed, we become careless about it, and profane in our minds; when bright, we need nought but manna, and the water, and patience for the wilderness, longing for the rest, submitting to the will of God concerning it. And when our souls are really dwelling as in the glory, when the grapes of Eshcol really fill our souls, there is deadness to all, save the savour and brightness of the hope: what is heavenly is heavenly to us, for we are heavenly minded, we see the glory of the Lord, and it is in a place where His eyes are continually—a land not watered by the foot, but by rivers that run among hills and valleys, the very

dwelling-place of the Father's kingdom. The Spirit in the revelation of God (for it is God) causes us thus to dwell in the fulness of God; and from hence we estimate the inheritance, the fellowship with Christ in it, and the glory. We dwell in it in the sweet savour of divine delight in Jesus, who fills all things, and will in very deed do so, and is now revealed so to us by the Spirit. His presence, as actually taking it, shall fill and gladden heaven and earth, banishing evil. But then, now it is, "if so be we suffer"; for the very dwelling in this glory, and seeing in spirit the whole creation reconciled, brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (it cannot be of their grace), waiting for the manifestation of these sons, make us the more and distinctly sensible how it groans and travails together in bondage until now; and our body too being part of this, it becomes sensitive and sympathetic groaning. Now we know this groaning of the creation by our dwelhng in the glory, but it becomes sympathetic because we are connected with it in our body, and that as unredeemed. But then it is not merely the selfish feeling of evil. The intercession of the Spirit in us is according to God. The Spirit, as dwelhng in us, estimates the evil not according to mere human pain in it, but in the divine estimate of it, as interested in and dwelling in them who are in the midst of the evil, and partakers of it as to their bodies; and all their groans, which take up the known groanings of the creation (for it is as to the body which is of it), are not from selfish pain, but the Spirit's sense of the evil as dwelhng in us; and though we, as to the mind and intelligence, cannot tell what to ask for, yet He that searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit who dwells there is; for He makes intercession according to God. Thus the Spirit, that other Comforter, in and through our hearts,

feeling in the non-adoption of the body that it dwells in a world groaning under the bondage of corruption, not only teaches from the glory, so that we say, “We know,” but expresses (in sense of it all, yet according to God) the need according to God, to be met in the saints now by more enlarged and deeper communion, and that glory in hope which shall put it all away.

As regards our own exercise on these things, I would say a very few words. As in the Spirit, our joy is full, the savour of heavenly things is fresh, our path easy. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” there is communion which makes all light, and we walking and dwelling in it, and everything shines in it. The Holy Ghost is the communicating power of all fulness. But when we come to the wilderness, there is exercise, difficulty; the heart is proved; all is opposite; it is a wilderness; and rest in a wilderness only keeps us in a wilderness still, and indeed will be found going back soon in heart after Egypt. For rest we shall find it a wilderness, and bring the chastenings of the Lord of faithfulness upon us. Now even where trouble is, if the heart be right in the sight of God, God is known through it all; it is not that the trouble will not be felt—far from it; the more perfect the faith, the more it will be felt: the more I know, the more my heart and thought is in Canaan, the more I shall understand what the wilderness is: yea, the very worship of God, blessed as it may be, will be and savour of the wilderness; my mercies are mercies of the wilderness; my food, food for the wilderness; the cloud may guide me to Canaan, but in Canaan I shall need no cloud for the way—still, where the spirit is bright through grace, though it feels all this, it has rich and deep experience of God, which works

hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. In that patience of spirit which is learnt only in the wilderness (what patience shall we need in Canaan?) the deeper parts of God's character are learned. If faith had to bear six hundred thousand rebellious ones, as if it had begotten them, how would it learn, through cultivated communion, the depth of God's patience, the wisdom of His purposes, the extreme perfectness of His love, uncaused by anything it found, bent upon blessing! How He knew the end from the beginning, and while we were travailing in heart about present circumstances, God was using them for bringing forth to that heart the certainty of future hopes, or forming it for the enjoyment of them! And how in us would the moulding of heart in this intimacy of God's ways intrinsically form us for the estimate of the glory in breaking the links (which seemed strange to those occupied with present things) which tied us to those things, that the life in us might grow up into unhindered association with whatever was heavenly! It requires the wilderness (not to give a title which would bring us to God, but) practically to put God instead of Egypt within us; I do not say it ought, and that we ought not to be as Caleb and Joshua ready at once to go up, and the grapes of Eshcol be our encouragement in going onward, rather than the sons of Anak our fear; for they bear the stamp of the beneficence and power of Him who called us there—they were the grapes of His land, and this Lord was well able to bring us in. But it is God's way habitually with us. But when our faith tastes those grapes, when our hearts are thus, we can rise over trouble, however felt; and when we are spiritual, all trouble is the instrument of the blessed experience of God.

God’s purposes are not ours, and He always works for His own, which are our perfect blessing, the making of us conformed to the image of His Son, co-heirs, “the glory of God by us.” Now in our blessed Master, as learning obedience by the things which He suffered, we see this path in the wilderness in perfectness, feeling as none else felt, but seeing (even then in perfect submission) the divine perfectness of the Father’s ways, and the end too they led to—His glory—enjoyed as joy set before Him, as a river of sure and blessed water too thus to give rest and refreshment. “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.” Here was true grief, and thoroughly felt as grief. There is no true grief but where there is no resource around; and around Jesus had none. “Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they were not”—the word to her was, “There is hope in thine end.”

But let us look to Jesus. “In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” “All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” “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.” How did the rivers of water flow forth here from this heart-smitten rock! There was none indeed without: but how did they flow from the revealed depths within! The

waters gushed forth, His own soul full, “All things are delivered”—I can reveal the Father—“Come to me.” How did His pent soul burst forth from the “Then have I laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought!” and in vain, as to present circumstances, to spread these living streams in the wilderness, which have, blessed Lord Jesus! refreshed the Church, and shall refresh it through the wilderness, till it need nothing but Thyself in Canaan. And are we not sons? poor indeed, but still, in exaltation of His fulness, “he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” And where the Spirit of God really is, there is no breaking, no smiting, no operation of patience through the word, but brings forth more of them; for we are associated with infinite fulness now in Jesus. Because all perfectness was there, it all burst forth at once, and “I thank thee” was in one hour with “Woe unto thee.”

In us often, that these streams may flow and flow pure, there is much process; and when the flesh is at work, and our will is at work, then, till laid low, there is no perception of the brightness and fulness before us, yea, with which we are in communion (for the flesh hath no communion with it, the will ho part or portion in it): until we are brought to say, “I thank thee,” “I glory in my tribulations,” there is no “All things are delivered,” as they are ours in Jesus—no real “Come to me,” though in our mere judgment we may say, There is the place where it is to be found. And this is deep work; but it is God’s work. Thus much for the flowing of these living streams in us: they are all heavenly; and only as we are simply heavenly will they run. Wretched me, that we should need so much to make God’s blessed refreshing streams flow! Wondrous love, that He should patiently

do so much! May we be enabled to say always, though not callous, “I thank thee!” Still, in all this bondage of corruption though the will by which it came in was in man, not in the creature without (therefore Jesus’s was pure sorrow, because it was all according to God—ours not), though this will yet working in us must be subdued; yet, where the Spirit is, God, seeing it in love (i.e., towards us), and putting in action the special process in love, that this will may be broken, every groan which does come (when we know not what to ask for, nor how) is the perfect intercession of the Spirit, whose mind is known to Him who searcheth the hearts, so that we may be comforted; and resting in God, God will shew us the brightness beyond. A true groan to God, however deep the misery, however prostrate the spirit, however unconscious that we are heard, is always received above as the intercession of the Spirit, and answered according to the perfectness of God’s purpose concerning us in Christ. Therefore the charge is, “Ye have not cried unto me, when ye have howled upon your beds”: and there is no consequence of sin which is beyond the reach of this groaning to God, nothing indeed but the self-will which will not groan to Him at all. This is a blessed thought! such is our intercourse with God in joy and in sorrow; and I doubt not that in us poor, but blessed creatures, the truest, the most blessed (what will shine most when all things shine before God), are these groans to Him: they cannot, indeed, be in their fulness but where the knowledge of the glory of blessing is. I can see them precede the greatest works and words of Jesus. The sense of the wilderness, taken into His heart, made but the streams which could refresh it flow forth in the sympathy of the Spirit which it called forth; and now the Spirit is in us. I believe I must for the

present close these thoughts. This has touched but upon one point (and, oh! how narrowly and poorly! what muddy water!)—the presence of the blessed and heavenly Spirit in the desert, as in our hearts, with joy for the things He gives in union with our Head, and refreshing for the scene He passes through, where God's poor pilgrims are; the Messenger of all their sorrow according to His estimate of it, who knows, loves, and effects the blessing of the portion of Christ in His people, as dwelling in them—their blessed Paraclete. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Hitherto we have seen the blessed Spirit generally, in His characteristic living operations, and not so much ecclesiastically, if I may so speak. The third, fourth, and seventh chapters of John's gospel have given us clear instruction in this:

Firstly, as quickening or giving life.

Secondly, as given; and thus a well of water in us springing up into everlasting life—thus, too, as manifesting, or connected with the riches of grace, making us know the Father as seeking such to worship the God of love, and enabling us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, as thus known in the grace that has sought us—brought in by faith to fellowship with Him, fellowship with the Father and the Son, out of every nation: in a word, the dispensation of the manifested Son, manifested to faith as One with whom we are in union through the Spirit— this by the gift of grace.

Thirdly, as flowing forth from us, a river of refreshings, and this in connection with the glory of the Son of man; and therefore not so much the power of worship as the

earnest of glory, and the power of refreshing, and glorious testimony that man in Him prevails and has the glory; though yet he must wait for it till He be manifested to the world set right indeed by His presence in that great feast of tabernacles.

The first of these chapters (John 3) closed proper Jewish intercourse, shewing that they must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God: and so was every one that was born of the Spirit (the cross, or the lifting up of the Son of man, closing all present earthly associations, and introducing heavenly things as yet unknown). In the second (John 4), the Lord, having thereon left Judea, going into Galilee passes through Samaria, and there, with one of the most worthless of that reprobate race, shews the gift of God, and the consequence of the humiliation of the Son of God, thereon introducing the Father's name and spiritual worship by grace. Thus the gospel dispensation is introduced by it, and its worship, sonship, and joy. In the third (John 7) we find it flowing forth from filled affections to the world, the witness, though not the accomplishment, of that day when Jesus shall appear in the glory witnessed of, and it shall be as life from the dead: and that, indeed, through His then unbelieving brethren here below. Chapter 4 (that is, the second of those alluded to) is more large and general, as the power of all living communion with God, and thus is specially the saints' place. It identifies itself more especially with the present prayer of Ephesians 3, founded on the title, "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," though that goes farther. Chapter 7 (or the third here alluded to) identifies itself more especially with the former part of the prayer of Ephesians 1, the portion of the Church also, it is true, but more its hope than its

communion, and founded on the title, “God of our Lord Jesus Christ”; looking thus at the Lord as the Head of the body— the Firstborn among many brethren, the Firstborn from the dead, the Head of the body the Church, as is plainly seen in the testimony of the apostle which follows—not in the nearness of the divine nature as Son, but in appointed, though righteous, headship as man, the appointed Heir of all things: both indeed hanging on His being the Son, but one connected with His nearness to God, even the Father, which is indeed oneness; the other His manifestation in glory according to divine counsel, when He takes His place with the Church toward the world; though, of course (and necessarily), the Head of it—she the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

That I may not omit the intervening chapters of John, but that we may see what a summary of divine theology it is, as a testimony to the Person of the Lord Jesus in its height above all dispensation, I would here observe, that chapter 5 contrasts the entire incompetency of any restorative power connected with the law (because it required strength in the patient, which was just what the disease of sin had destroyed, as well as his righteousness which would not have needed it), in a word, the entire futility of all remedial processes, with the absolute life-giving power of the Son of God in union with the Father; and shews, in addition, on His rejection (the rejection of His word, for so that power wrought), the judicial power put entirely into His hands as Son of man to execute judgment on all that rejected Him, that all men might honour the Son, even as they honoured the Father.

Chapter 6 shews what was proper to Him—His place and that of His disciples—as rejected. First, it shewed Him (who fulfilled that word, Psalm 132:13-15, “He shall satisfy her poor with bread”—the Jehovah of Israel’s blessing in the latter days, when Zion shall be His “rest for ever “) as prophet, refusing to be king, and thereon going up to exercise His priesthood of intercession apart on high. In the meanwhile, the disciples were toiling alone on the sea, and the wind contrary, aiming but not attaining. Immediately on Jesus (who could walk on all the difficulties) rejoining them, they were at the land whither they went. This blessed little picture of the order and circumstances of the dispensation having been given, the humiliation of Jesus, as the portion of the Church during His priesthood, is then shewn as affording its food and strength of life. First, His coming down and incarnation— the manna, the true bread that came down from heaven; next, as sacrificed, and giving the life He had thus taken as man— believers thereon eating His flesh and drinking His blood, thus living by Him; then, closing by the question, “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” This, as we have seen, is followed by the instruction of chapter 7, where the time for the manifestation of the Son of man to the world was not yet come, and the gift of the Holy Ghost as the intermediate witness of His glory as Son of man is spoken of. This point has been spoken of in the former part of these remarks; I revert to it now, merely as shewing the beautiful order of the instruction of the Spirit in the gospel of John.

There is another point connected with the operations of the Spirit of our God, which remains to be touched upon —His corporate operations, or His operations as acting

in connection with the body of Christ, both as maintaining, and the very centre of, its unity; and also as ministering in the diversity of His gifts; and also the distinction between this and His individual presence in the believer.

This last difference will be found to be important, and to flow from, and be connected with, the whole order of the economy of grace, of which the Spirit of God is the great agent in us, and though not received there, still in a certain sense in testimony in the world.

This difference depends on the relative character which Christ stands in: first, with the Father, as Son, and us by adoption made sons with Him: and, secondly, with God, as the Head of the body, which is His fulness the Church. We shall find the Scriptures speak definitely of both, and distinctly: in one, the Lord Jesus holds a more properly divine relationship with the Father, and introduces us by adoption into something of the enjoyment of that nearness; in the other, a relationship (though all be divine) yet more connected with His human nature and His offices in that, and therefore God is spoken of as His God. The distinction and reality of these two things are expressed by the blessed Lord going away. Having accomplished the redemption, which enabled Him to present His brethren along with Himself as sons to the Father, in His (the Father's) house, spotless, and sons by adoption, and to assume His place as the Head of the body, the Church, He did not yet allow Himself to be touched and worshipped as in bodily presence in His earthly kingdom; for He was not yet ascended to His Father, so that He could bring forth the fulness of His glory, and that that kingdom should be manifestly of the Father, and have its root and source in

that higher glory; but putting His friends, and that for the first time, into the place of sons and brethren, He says to them (thus setting the saints, and Himself for them, in their place), “Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God”; thus establishing these two relationships, and His disciples along with Himself in them.

Then the Lord ascended up on high for the accomplishment in power of what He now spoke of, in the truth and efficacy of the work which He had accomplished, and the value of His presented Person before the Father, as well as the blood by which sin was put away.

On this statement in John hangs in fact the distinction to which I have alluded, followed up in Scripture by many other passages. It is the definite revelation of the characters in which Jesus Christ was going away, and which He was to sustain in our behalf on high, placing us in fellowship with God and the Father in them. There was another point, however, connected with this, involved in the position which Christ assumed: He is the displayer of the divine glory, His Father’s glory. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” He shall appear in the Father’s glory. He was on earth “God manifest in the flesh,” seen too of angels: again, “the brightness of God’s glory, the express image of his person.” His glory too was sonship, as of the only begotten of the Father, as again, “the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell; and, as afterwards stated, in fact, as in good pleasure, “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Thus we see the Person of the Lord Jesus, the place in which divine glory is in every sense

manifested. But He is now hid in God: that is the position which He has now taken. And thereon the Holy Ghost is sent down into the world to maintain the witness and manifestation of His glory (not brought out yet visibly on earth, but personally accomplished on high, “crowned with glory and honour”), and to be the earnest and testimony of His title to the earth. The Church on earth is the place and depositary of this. “He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

Now, the Holy Ghost, as thus sent down from heaven, is the witness of what Christ is there for us towards the Father; and what His title is as of God towards the world and specially therein what the power of the hope of the calling and inheritance of God in the saints is. The enjoyment and testimony of these things may be much blended in the operations of the present Spirit; but they are distinct. As for example, the display of my portion in Christ as the Son before the Father may fill my heart and make me a witness and a testimony of it, to the blessing and comfort of the Church, if the Lord accompany it with the suitable gift of communication; and the power of it in my soul in joy is intimately blended with the thing to be expressed; because so the Holy Ghost acts in this work. It is therefore said, “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Still they are quite distinct: for a man may have these things shewn to his soul, and enjoy them, and yet not have the gift to communicate them to others; though they be the deep (possibly, I suppose, the deeper) joy of his own: so that, though connected when both are there, they are distinct things. I suppose that those who have gift of testimony

have often found as much (or more) joy in hearing the blessed things of Christ, as in uttering them; though the sense and joy of the blessed things may have ministered to their capacity of utterance. I would speak then distinctively of these two points, though their blending, if the Lord will, may be noticed.

In the earlier passages in John, and the remarks which were made upon them, the Holy Ghost who is sent was spoken of as the power of life, the power of communion, the power of communication. In the latter part of John and other places the sending of the Spirit is specially spoken of, because the absence and going away of Christ were brought before their minds as a present fact; and hence the Spirit is shewn as the sustainer of the relationships induced by the mystery of Christ being thus hid in God, and another Comforter sent. Life-communion with God the Father and the Son, communications concerning the glory of the Son of man, were all distinct and blessed things; but they were not the revelation of the dispensation in which they were ordered, nor the display of the relationships which those dispensations brought to light, though to the instructed soul they might imply them. This is taken up first in the close of John's gospel. We shall also find it brought out on other ground later in the close of Luke.

It is introduced in John by the statement made to His disciples, "As I said unto the Jews, so now I say unto you, Whither I go, ye cannot come." In the earlier part of the subsequent chapter the Lord introduces their comfort—that He was to be the object of faith as God was; that He was not going to be alone in blessedness, and leave them here to themselves in misery, but going to prepare a place for them; and that He would come again and

receive them to Himself; that where He was they might be—a far better thing than His being with them in the condition they were in. But meanwhile they knew where He was going, and the way. This resulted, as He explained to them, from their knowing the Father (to whom He was going), in knowing Him; for He was in the Father and the Father in Him. Thus, the great scene into which they were brought in the knowledge of the Person of the Lord Jesus, and His oneness with the Father—He in the Father and the Father in Him—was introduced; the scene of associated blessedness, into which the disciples were brought by the living knowledge which they had of Jesus, was declared; but the power in which it was known and enjoyed was not yet. But the knowledge of the Father through the Son, as the object of faith, was now declared, and the subsequent display of His glory in the world by reason of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus spoken of. The Lord, then, urging obedience to Him as the way of receiving blessing, takes the place of Mediator to obtain the Comforter for them—another Comforter, who should not leave them as He was doing, but was to abide with them for ever. This it was that was the power of their association with that of which they had heard before—the fellowship of the Father and the Son: first, of the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father; and then of them with both, in that it was by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, the Comforter now sent. Thus, though they could not come there, they saw Jesus, and He came to them, and with the Father made His mansion with them, till He came and took them into the mansions of His Father’s house.

This chapter 14, then, gives us the blessedness—the knowledge of the Father and the Son, by the Son; the

order of it, obedience to the Son; the power of it, the presence of the Comforter obtained through the mediation of Christ; but thereon (consequent on this presence) their knowledge that He was in the Father, they in Him and He in them—a blessing far beyond mere mediation, but consequent on the presence of the Spirit obtained by mediation. This also is added as a consequence: that the Father and the Son would come and make their abode with them. Still, in this chapter, whatever the effect of the mediation in their knowledge was, Christ does not go beyond the place of Mediator here, and therefore He tells them that the Father will send the Spirit in His name, and He (the Spirit) would recall all the Lord's words and instruction to them.

This chapter27 settles the ground of our present blessing on its basis, as to the place of the great objects of it—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is quite distinct from the subsequent chapters. The Person of the Lord as the object of faith, and His mediation, are spoken of in it. In chapter 15, we see that, even here below, Israel was not the true vine, but Christ. Of His life below they were to be the personal witnesses, for they had seen it: of His exaltation as Head on high, the Holy Ghost, sent down, thereon, by Him.28 Hence, in this passage, it is not the Father who is spoken of as sending the Holy Ghost in the Mediator's name, but the Lord Jesus who sends the Comforter from the Father, in connection with His glory, to testify of His glory, proceeding from the Father. It is to be remarked here, that while much of this latter part connects itself very closely in detail with the operations of the Holy Ghost, given in connection with the Lord Jesus, as calling God His God as well as ours; as the Man who, through grace, places Himself in

association with us in deed as in glory, yet He never, in this part of scripture, puts Himself out of the place of the Son paramount to all dispensation. Though He may take the lowest place in service and obedience, still it is on a principle paramount to all dispensation; or though the acts alluded to may have their place in connection with dispensed power (as the testimony of the Spirit will be found to have), yet still Christ holds the place here, in which He sends Him for that purpose, as paramount to the associations revealed by the Spirit, so sent, in those acts. He testifies that all that the Father has are His, as Son (though the acts by which He may do it may be the witness and consequence of a union with Christ), putting, by grace, ourselves and Him, not merely as sons before the Father individually, but as a body with its head before God.

This distinction will be found to be important; because the exercise of the dispensed power may depend on the condition of the body through which it is dispensed, the testimony of the sent Spirit to the glory of the Head who sent it never can.

And this is what is peculiar in the state of the Church. Its standing in Christ is above all dispensation; it is as sons along with the Father. Its manifestation in time may be by dispensed service; and here it partakes of all the responsibility of a dispensation on earth, as of deeds done in the body. Thus this gospel begins anterior to Genesis, which recounts the creation of the scene on which dispensations have been displayed: there, “In the beginning God created”; here, “In the beginning was the Word,” by whom all things were created. And the Church derives its existence and heavenly fulness from this sovereign source, the purpose of it being

effectuated consequent on the rejection of the Son of man, who would have been the righteous crown of all natural dispensation, but who, as risen, associates the redeemed Church with Himself, in a position paramount to it all, even His own association of sonship with the Father, in the privilege of the same love. And the Holy Ghost is here sent down of Him, the witness and power of this, and therefore in His own action paramount to all dispensation, but this only in the fact of His testimony to Him as so exalted; and this is the point John here takes up. Now the manifestation of His (Christ's) corporate headship to the Church (in which He says in our behalf, "My God," as He had said so in blessed title of righteousness when the Pattern of our place below) depends (and hence the present manifestation of the Church's glory as united to Him) on the obedience of the Church, and its suitableness to be made an instrument of display here—quite a distinct thing from the certainty of its union to, and the known and infallible glory of, its Head on high. This is a permanent revelation, not a responsible manifestation which partakes of the nature of a dispensation on earth, though the glory testified in it may be above all mere dispensation, for its Head and for itself. The joy, moreover, and sense of glory, may also depend on obedience and consistency, not the permanent fact that the Spirit testifies of His glory in the Church. Thus in John 15 it is written, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." There could clearly be no doubt of the Son's continuing in the Father's love; but the dispensation of this on earth hung on the obedience on earth—in Him, infallibly perfect, and therefore so its consequences—in us continual failure and its consequences also.

We have seen that the testimony of the Spirit is to the glory of Jesus Christ. Sent by the Father in the Son's name, He is the power of union and communion with both, associating the disciples in the fulness of blessing with both, and the presence of both manifested thereby to the believer. Sent by the Son— the exalted man—from the Father, He is the witness of His glory, and that all that the Father has is that holy but rejected One's also.

From the remarks I have already made, it will be seen that in John 16 the Spirit and His testimony, as there presented to us, are the indefeasible portion of the saints, the necessary testimony of the glory of Christ. It forms and sustains the Church, instead of depending on the Church's obedience, although the extent of the Church's enjoyment of the blessing may hang upon that obedience. He is the witness of the acceptance by the Father of the obedience of Christ, the perfect Son of God, and of the glory of His Person: thus establishing our present standing with God and our Father, and the place of the Church, owning this by His operation through grace, in contrast with the world which rejected Jesus as the Son of God.29 Hence, although the obedient disciples of the Lord Jesus were the instruments of the testimony, yet these are dropped as regards the testimony in the first instance; and the subject spoken of is the Comforter's testimony in a conviction of the world. He is present as the witness of the glory of Christ. That is, as the abiding power of the dispensation, the necessary character of the testimony of His very presence in the world was this—that He was come into condemnation of the whole world before God; for it had rejected the Son whom the Father had sent in love to it. He had said, "I have yet one Son"; and they had cast

Him out. Not merely Jews were in question, the world had done it: “He was despised and rejected of men.” Every grace of God, every righteousness of man, had been shewn in the Son of God: they had seen no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Nay more, as the Lord had distinctly shewn of the world, they had both seen and hated both Him and the Father—hated Him, blessed and perfect in His ways, without a cause.

It is on this solemn ground the Lord appeals to His Father in chapter 17. For the children, He had called for the holy Father’s care. As to the world, He appeals to His righteous Father’s judgment. He and the world now were entirely contrary, the one and the other. “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.” The presence of the Holy Ghost, sent down on the departure of the blessed Son of God, proved the world to be in irreparable sin in not having believed on Him. Nothing else was seen in the world. It lay in wickedness. Righteousness there was none. The only righteous One had been rejected and cast out and slain. God had not interfered to prevent it, nor Jesus resisted it; for deeper purposes were in accomplishment. But the evidence of sin was complete, irrefutable, and in itself in the world irreparable, in the accomplishment of its highest act—an act shewing hatred to the gracious presence of the Lord as well as contradictory of the righteousness of man before Him. Righteousness thereon was not looked for on earth in man; for sin had been proved. It was found only in the reception of the righteous Man, the Son of God, on the throne of God on high, and the condemnation of the world in seeing Him no more as so come. This also was testified by the

presence of the Holy Ghost sent down as a consequence of Jesus being there. The judgment (not now executed) was proved as against the world; because he who, in leading them against Christ, had been now demonstrated by the world to be its prince, was judged: the rest would follow in its day. Thus the presence of the Holy Ghost, convicting the world in these things, formed the testimony to Christ's glory here—His witness against the rejecting world.

To the disciples He was in blessing: in leading them into all truth—truth which they were unable to bear till He came— truth connected with Christ's glory, and the consequent breaking down of all they then knew and clung to; and not only leading them into all actual truth, but shewing them things to come— the portion of the Church—their portion, and God's future dealings with the world too. In this He would glorify Christ, taking of His and shewing it to them; and all that the Father had was His. This then the Holy Ghost did, as against the world and with the disciples, in the testimony of Christ's glory. If by grace a man received the testimony as against the world, and was subdued by it, and gave up the world and followed Christ with His disciples, he became the happy subject of that further service of the Holy Ghost, guiding, shewing, and glorifying Christ as the possessor of all the Father's. This is the office and service of the ever abiding Comforter (in whatever degree enjoyed) for the need of Christ's glory, till the Church be caught up to enjoy it there, and the world be actually judged; so that there shall be no need of testimony to either on these points, though the Holy Ghost may be to the Church the perpetual power of enjoyment in them and God's glory by them.

The presence of the Holy Ghost implies and involves this — the need, before God, of Christ's glory. In this He acts as a servant, as it were, not speaking of Himself, but what He hears, that speaking. Whatever the means instrumentally used, this is the subject and the power. The Holy Ghost is faithful in this service. He must be so; for Christ is to be glorified. And this secures the witness of Christ's glory, in whatever measure, according to its faithfulness; this is the Church's delight.

In all this the Holy Ghost is spoken of as being on earth, and being sent in lieu of Christ, who is gone on high, in distinctness of Person. And the glory of the Person of Christ, the great subject of the gospel, is still treated of in its aspect to the world which rejected Him, and the disciples who by grace received Him.

It appears to me that the communication of the Holy Ghost, as noticed in chapter 20 of this gospel, is (as to the place it holds there) of the character already spoken of. The whole of that chapter is a sort of picture of the dispensation in brief. It is not the Head and the body, but Christ in His personal title to send, as the Father sent Him; and giving them, in His risen power capacity to execute the mission, the abiding essential service of those now called to it, whatever measure of power it might be executed in. But Christ has not only gone to the Father, and been seated in the glory which He had with Him before the world was, and sent the Comforter, the witness of that glory, and the assurance to the saints of their sonship and fellowship with Him in it—'His Father and their Father'; but He takes a place as Head of the body (is its Lord indeed and source of supply, but also its Head), and to receive for it that which He sends forth and ministers to it. Christ has a double character

in this—Lord, and Head of His body united to Himself. But the Holy Ghost is, in all operations from creation downwards, the proper and immediate agent.

As Head of the body, the Lord Jesus displays the Church with Himself in a common glory; but in all this He is spoken of as the subject of God's power (see Eph. i: 19-23), and even where spoken of as Lord, still as a recipient, and as made so: though while this is true (because He humbled Himself and became a man, so that God also has highly exalted Him, that He should have a name which is above every name), every believer finds the very basis of His faith in that He is the true God and eternal life.

Philippians 2 is the full statement of this great truth—this blessed truth (having all its value from His being truly and essentially God), that He humbled Himself, that, as a man for our sakes, and as obedient to death, He might, as man, be exalted to the place of Lord, due to Him in glory. As my subject is the presence of the Holy Ghost, I do not remark farther on this passage, than that it seems to me a special contrast with the first Adam, who, being man, sought to exalt himself, and became disobedient unto death, or under death by disobedience: whereas the history of the Second Man is, that He made Himself of no reputation in becoming a man; and death to Him was the highest, fullest act of obedience and confidence then, as man, in His Father. And therefore God highly exalted Him; as sinful man was by his disobedience cast down, who sought to exalt himself and to be as Elohim. In this, then, we have the great doctrine of the exaltation of Jesus as the new man, the Second Adam, the Head of a new race—the depositary of power;

in whom man was, according to Psalm 8, “set over all things.”

The divine power in which He could sustain it, and the title of sonship in which He held it (for, indeed, He was the Creator), is not now my immediate subject. This point may be seen in Colossians 1, and the double headship resting on it, of creation and of the Church. At present it is the connection of this gift of the Holy Ghost that we have to speak of. It is not, perhaps I need hardly say, as if there were two Holy Ghosts, or the Holy Ghost given were not so given at once, whatever the results, but that the place and power of the Spirit, so given, are distinct. In the one He is the pledge and power of Sonship with the Father; in the other the effectuator of the Lordship of Christ, and the animating energy of every member according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and the power of unity to the whole body. We do, however, see that Christ risen, but not yet glorified, could communicate the Holy Spirit to them, though, till glorified, He could not send it down as witness of His Lordship. We have seen, that while (as individually blessing us) He fits the soul for the exercise of whatever gift is bestowed, He may bless in fulness of communion when no gift is in exercise—so that they are distinct; the former point, its connection with the apprehensions and enjoyment of the soul, being the difference of habitual Christian gift from the previous workings of the Holy Ghost: that, before it was put, “Thus saith the Lord,” and individually the prophet might find he ministered to another. In the exercise of it by a real Christian (though he might minister it without actually realizing it in communion at the moment), he ministers the things

which are his own, and known as such through the earnest of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

I would now trace some of the scriptures connected with this point. In this the Holy Ghost is a Spirit of power, not a Spirit of sonship (though it may be, the sons, having the Holy Ghost, have the power according to His will, by His presence working in them). This presence of the Holy Ghost is withal corporate presence, that is, His operation; though, as the body, it works by individuals, of course, but by them properly as members of the body, working in power, not in communion. Consequently, we see, if the gift was not available for the body (where the edification of the body was the intent of the gift), it was to be suppressed in its exercise, even though confessedly the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the particular gift of the Spirit was to be subjected to the title and rule of the Holy Ghost in the whole (as the member to the mind of the whole body), for the glory of Christ (though power was entrusted to the individual for that use of the whole body, for that glory), and the glory of the body with Him; for no power was rightly used out of the objects of the grace that gave it.

This train I have been led into by the first scripture I would refer to—Luke 24. There Christ is looked at as exalted in glory, and the world and all flesh alike here below. It is not there, “Go…disciple all the Gentiles,” as in Matthew; but repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem—merely the first place here below amongst them. This commission Peter was accomplishing in his early sermons in Acts, though Paul carried it out farther, as regards the Gentiles, not beginning however at Jerusalem. The word of the Lord in Luke was, first,” Ye are witnesses of these things “;

then, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in Jerusalem, till ye be endued with power from on high.” And afterwards He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

In the first sermon of Peter we have precisely this: “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” He then quotes the testimony of Psalm no, and says, “Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” The rejection of this testimony set aside the form of the commission in Matthew, in which Jerusalem was made the formal centre of organized evangelization according to her ancient standing, the Gentiles being treated as Gentiles. 30 But the character in which the gift of the Spirit is here presented, as given to believers and forming the Church, is very distinct. Jesus sends the promise of the Father. It is the same great common truth. But in what character is it sent? It is to endue with power from on high. It displays itself in exhibition in the first instance to the world, not in communion of sons with the Father, though, of course, the very same and only Holy Ghost which was the power of this. Its primary testimony is to the Lordship of Christ.

We have seen the identity of the expressions in Luke and Acts (see Luke 24:48, 49; Acts 2:32-36): let us observe the terms in which the Spirit, by the apostle, bears witness to Jesus.

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and sign’s, which God did by Him… This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear… Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Now, in the whole of this passage, it is clear that our blessed and adorable Lord, who had humbled Himself to become so, as we have seen from Philippians, is spoken of as man. As man He is made Lord and Christ. This we shall see to be directly connected with consequent operation and power of the Spirit, but yet not the whole of the principles connected with it. The corporate character of the scene of its operations was not yet developed. We have already, then, this first point distinctly brought out: the testimony through the medium of the disciples, as the Spirit gave them utterance, to the Lordship of Christ as man before the world. But whatever the rumour occasioned by the facts, the word of preaching to the Jews is all of which the effect is related. They were to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise was to them and their children, and to all afar off, even as many as the Lord their God should call. Whoever, then, received the word gladly was baptized, and there were added about three thousand souls. The assembly was now formed, and the Lord added to it daily such as should be saved.

The testimony had been given to the world, beginning at Jerusalem, by these witnesses chosen of God, to the Lordship of the man Christ Jesus. The Church had been formed by it, and then the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved—the remnant of Israel.

In this we see the operation of the Spirit, founded on the exaltation and Lordship of Christ, by chosen witnesses; but antecedent to the Churchy and forming it. Of this character is all preaching.

When the assembly is gathered, then the Lord adds to it daily such as should be saved. The highest privileges of the believer are then known, in the revealed portion of the believer brought home to his new man by the Spirit of adoption—the Holy Ghost given to him, the seal of the faith wrought in his heart by God.

The work of the Holy Ghost is then pursued in abundant testimony of Christ's power, proposing (Acts 3) the return of Jesus and the times of refreshing on the repentance of Israel, the opposition and rejection of the testimony by the rulers, the disciples' confidence—His power, and blessing, and judgment within the Church—the determined opposition and rejection of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, and constant testimony thereto of the apostles as His witnesses; as is also, say they, the Holy Ghost which is given to them that obey Him. We have then (Acts 6), the exhibition of the energy of the Holy Ghost providing for the circumstances even of partial failure in the Church. Then, on the renewed testimony, in His own prerogative power in Stephen "full of the Holy Ghost," the judgment of the Jews' rejection (nationally) of the Spirit is pronounced, and the Jewish history closed with that

which introduced the Church (as so witnessing) into heaven, on its rejection, as full of the Spirit, in Jerusalem the centre of God's earthly system; and actually the spirit of the saint in the intermediate state there. "They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; and with intercession for the unhappy people, as Jesus on His rejection, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Thus the Spirit, so acting, recognized the Lord Jesus; as Jesus, as the Son, had commended Himself—His spirit—on His rejection, to the Father.

This broke up, as has been frequently observed by those familiar with these truths, the earthly scheme and centre of the Church. Matthew's commission, as has been remarked, in its original form dropped; for the Jewish people, by their rulers, having nationally rejected the testimony by the Spirit to the exaltation of Christ, as they had rejected the Son of God in His humiliation come amongst them as Messiah, Jerusalem ceased to be the centre from which the gathering power thereto was to flow.

Thereupon accordingly, the Church was scattered, except the apostles. I would remark, in passing, on the very distinct manner in which the personal presence of the Holy Ghost is presented to us in all this history. Ananias lies to the Holy Ghost—tempts the Spirit. The apostles were witnesses of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and so also was the Holy Ghost which was given to them that obey Him. "Filled with the Holy Ghost," as the Lord had promised, was the power and source of their speech, as we see on every occasion. Thus the Holy Ghost, as that other Comforter present with them personally, was clearly before their minds. As

the Son had been with them once, so, according to promise, the Holy Ghost was with them now. The Son had brought the love of the Father (now indeed yet more clearly apprehended by the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of adoption), and the Spirit now fully revealed to them the Lordship of the man, Jesus, who had been slain and rejected by the world.

But another great framework and form of the dispensation was now to be introduced. Saul, through the instrumentahty of a simple disciple, Ananias, receives the Holy Ghost on his conversion, and begins to testify of Christ at Damascus. The Gentiles then receive the Holy Ghost, and are admitted through the instrumentahty of Peter. Acts n, 12, and 13 will distinctly shew what prominency this presence and power of the Holy Ghost held. There is, in addition, the service of angels, in the apostle of the circumcision; but the gift of the Holy Ghost is just the sign of acceptance.

But in the calling and conversion of Saul a new and blessed principle was presented, as identified with that to his mind: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” In a word, the unity and identity of the Church with Christ, of which the apostle thus called—irregularly called, as one born out of due time—became the eminent witness and teacher. Indeed, though there may be kindred truths in the other epistolary writings, we never definitely read of “his body, the Church,” save in those of Paul. He seems specially to call it his gospel. In this (the power, in whatever form, of the glory of Christ, the knowledge of, or unity with, Him) the Holy Ghost is found to operate and unfold itself. Not clearly quitting the ground of the Lordship of Christ, but withal working as the power of unity in the whole body and diversity of operation in the

particular members. In each, at the same time (for this highest and most blessed character of it, I need hardly say, was not lost), “the Spirit of adoption crying, Abba, Father”; but this was a distinct individual operation, though of the same Spirit—a joy true to the individual saint, were there but one, though enhanced doubtless by communion, and which contemplated our joy with the Father, as sons along with the blessed Son of God, Jesus, the Firstborn among many brethren.

The corporate witness of His Lordship and glory, and of the union of the Church with Him as Head over all things, is a distinct subject. The ground of this in union, as well as the Church’s blessing and portion by virtue of that union, is specially found in the Ephesians, and is there therefore looked at as regards the blessing and profit of the Church. Its administration, and, therefore, the general order of it in its principles and exhibition before the world, is found in Corinthians, the epistle which affords the apostolic directions for the management of the Church in its internal economy here below.

But before I enter on the formal economy of the Spirit, as presented in these chapters, I would turn to the doctrine of the word relating to it, as the ordinary portion of the Church in general, as there are one or two passages of scripture which speak definitely of it in this light. The resurrection had marked out Jesus to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness. He might be of the seed of David according to the flesh, but He was the Son of God according to entirely another life, spirit, and energy. Of this His resurrection was at once the proof and the glorious character; for it was triumph over death, of which, according to that life and holiness

which was in Him, it was not possible (though He might imputatively take sin) that He could be holden. In this resurrection and power of accomplished and triumphant liberty—liberty of perfectness and sanctification of man to God in a new state of fife, in which man had never been—He became the Head of a new family, the Firstborn from the dead, the Head of the body, the Church, having in all things the pre-eminence, and the Son, taking His place now, as such, in resurrection. Thus our justification became in fact identified with our position as sons, and as risen (i.e., with holiness, according to its character in resurrection) before God as children. Therefore it was that, if the apostle had known Christ Jesus after the flesh, henceforth he knew Him no more; for he now knew Him in this character of resurrection, the Head of the new creation—the new family of God—the Second Man, and so to us the quickening Spirit, when our living souls had spiritually died in the first Adam in sin—the head of a new family of men, with whom, in the close, the tabernacle of God should be.

The justification of the Church having been first reasoned out by the Spirit, the apostle turns to this: first, as regards death and resurrection, in Romans 6; then, as regards the law, chap. 7; i.e., first, “nature “or “the flesh “in se, then the operation of the law on the question into which spiritual understanding and a new will brought the conscience; and in chapter 8 he takes up the presence of the Spirit in moral operation and witness. Having stated the source of this mighty change and holy liberty, in “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus “(the breath of life to our souls being the very same power in which Christ was raised from the dead,

and our partaking in all the consequences of that resurrection; God having done what the law could not do, i.e., condemned sin in the flesh, and that in atonement, in grace to us), the apostle proceeds to instruct us what the power and the character of the Spirit in this new nature is.

It is the Spirit of God, as contrasted with man in the flesh. It is the Spirit of Christ, in respect of the form and character of this new man. It is the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead, according to the power and energy in which it works full deliverance in result. Thus its moral character and operation were unfolded, as a Spirit of power and deliverance and character in us, in answer to the question, Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?

But there was also the doctrine of the relationship which we have in the new man, as well as moral character and power. As many as are led of it are sons; sons, and therefore "heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." And here the groaning is not the question of what we are as to God's judgment of evil in us, a spirit of bondage to fear; but our own judgment of it in its effects because we are sons, and are certain that we are, and know that we are heirs. We take up the groaning of the whole creation, of which we are part, as in the body, and express it to God in sympathy, in the sense of the blessedness of the glorious inheritance when the creation shall be delivered; suffering with Christ in the present sorrow by His Spirit, and express it in the Spirit of God, even though we have no intelligence to ask for any actual remedy. In this, then, the Spirit has a double office: the witness with us, for joy, that we are

sons and heirs, and helping us in the infirmities lying on creation and on us in the body; and when He, thus acting in us in sympathy, thus groans in us expressive of the sorrow, He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for us according to God.

The epistle to the Galatians with less fulness teaches us the same truth, securing the foundation on which it rests. But we see, thus far, the sons joint-heirs—joint-heirs with Christ, and the Spirit at once the seal of the redemption which is accomplished, by which they have it; the witness of sonship in them, and the earnest of the inheritance which they have with Christ: known by the revelation of the glory of Christ and the things to come connected with His Person. Thus we have it expressed in Ephesians i:2-14.

There is another very interesting passage as instruction upon this point (2 Cor. 1:20, 22), “All the promises” belonging to Christ as heir. “All God’s promises are in Christ yea, and in Christ Amen, unto the glory of God by us” The promises are of God, and in Christ. God then establishes us in Christ, and then, for our knowledge and assurance and enjoyment, we are anointed, sealed, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts; knowing it by the anointing, as in 1 John 2:29; sealed, as in Ephesians 1; and having the earnest in the heart so as to anticipatively enjoy the blessing known, and for which we are sealed.

Having spoken on this passage in a previous paper, I do not enlarge on it. But there is another collateral passage which I would not pass by, relative to the knowledge, communication, and reception of the revelations of the

Spirit; shewing our entire dependence on that blessed Comforter and power of God for all knowledge of these things (1 Cor. 2): “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” Man’s heart never conceived them, but God revealed them to His saints by His Spirit. They had received the Spirit which was of God, that they might know. They spoke by words which the Holy Ghost taught, communicating, as I should translate it, spiritual things by a spiritual medium; and they were, moreover, spiritually discerned: they were known, communicated, and received by the Spirit.

Having noticed these collateral passages, I pass on to the point of corporate operation of the Holy Ghost in the union of the body. The testimony to the Lordship of Christ, and that character of His exaltation, we have already seen in the addresses of Peter to Israel. This, of course, is never lost: but we have seen the additional truth of the identity of Christ and the Church—the very basis of Paul’s special ministry, brought out in the question to the apostle, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Just as the sin of the first Adam was brought out by the terrible question, “Where art thou?” It is upon this that the grace of the ministration of the Spirit now was to have its course. The Spirit had borne witness by certain disciples; and the Church thereby had been gathered. The Church now was to be the vehicle for the testimony and witness of the Spirit corporately. The distinct revelation of this position of the Church, and its establishment in it, in the intelligence and actuality of its standing, began by the scattering of the assembly at

Jerusalem, and by the apostle (having been called and enabled by the Lord, and having preached at once, and thus laid by in a measure for a time) recommencing the work from Antioch as a centre, whence he was separated to the work to which Christ had called him, not by the appointment of Jesus after the flesh, but by the authoritative direction of the Holy Ghost in the disciples. Paul had no part in the testimony mentioned in John 15:27. It was only the Holy Ghost's testimony, and seeing the glory of Christ, and hearing the words of His mouth. Hence it was not a testimony to the exaltation and Lordship of Him whose companions they had been on earth (that God had exalted Him to be Lord and Christ there); but starting from the point of His Lordship seen in glory, that He was the Son of God, and a testimony, and of course owning it, to the union of the whole body, Jew and Gentile, with Him so exalted to God's right hand. Hence the operations of the Holy Ghost—always following the testimony concerning Christ, while still declaring and subservient to His Lordship— wrought in the unity of the whole body according to the operations of God.

Hence we read in 1 Corinthians 12, "Concerning spiritual things, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say, Lord Jesus (or, call Jesus Lord) but by the Holy Ghost." That is, whoever does so (i.e., in Spirit) does so by the Holy Ghost; for it was the Holy Spirit that testified that Jesus was Lord, not an evil one.

There were, along with this testimony, “diversities of gifts,” yet not many spirits, “but the same Spirit. And there were differences of administrations [ministries], but the same Lord [not ‘lords many’—Jesus was Lord]; and diversities of operations, but the same God [for the operations were truly divine] that worketh all in all”; there were not “gods many”: all were the operation of the one true God.

It is not the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) which is here presented to us, though from other scriptures we may know its connection with it, but God, the Lord, and the Spirit, working in the Church upon earth; though, lest we should suppose He was not God, it is afterwards said, “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

We have here, then, these two points: the Lordship of Christy and that taking its place as to the services of which the gifts were the power; and the unity of the whole body, in which, as by its members, the Spirit wrought according to their diverse appropriate functions. The operation being all the while God’s operation, but ordered according to the functions of the body, and the purport of the whole; for the members’ service was for the good of the whole body.

From this, I think, we distinctly learn the order of the ministration of the Holy Ghost, as thus presented to us.

What additional instruction the word may give us, we shall afterwards see.

First, there was the primary testimony that Christ was Lord—more correctly, that Jesus was Lord. That formed the great basic truth. All was subservient to this. The Holy Ghost as in operation, though supreme to distribute, was subservient to this. This was the great testimony He blessedly rendered. It is this, and not as touching the question of His divinity, makes the apostle say, “To us there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.”

He bore it in gracious faithfulness now, as hereafter every tongue shall be obliged to confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Upon this hangs consequently the responsibility of every gift. We are servants by them to the Lord Christ. “Ye serve the Lord Christ.” “Such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies.” “Paul the servant of Jesus Christ” is the well known glory and faithfulness of the apostle. It was to “the Lord, the righteous Judge,” he looked. Thrice he besought “the Lord “that his thorn in the flesh might be removed. “He that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.”

These gifts of the Spirit, then, set them in ministries to the Lord, in which they were individually responsible for their exercise to Christ—talents with which they were to trade; but then they were responsible to exercise them within the body, according to the order in which they were set in the body, and in subjection to the mind of the Lord the Head of the body. This preserved entire the full personal responsibility and liberty; for no one was Lord but one, not even an apostle, and yet mutual

dependence, healthful for all, even for an apostle; for the Lord's authority was as great over the foot or over the hand, and as exclusive, as over the apostle himself. Nor would an apostle, having still the flesh to contend with, keep his place unless this were carefully held. Though by pre-eminence of gift he might guide, lead, direct, and, by revelation from the Lord, give a commandment to the Church, he could not in the smallest degree or tittle touch the direct responsibility of the least member to Christ the Lord Himself; he would have been setting up himself as the Vine, as lord over God's heritage, had he done so. The apostles were alone as helpers of joy, and that by authority entrusted for edification, but never as lords over their faith. Authority, however, as gift from the Lord, increased responsibility; but of this more hereafter. If he, the apostle, counselled any member by the Spirit, woe be to that member if his counsel be despised. Of course, if he revealed a commandment of the Lord, the believer became directly responsible to the Lord for obedience to that commandment. And though he specially, and the whole Church, might judge by the Spirit, still it was always with this remembrance —"another man's servant."

But, it must be distinctly remembered, this was not for private right or title in an individual. I recognise no such thing as right in an individual. Right, in the human sense of it, is some title to exercise his own will in man, unimpeded by the interference of another. Now Christianity entirely sets this aside. It may be very speciously maintained by dwelling only on the latter half of the definition, because grace does give a title against the interference of another; but that title is in and by virtue of responsibility to God. No man has a right to

interfere with anything in which I am responsible to God. But the light which Christianity sheds on this is, not my meddling with the will of that other, but my obligation to do the will of God at all cost: “We ought to obey God rather than man.” And having first done the will of God, then to surfer for it; for it is better, if the will of God be so, to suffer for welldoing than for evildoing, for Christ, in the best sense, has once suffered for sins. If we do well, suffer for it, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. But this right in the individual, in the human and common force of it, Christianity cuts up by the root, because it pronounces the human will to be all wrong, and the assertion of its exercise to be the principle of sin; so that we “are sanctified unto obedience” as unto “the blood of sprinkling.” Thus the idea of all having a right to speak in the Church could never enter into the Christian mind. It has no place in the scheme of Christianity, which begins its moral existence by the breaking down the human will as evil. The Holy Spirit has the right, which He exercises sovereignly, of distributing “to every man severally as he will”; and hence responsibility subject to the purpose of the Holy Ghost in all. For the manifestation of the Spirit (which gifts are—they are not the Holy Spirit itself) is given to every man to profit withal. There is purpose in it, to which the power of the Holy Ghost is to direct the use of these gifts for the good of all, as this epistle clearly shews us. The gifts to men or in man (both are used; one refers to Christ, the other to those to whom Christ gives them) are not the Holy Ghost, though they be by the Holy Ghost, and hence are guided by the mind of Christ, for the accomplishment of which they are given. Thus, to display the gift of tongues, or to use it where there were none to whom they applied, is

described by the apostle to be the folly of childhood: they were given to profit withal. So also the spirits of the prophets—the highest desirable gift—were subject to the prophets. The not seeing this, and confounding these gifts of the Spirit in man with the Holy Ghost Himself, has led to much and mischievous confusion. And it has been thought impossible that they should ever be restrained, or subjected to even apostolic rule, turning, as every departure from scripture does, to the licence of the flesh and human will, or the even worse delusion of the enemy.

The Holy Ghost Himself, dwelling in the individual, and especially also in the Church as such, guides, directs, and orders by the word the use of these manifestations of His power in man, as He does everything else, I repeat, by the word; just as the conduct of one led of the Spirit is ordered and guided by the word, the power of the same Spirit directing and applying it. It is this that maintains responsibility, whatever the power given, and, by that, unity, through the Holy Ghost, in the whole body; for, power being given, its exercise would be by man's will else, or it would not be in man at all. This was true in the highest instance where error or failure could not be. When the Son of God in infinite grace and counsel of wisdom became a man, it was not to destroy responsibility, but to fulfil it all in absolute abstract perfection. "He became obedient." Even in working miracles He would not depart from this. He would not make stones bread without God His Father's will. It was precisely to this the enemy (Satan) sought to lead Him—to what might be called the innocent exercise of will, and using His power for this. But He was perfect, and the enemy confounded. He was content to do God's will.

He kept His commandments, and abode in His love. And if therein He, a divine Person, could shew that He loved the Father, and in His suffering there was a therefore that the Father loved Him, still He blessedly adds, and this was His perfectness, “And as my Father hath given me commandment, so I do.” And thus closed His blessed and perfect career, with this true word to the Father, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” Blessed Jesus! justly art thou glorified in all things—our Lord!

This difference now however exists, that Jesus having taken the place of power—“all power given to him in heaven and in earth”—His place is not merely the manifestation of perfect obedience in self-humiliation, but the manifestation of exaltation and power. But this, while it has altered the position of Jesus, and the place of His disciples, as vessels of this power, in the testimony of the Spirit of God, has in no way touched the principle of their responsibility, though its sphere may be enlarged by it; nor has it let in the principle of human will in the smallest degree, because power has been increased; but it has merely introduced the principle of that responsibility into the exercise of the power entrusted, whatever it may be, and connected it with the Lordship of Christ, whose servants they are in it, that they may minister it to His glory, in love and testimony to the world, and in the edification of the Church. And the word affords the rule for the order of its exercise, as of all things else.

It is a part of this responsibility and reference to the Head of the Church) not to “quench the Spirit” nor “despise prophesyings,” be they the simplest or by the

humblest in the Church as to mere circumstance, if God be pleased to use them.

The title and the right are God's, proving them divine, and therefore good: the responsibility man's, and the gift only the occasion of responsibility in that; the Lord Christ being He under whom it was exercised; and by that responsibility necessarily independent of others; for no man could serve two masters; but within the Church exercised according to the mind of Christ, of which the Spirit is the power in the Church, and the written word the guide and standard. It is in this last point the Scriptures hold a place, which in many respects the apostles held, that is, of revealing the mind of Christ. They cannot have in themselves the place of power, but they do contain the wisdom of God, and, as to this in the New Testament, the mind of Christ. We must distinguish this point of revelation. The other point of apostolic office may be spoken of hereafter.

There are some other points to be noted in this 1 Corinthians 12.

Having spoken of the Spirit, and the Lord, and God; the first two shewing the relationship and power of this service, the last making us understand that it was withal truly God's power and working; and then in the same language (that the divinity of the Spirit might be recognized, though in a certain sense taking the place of service, as acting in the subject instrument of Christ's Lordship) ascribed the power and working to the Spirit: having cleared this point, the apostle takes up the subject in connection with the unity of the body. And here Christ, at least the body of Christ, becomes the subject of divine operations: first is rather the fruit of

those operations; for we are by one Spirit baptized into one body—thus is Christ. And the whole is spoken of as the subject of divine counsel; Christ only being the Head, and we in mutual dependence; but the whole sphere is looked at as a subject-scene of operations. It is not merely now the Holy Ghost bearing witness by which the world was convicted, or individuals convinced, and the Church gathered; but “now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” “God hath tempered the body together.” “God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles,” etc. They were “the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

We have thus the operations of the Spirit of God formally established in the corporate unity of the body, in the various gifts of the different members, of which the Spirit itself formed the unity and the power; subservient to the lordship of Christ, and therefore directing the Church by His mind, whether for its own edification in love or testimony to the world; God setting the members of this body as it pleased Him.

The control of the Spirit, as communicating the mind of Christ, over the exercise of these entrusted powers is next brought forward—after stating the superior excellence of love to any gift. Love was, and witnessed, God, and was the bond of perfectness in essential blessing. These, the testimony of power; prevailing indeed over evil, but still ministered in the midst of it, and not to continue, therefore, but to pass away or cease. The use of these for the purpose of love thus became the true test of grace and the mind of Christ in using them; otherwise, turned into personal display. The edifying of the Church was to be the rule of all used

there, and no individual title, for they were to follow the mind of Christ.

This also gave rise to a distinction in the gifts, of those suited to the world, and those meant for the profit of the incumbent of the Church. Thus “tongues “were a sign to unbelievers, not to the Church; this was their use. One gifted with tongues was not therefore to speak in them, unless there was an interpreter; for the Church would not be edified: it would by the subject matter, if there was an interpreter. So “signs,” or “miracles,” confirmed the word.

The gift of tongues was peculiar and characteristically evangelical; overreaching the consequences of man’s sin and judgment in Babel, and setting aside manifestly the confining the testimony of God to the Jewish people; constituting an active ministry towards those without, which was distinctively essential to Christianity. It thus became, distinctively, manifestative of the Holy Ghost, on the Jews, and on the Gentiles (the hundred and twenty and Cornelius), as sent down, the witness of this grace, and of glory and headship in Christ. Miracles had been wrought among the Jews; even there, however, it was amongst those departed from the covenant, or when at first that national system was established. In Judea the prophets recalled to the law, and let their predictions verify themselves or be owned by faith. Their summons to the law required no verification; its obligation was acknowledged. But tongues were properly applicable to the Christian dispensation as acting on the world, and therefore because the characteristic manifestation of the Holy Ghost sent down as acting before the world that needed this.

“Tongues, miracles, healings,” then, might be exercised by those gifted thereto in the Church, but they were exercised as the witness of the beneficence of Christ’s Lordship to the world, and not towards the Church already alive in heaven by the deeper quickening power of that beneficence. This was their general character. The proper character of the Church’s blessing was edification: “Let all things be done unto edifying”; or, as expressed in the Ephesians, “the edifying of itself in love.”

This appears to me the true distinction: signs too to the world, and edification to the Church; not that usually made between miraculous, and not miraculous; as if God gave no positive gifts to the Church now, and as if miraculous were synonymous with supernatural, and that the Holy Ghost had ceased to act; and thus human powers are practically referred to as the sole agent in the Church. If miraculous be spoken of as meaning those which were signs to the world, I have no objection, provided the direct power and gift of the Holy Ghost be not set aside in those which are not for signs but for edifying: otherwise great dishonour is done to the Holy Ghost.

There is this distinction given us in these gifts by the fact of some being for signs, some for edifying: the former are to act on the senses and mind as applicable to those without; the latter on conscience and spiritual understanding, and consequently the subject of intelligent judgment and reception. This remark is of importance. The Spirit of God acting in the force of responsibility in us is always paramount to any means of power and gift—even if real; for, thereby the authority of God is owned and set up over ourselves. The true use of

gift in the Church is just to enforce this: wherever it departs from this it is clearly false in principle. “I must judge them which say they are apostles”— “let the rest judge”— “the spiritual man judgeth all things.” Self-will, which refuses the enforcement of responsibility by gift, or which would use gift to exalt itself, instead of enforcing it, are alike the flesh set on by Satan to its own lawlessness. There is no remedy for this but grace, and the power and presence of the Holy Ghost condemning and mortifying the flesh in each. The want of this is recognized as possible, and to come, by the apostle: “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”

I should also remark, that the Holy Ghost teaches us here that while He distributes to every man severally as He will, and uses whom He will, so that all openness is to be maintained for His operations, there are distinct permanent gifts whereby men are constituted teachers, prophets, or the like, though their teaching and prophesying may still be in constant dependence on the action of the Holy Ghost Himself. These directions, in fine, as to tongues and interpretations—the number and manner of prophets speaking—women speaking—shew the distinct control of the Holy Ghost Himself (thus is its order expressed in the word) over the exercise of all entrusted gifts in the Church, where the Holy Ghost habitually dwelt and guided for the edifying of all. Liberty and guidance is characteristic of Christianity, and is distinctive of power making willing, and the wisdom of God for us.

This testimony to the world, and edifying of the Church, involves also another consideration, besides the signs

wrought by the Church before the world—a principle of service a little modified by the position of the apostle Paul—that the operation of the Spirit in gift, though working in and by, precedes the formation of, the Church. Gift of evangelizing, though it be in a member of the Church, yet is clearly antecedent in its own character to the existence of the Church; for it is by that the Church is gathered.

The highest form of this was shewn in the apostles at Jerusalem, as we have already seen. And though the evangelist may go forth from the Church, and be aided by the Church, it is a gift exercised not towards the Church, or to its conscience, and of which the Church, therefore, cannot be properly cognizable. It must be exercised on the possession of the gift, and bears its evidence in its fruits, by acting in the primary work of God's Spirit on the conscience of the unconverted; judging it, not judged by it; coming in the grace and truth of Jesus to it. Other gifts, as prophesying, may convince others in conscience, but its exercise is in the Church, and the Church, having a conscience taught to the Spirit, is bound—it may be through other prophets efficiently, but is bound—to judge; but the evangelist is to the world, and there is no competency of judgment, though there may be holy counsel and advice, as from the Lord. As aiding in grace, temporally, the Church, or rather each individual in it—be it a woman—is bound to have no fellowship with doctrine not according to the word; and the Church should take all needful notice of this, and not be partakers of this sin. The same would apply as to any evil practice; but the exercise of the gift, as such, in its nature, though it flow from the midst of the Church, goes forth out of it, and, not referring to its

conscience, does not raise a throne of judgment there, which responsibility to God does, in what is addressed to the Church. The evangelist is responsible to God for the exercise of his gift towards those without, and becomes manifest in their consciences in the sight of God.

The highest form of this was the apostles' on the day of Pentecost. It was a direct authoritative address, as the apostles of Jesus, appointed by Him, and ratified in power by the Holy Ghost to the world, thereby forming the Church, and becoming, in a certain subordinate sense, heads of the Church, to guide, regulate, order, and direct those whom they so gathered, which gave the subsequent character to apostolic office.

Thus the evangelist becomes, in a certain sense, independent of the Church, though the man be always subject to it; and though the ministry of evangelization be in the Church, yet the Church is not properly missionary, nor the manager of missions. It is "a city set on a hill," formed by missions from God.

The sense of this position of the evangelist I believe to be most healthful to the Church, keeping it in its place and from assuming the place of God as if it were the sender. It is gathered, and does not send: God sends; though, in love, those whom He sends may go forth from its bosom. This was clear in the first apostles: "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you," was the Lord's word to them.

But this was true of ministers of this character, inferior in rank to the apostles, and of the whole body when under this character—a character assumedly this, as "scattered," not "gathered"; as "going," not "sending." They that were scattered abroad went everywhere

preaching the word, and the hand of the Lord was with them, and many believed. Nay, before this, Stephen (of whom we may perhaps say, he had gotten to himself a good degree and great boldness in Christ Jesus), full of the Holy Ghost, was mighty in the word. Philip in like manner was blessed in Samaria, which, when the apostles heard, they sent Peter and John to confirm the work; but the work was done before they even heard of it.

This is the character then attached to evangelizing in the word. The weakening of it in individual energy will always weaken that and the Church too; for God will be independent of man, though he cannot be of Him, nor of his neighbour in love.

I said this was a little modified in Paul, yet withal clearly sustained in principle. But he went out as one born out of due time—after the body was formed, in a certain sense. This, therefore, was recognized; not in sending him, but in his going forth from it and returning to it, whence he had been commended to the grace of God.

The positive independence of his mission he is most careful to assert. “It was not of man, nor by man.” Immediately Christ was revealed in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles, he conferred not with flesh and blood, but straightway preached Him in the synagogues. Thus the character of this ministry was fully maintained.

But after a lapse of time Paul comes from Tarsus, brought to Antioch, and there for a year assembles himself with the Christian congregation, and teaches much people; and then “the Holy Ghost,” certain prophets being there, while they fasted and prayed,

“said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Thus, while directly sent of the Holy Ghost, they went in obedience to Him, not to the Church; they went from the bosom of the Church, commended of them to the grace of God for the work whereunto He had called them, and returned to the bosom of the Church. Not returning any intermediate reports indeed as responsible to them, for the true apostolic office would thereby have been detracted from; but communicating for the joy of all what God had done through them. Thus, though it was not a gift exercised in ministry in the Church, its union with the Church was maintained, and the comfort of all sustained therein. The apostle became—authoritatively sent amongst those whom he had himself thus gathered—the apostle of the Gentiles.

I have said thus much of evangelization, because, though not a sign to the world, but a ministry flowing in the Church, it was still towards the world, and came in a special place in the distinction of gifts as for the world or the Church. It was, if I may so call it, a moral gift, i.e., a gift acting on conscience, but not as within, but as that of the natural man. It is not actually mentioned in the gifts God has set in the Church. It is amongst the gifts which Christ conferred, on ascending up on high, for profit, and the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ; as are pastors also; for the special subject of that epistle (Ephesians) is the love towards and the blessedness of the body in its union with Christ, and consequent unity. Having completely redeemed it, and filled all things, it being His fulness, He ministers from on high the gifts necessary for its advancement in grace, security from being deceived and led astray, and

its self-edifying till it grows up into Him. This was not what the Church was to the world in display of Him, but what it was to and for Himself; though in that, in the number who had that gift, the evangelizing minister of His love, as a helpmeet for Him in grace.

This is the real difference of this epistle to the Ephesians and that to the Corinthians. There the Spirit is looked at as present, and operating in the body generally, in the power of God, “as God hath set in the Church” —witness of, and subservient to, the Lordship of Christ, and therefore including that in which it was the witness of this to the world; and therefore the gift in its exercise is dependent in many respects on the competency of the Church by its state to stand as a witness, or the wisdom of God in so using it. Here (in the Ephesians) the state of the Church is not adverted to. It is not its internal administration that is the subject, but Christ’s own love to His own body, His spouse; one he cherished and nourished as His own flesh, and thus cherished and nourished for Himself. Hence we have Christ, who loved the Church, viewed as ascending up on high and filling all things, giving the gifts; and it is said—not the Spirit works as He will in power, but (while the same unity is spoken of, though more of blessing than of membership) “to every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” This, then, is not the witness of the power of God above the flesh and its ruin, and the Lordship of Christ; but of the love of Christ and the ministration of that, and of the counsels of God, as to the place He has given the Church with Christ; it had, therefore, a more permanent character; for Christ’s love to the Church is permanent, not resting on the suitableness of the medium to display power, but on the

Church's own need of that gracious and tender love. This love, therefore, we may reckon upon.31 I do not say that our faults may not hinder the manifestation of the love in plain and happy favour. Surely they may; still it is always in exercise.

Perhaps it may be said that the evil state of the Corinthian Church shews it was not a ministration of gift dependent in any way on that state; for these, so evil, came "behind in no gift."

It shews, indeed, that our patient God does not withdraw the honour conferred by His goodness at once on shortcoming; but the principle is exactly shewn by it. The Church, still in unity, though having failed in practice, is corrected by the apostle in all points, shewing the importance of the apostolic energy which still sustained it, that its safeguard was not mere primary position; but while it held its place, though falling into evil, it could be restored by that and all go right—Satan not be allowed to get advantage after all. But still this was just the evidence that the state and administration of the Church was in question, not the self-moved tender love of Christ to it, caring for it as His spouse; it stands in Corinth as the responsible witness of His glory, not the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. In Ephesians it is the blessed and holy privilege of grace, not the condition of the Church itself, which is in question as the ground and theatre of the display of Christ towards the world. It is what Christ is towards the Church, not what the Church is for Him, or what God has set it in its Head and body, towards the world around it. It is "till we all come." Hence, as the special personal care and love of Christ for the Church, it is not "the Comforter whom the Father will send in my

name”—nor, “whom I will send unto you from the Father”—nor even members which God has set in the body subservient to the Lordship of Christ; but gifts which He, ascending up on high, has given, on leading the adverse powers captive. He who fills all things has given these the tokens of the nearness of His love—“that he might fill all things,” and “he gave.”

This, then, is the portion of the Church in Christ’s love as caring for it, in the midst of His filling all things—as His body, the place of the manifestation of supreme grace; that which is given to the Church, not for His display of Lordship to the world, but the link of the Church as associated with Him, and to lift it up into heavenly places and to form it in spirit into all His fulness; preserving it from being frittered away in mind into various and strange doctrines, and ministering to its direct growth into the heavenly character and fulness of Christ. This is the character of these gifts here—the link and association with the heavenly fulness of Christ.

The Church, is “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” But He is the Head of the body also as exalted over all things to it. The Anointed One is set in this place that He may, by immediate communion and gift to it, according to this anointing, associate it through the ministration of these gifts as His body into all this fulness. It is here, not merely the headship over all things to it, but the entrance into the understanding of His fulness as filling all things, as descended into death and ascended on high above all; and by the communication of the gifts as the Anointed, the “Christ”—then entering into intelligently and spiritually as—though subordinately, yet really—associated and brought up into this fulness. This is the portion of the Church. It is a step above and

more intimate than the witness, or even partaking, of Lordship, though the sphere in which that is held. For indeed this fulness in Christ involves divinity, though fellowship with it be communicated by the Anointed Man, or, at least, the ministration of that fulness in gift.

He “filleth all in all,” and the Church is “His fullness”; but then this is spoken of One whom God—” the God of our Lord Jesus Christ”—has raised from the dead; and this is just the connection of the Church with it. He is in the Father— necessarily, therefore intrinsically, divine; we are in Him, and He is in us. All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him; as afterwards stated as to the fact: “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”; and we are “filled full” in Him.

But in the passage immediately preceding the one we are upon in Ephesians (that in the end of chapter 3) this is pursued more directly as to the power in us; because the Colossians treats more of the fulness of the Head for the Church; this of the Church as the fulness of Him that filleth all in all—the corporate fulness, as His body, of Him that is Head over and fills all things. We read of “strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man —able to comprehend the length and breadth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that we may be filled with [eis, lit. “unto”] all the fulness of God.” Thus the Holy Ghost becomes in us now the power and strength of this fulness. Chapter 2 had introduced—after stating access to the Father by the Spirit through Jesus for both Jew and Gentiles—the additional truth that they were “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” This ground having been parenthetically unfolded in its fulness in

chapter 3, chapter 4 resumes the thread of chapter 2, while taking up the unity mentioned in the first.

We, “strengthened with might by his Spirit, … that Christ may dwell in our hearts,” thus “rooted and grounded in love,” “able to comprehend with all saints” the plenitude of blessedness and glory in divine counsel and fulness, and to know the love of Christ, that we might be filled with the fulness; thus we find it in Christ;, known by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Thus this fulness of God is known, even in Christ, for so are we brought into it. And this is by power working in us that we may enter into that into which we are brought. “Now unto him… that worketh in us” —concludes the apostle—“be glory in the Church!” Now all this blessed fulness (of which the unity of the Church united to Christ is the centre and scene of development, while it extends to the whole sphere of the display of God’s universal glory), in the love of Christ her Head, is ministered to the growing up of the body by these gifts of Christ. They are the ministrations of Christ the Head in the body. It is His gift—the edifying of His body—that they might grow up into Christ’s fulness, of which we have seen the character just now. This gives us the character of the gifts. Here there is actually no mention of the Spirit, though doubtless the Spirit was the medium of power,32 but they are given by Christ, who fills all things, that He may introduce the Church into His fulness—the Church in which the Spirit dwells: His fulness being the fulness of God—in Him all the fulness dwelling—and He filling all in all, and the Church His fulness.33 It is then here, Christ according to this blessed fulness giving in love to His members, for the growing up into Him in all things who is the Head, till

we all come to the measure of the fulness of Christ: not the display of His Lordship to the world (the Spirit acting as subservient to that display, divinely distributing, “God working all in all”). It is Christ giving to the Church to minister on the ground of union—entrance into communion with His fulness.

I would now turn a little to the character of the gifts here spoken of. We shall see they are associated with this special character of giving to the Church, not witnessing by the Church. Having urged upon them in individual lowliness, which the sense of the excellency of the calling would induce (a calling which had its existence in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace), the apostle proceeds to declare what gifts Christ gave (as gifts, nothing righteously to exalt) to man on His exaltation (that being of Him who first descended, and that into the lower parts of the earth), as now far above the heavens, so that He filled all things, captivity being led captive; that the powers of darkness having the Church captive were now led captive themselves, so that Christ could freely communicate to the Church, so delivered, communion with His fulness, who in this act displayed how He filled all things, and accordingly gave these gifts for this purpose—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These I would now notice.

It is to be remarked that all gifts of sign to men as such are entirely omitted; all that dealt with nature, and all even that merely dealt with the flesh in the Church; those only are mentioned that are initiative, and that edify in the Church. Thus miracles, tongues, healings, helps, and governments are omitted; apostles and

evangelists, prophets, pastors, and teachers are introduced.

As to apostles, what has been observed will partly lead us to some distinction in this office. Primarily, they are no part of the body properly speaking; they gather it. The house is built on them. Thus the twelve were sent as Jesus was sent of the Father. Paul was sent of the Lord directly. But in another character they had a place in it, in the continual exercise of their functions. In the former character they stood alone, save in one particular which they possessed in common with prophets. But, as authoritative regulators of the Church by revelation, they had a peculiar and definite place. In the one particular of revelation of the mind and will of Christ and of God, the prophets might be associated with them; but these had no authority delegated of the Lord in their office as sent forth. The holy beneficence of this arrangement, I think, is evident. Thus while the Church was regulated and ordered responsibly and authoritatively by an apostle, yet they had to say, “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” In the sense of.revelation, as laying down the foundation, their work is complete and fulfilled. The word of God is written for us. The fruits of authoritative regulation were left (as every dispensation had been) in the responsibility of man, and men have entirely failed. But the revelation of the will of God is complete, and is there for us to refer to by the Spirit, according to the light of the word in our present condition, not by imitation, but by obedience. Hence tradition disappears; for at best that is imitation, not obedience; a very important distinction, as will soon be found in its application.

But, moreover, it is clear to me that, in a subordinate sense, apostles and prophets had a place beside this. That the apostles expected no continuance of their functions is clear, for the apostle Paul declares the evil that would come in after his decease, and commends them to God and the word of His grace; and Peter says he will take care that they have the things in remembrance. And, indeed, one familiar with the New Testament will see that the character of the Church's responsibility is founded on the departure of direct apostolic authoritative care. The Church could not leave it to them as the complete competent authority, who had communicated the Lord's will, and before whose departure the Lord began to act in judgment, if equally authorized communicators were constantly with the same authority present in the Church. The casting a dispensation on responsibility of a given deposit would have been entirely set aside, that is, the whole principle of God's dealing to the end, and the assumptions clearly taken up by the apostles falsified, and the Bible set aside, by a constant succession of equally authoritative communications. For the principle of the office of which we now speak is the authoritative revelation of the will of Christ.

We find that, in one sense, apostolic ministry precedes the Church, the Church being gathered by it. Its character being, then, gathering by the authoritative revelation of the will of Christ (as the testimony to Christ in the power of the Spirit, whether by themselves or others, draws and quickens souls). Under this evangelists came, another testimony of their gift being of God, and that He could in His sovereignty communicate important parts of it to others; but

apostolic service found its place also in the Church, where the participated evangelist's gift did not (that is the regulating authoritatively the gathered, according to that revealed will).

But, as has been elsewhere stated, a new principle was introduced in and even before the apostolate of Paul, on the dispersion of the order of the Church at Jerusalem—individual agency according to the energy of the Spirit, according to its measure, the operation proving itself and its own efficacy. So even the apostle of this owns: "The signs of an apostle were wrought in me"; "Make full proof of thy ministry"; "Let no man despise thee." Hence, though subsisting not in authoritative revelation of the will of God, nor power in the Church, in a subordinate sense, it seems to me that the gift of apostle and prophet has not passed away. Barnabas was an apostle: Junius and Andronicus were of note among the apostles: and it was praise to a church that they had tried certain whether they were apostles, and they were not, but liars. Doubtless, these pretenders set up for the highest form of apostolate. But the Church could not have been commended for trying them, if there had been question only of the twelve and Paul. In truth, the word 'apostle,' though now of definite force, has it not properly; it just amounts to one sent, a missionary. The messenger of the Church is called "your apostle," in the original.

That which seems to designate the character of apostle, is the being directly sent of Christ, raised up to act on his own personal responsibility to Christ; not merely a gift exercised on such or such occasion subject to church rules, nor the going forth with good tidings to sinners; but as one sent by Christ, acting from Him on

his own responsibility to Christ, having a given errand and sphere in which to exercise his commission. In this sense, while the authoritative primary revelation of God's will, gathering and regulating the Church, has clearly closed in the scriptural record to apostolic ministry, I do not see but that apostolic service may still subsist, and probably has been exercised, though the name may not have been attached; men raised up and sent by God for a certain mission, to effect a certain result in the Church, or on sinners, though with no fresh revelation, but with a special energy in which to fulfil it, beyond the bounds of mere circumscribed gift as members within, but special in its relation to Christ. The faithfulness of its accomplishment, the mixing of other things with it, or the failure in clearly following in particular instances, does not, it seems to me, touch this question. In the same way, prophets, who were associated with apostles as the foundation, because they revealed the mind of God, may, it appears to me, in a subordinate sense, be believed to exist. It is not that they now reveal fresh truths not contained in the word (or the foundation would not be completely laid—this, I hold, never can be touched), but that there may be those who not merely teach and explain ordinary and profitable doctrine—truths, and guide by the Spirit into present truth, but who by a special energy of the Spirit can unfold and communicate the mind of Christ to the Church where it is ignorant of it (though that mind be treasured up in the scripture)—can bring truths, hidden previously from the knowledge of the Church, in the power of the testimony of the Spirit of God, to bear on the present circumstances of the Church and future prospects of the world, shewing the things to come; only that these things are all actually treasured up in

Scripture, but they can give them present application and force according to the mind, intention, and power of God, and thus be practically prophets (though there be no new facts revealed, but all are really in the word already), and thus be a direct blessing and gift of Christ to the Church for its emergency and need, though the word be strictly adhered to, but without which the Church would not have had the power of that word.

This reference to that word, I hold to be the essence of the Church's safety, accompanied by acknowledgment of, and dependence on, the Spirit of God, the Comforter —the plain written word (that of which it could be said, including now, of course, the New Testament, that from a child—scorned by some as knowing it in the flesh— thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus). No tradition can in the smallest degree take the place of this; it is at best the certifying of men's minds as to the certainty of certain points. But see what the apostle refers to in assuring them that they should see his face no more (clear evidence, as we have seen, he thought of no apostle or successor to supply his place): "I commend you to God "(says the blessed witness of Christ— that is the first great point; it must always, and in a special manner now that He was gone, be found in Him directly) "and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." This was exactly what was needed. Let a teacher unfold, a pastor graciously guide by, or a prophet apply in power, this word. This was what was able to build up and give an inheritance. Now, no tradition, however guiding, is a word of God's grace. It may direct the forms of man, it may order the rules of the Church, it might even record a form of

correct doctrine; it is not the word of His grace “able to build up.”

This makes, I trust, this point, and the sense in which there may be, in a subordinate and inferior sense, apostles and (in a nearer sense to their original character) prophets, now clear. Revelation of new, unknown, and unrevealed truths being quite excluded, prophets, as expressing the mind of God, could speak, and did, to exhortation, and edification, and comfort, in thus applying the mind of God to the saints. So did the prophets of highest character of old.

These subordinate parts of the gift we see again participated by others, and diffused in the Church, that unity and deference for all might be maintained. He that exhorted was to wait on exhortation; and so one that taught—not necessarily a pastor— was to wait on his teaching, using his talent.

These might, in a certain sense (that is, apostolic and prophetic ministry), be called extraordinary, coming on special occasions and with special objects into the Church, though always witness of the goodness of God and for the glory of Christ. Evangelists were of another character, the natural and constant testimony to sinners of the grace that was revealed in their good news of God, in what we call the gospel. Any saint had to tell it, but there were those specially gifted to proclaim the glad tidings. Timothy is exhorted to do this, in the midst of his care of the Church for the apostle. It is always in such case healthful, and a good sign, that we labour in the sense of the grace of Christ, and generally an evil sign when we do not. None can so deeply understand the basis of love without it. An apostle wrought in this

work. The bearing on souls is understood by it. Specifically, grace is felt and understood in the heart. We are on the ground our own souls have felt the need of.

The next class—for they are brought together as one—is pastors and teachers; for watching and feeding, and that with the word, are most clearly united and identified: only pastorship includes guidance in holy wisdom and grace, and applying teaching to the state of the saints. We have seen the subordinate part of this distributed by itself—" he that teacheth on teaching." But the gift here is guiding as pastor; shepherding and feeding the flock, applying the word in wisdom, watching against intruding heresies, building up by the word, guarding and securing from evil, guiding the feet of the saints into straight paths; in a word, the care of the saints. It is not here, as was remarked, government controlling the flesh, but the ministration of grace, nourishing and cherishing, guiding and feeding: some were "pastors and teachers."

These were the ministrations: the first two (apostles and prophets) being in their primary sense the foundation—extraordinary; the last three (evangelists, pastors, and teachers), the ordinary abiding ministrations of the Church, to build them up in Christ's known and thus ministered fulness; that the body of Christ might be edified, "grow up into him."

The primary and full object was the perfecting of the saints— their being formed and fashioned according to the pattern of this fulness and into it; but there was a formal and instrumental object as the medium of this. As to this in its twofold character, the Greek preposition is

changed, and the article omitted: “for [pros] the perfecting of the saints; with a view to [eis] the work of the ministry with a view to [eis] the edifying of the body of Christ,” Eph. 4:12. This ministerial work was clearly merely ancillary, and the edifying the body of Christ, for the perfect enjoyment of the fulness by the saints, “for the perfecting of the saints,” is the direct and positive object. The other two were the service and form of blessing in which this object was carried on, and to which, therefore, these gifts were directed for the other, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to full-grown men— to a perfect man—to the measure of the stature, in mind and in blessing, of the fulness of Christ, of which we have before spoken; that we be no more children, nor blown about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, being preserved through these gifts of God.

This leads us to see the blessing and importance of these gifts, definitely committed by Christ, as He sees good in grace, for the good and communication of His blessed fulness to the Church; whereby, fed with what is good, it should be preserved and guarded against hankering after the false trash of deceivers. They are gifts to the Church, not to all, but for all. The development of these in full liberty and openness of ministry is most important. Nor can they be really or rightly developed otherwise. Hence God has commanded —made it a matter of command, and thus guarded the closing of the door by making it a matter of personal responsibility—that he that exhorteth shall wait on exhortation, and he that teacheth on teaching; and, “as every man has received the gift, so minister the same as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” So “Judas

and Silas, being prophets also themselves," exhorted the people much at Antioch. By this use of every gift in its place as the apostle speaks, "the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," and, "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." Still, observe, these ministrations are all to the edifying and increase of the body, not to the external testimony of Christ's Lordship to the world. They are the fulfilling of His love to the Church, in ministering to it of, and so building it up into, His fulness—not the verification of the assertion of His Lordship to the world.

The only other reference of importance, that I am aware of, as to distinctness of subject, is in the book of Revelation, which I shall only briefly notice, because its character is quite different. In the first three chapters, the unity of the body ceases to be recognized, and the Spirit is not seen acting in the Church in the power of this unity, of which Christ is the corporate Head; but Christ is seen in a judicial though priestly character in the midst of the churches, and the Spirit is a Spirit of address and prophetic warning to them, not of gift in them. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This might be gift in the apostle, but this is the character of the address; and hence every individual with an ear is called upon to hear for himself.

After this the Spirit is seen in His fulness in heaven, not in the Church, and is sent forth as the providential agent of the Lamb's power, as the seven Spirits of God sent into all the earth, not as the power of communion and gift in the Church at all. Thence it is seen as in the

Church, as the bride directing her aspirations and desires after one object, the coming of the Bridegroom: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” And this closes the whole scene.

I have now traced the operations of the Spirit individually as a Spirit of adoption, His highest and most blessed office in us. Then as coming paramountly to convict and guide, as shewn in John, as the Comforter sent.

This is traced, after the unity of the body with Christ is revealed, in His corporate operations and character, first, as the witness of Lordship in Christ, acting in the members of His body in witness; then as the ministration of His love to His body for its growth up into His fulness: lastly, as a prophetic and judicial witness to the churches themselves, thenceforward only in heaven as regards the Church in acting on the earth.

Such are the operations, as fully developed, of this blessed agent of divine power in us and towards the world. The chief topics, I believe, are noticed: I pretend to nothing more. Those who seek to search Him out, must do so by His own aid in the word itself. And may they, while dwelling on it here as a subject of thought, be led to refer to that Holy One Himself in His presence and personal power, as One who is with the Church—the Comforter sent—not merely resting in thoughts about Him, but led, actuated, directed, by Him, and honouring Him as energized by Him in all things!

This is specially the Church’s need.

24 The sabbath (i.e., the rest of God) was connected with the manna (Christ) sent down (see John 6); conflict, with Amalek at the waters of Rephidim. Every Christian

will more or less painfully have to learn his own heart; for that is the separating, sanctifying process. The great object is to separate this from our justification; and that it should be a matter of judging ourselves, not of expecting God's judgment on us. When this discovery of sin in us is made previous to any clear knowledge of the work of Christ, it is habitually accompanied with terror or despair—a very intelligible effect; when after that knowledge, the sin is perhaps more deeply abhorred, but it is not with terror as to our condemnation, but characterised by a loathing condemnation of the sin itself.

25 Whenever this is not the case, our standard is apt to be—as little of the fruits of the Spirit as we can ascertain ourselves to be Christians by: and then to go on, after the examination, as we went on before, being satisfied with ascertaining that.

26 The word 'together' is found here also in the structure of the Greek word.

27 In fact, in chapter 14, Christ speaks much more as on earth (see verse 25), though on the ground of His going away, and shews them they should have known His Person (in the power of which He speaks; as, "I will do it") there, and thus have known where He was going, and the way. After verse 16 He speaks more of their position on His going away, and its consequences, still as being yet there. Hence the word is (they being looked at in this character, and the Father on high), "I will pray the Father, and he will give." In chapter 16, where union has been treated of, and they as it were placed in Him before the Father, it is, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you"; and they ask in His name; for they were

so placed before the Father. And in the end of chapter 15 it is, “whom I will send.” “Arise, let us go hence” closes the mere individual earthly place.

Chapter 15 does not declare the exaltation of Christ as the Head on high, but (Israel, the nominal vine, being rejected) His being the true vine Himself, even here below, and fruit bearing to be the test of abiding in it. We know that it is in exalted headship in heaven at God’s right hand, that He is now thus the living source of fruit bearing; but this is no part of the statement in chapter 15; but the testimony of the Holy Ghost is direct evidence that He was gone up there, accepted and glorified of the Father. Remarking this much elucidates John 15. It is the then connection of the disciples with Him, and fruit, but not exaltation to heaven.

28 Herein is a distinctive difference of the apostle Paul’s ministry. He could not have the second part of the witness mentioned in the chapter. He had not been with Jesus from the beginning. When he saw Jesus, he saw Him only in the glory of His heavenly Lordship, of which the Holy Ghost testified to. This made his testimony a more purely heavenly testimony; as he says, “Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” Peter, in testimony, would hardly have said this, though preaching the same truths; he says, “A witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.”

29 As it is the direct testimony of the presence of the Holy Ghost, convicting the world of sin in its rejection of Jesus, and of the Father’s reception and owning of Him as His Son, and consequent judgment, the disciples (not yet properly the Church) are entirely omitted; but as

regards them in detail, the great principle of obedience being the ground of blessing is preserved in chapter 14, where this point is spoken of: “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever.”

30 It was only in grace she could have so stood; but grace had not put her out of this place till she rejected it for herself. I do not know but this point has been noticed in the “Christian Witness” by a brother already; but, because it unfolds the present subject, I do not pass it by.

31 For that very reason the extraordinary power of apostles and prophets does not continue—they were the foundation in that power— the word by them does.

32 See chapter 2:22; chap. 3:16. But chapter 3 has brought it into union with divine fulness, and that, as we in Christ, so Christ is dwelling in us, and therefore pursues it here as of Christ ministering of and in the power of that fulness, for the bringing up of the Church into it in actual joy, security, and fellowship by these ministrations of it.

33 Ephesians 1 presents specially the presenting of God to the saints; chapter 3, Christ’s dwelling in them, that they may realise His fulness.

The Resurrection, The Fundamental Truth Of The Gospel

Many have, perhaps, been able, in looking at the Church's hope in Christ, to see the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection. But the more we search the Scriptures, the more we perceive, in this doctrine, the fundamental truth of the gospel—that truth which gives to redemption its character, and to all other truths their real power. For instance, who does not know that Christianity has its root and its foundation in that solemn and all-important event, the death of our blessed Saviour? But if it had been possible that death could have held the Saviour in his power, death, instead of being the foundation of joy, and the certainty of salvation, would have been the source of a black despair which nothing could have dissipated.

It is the resurrection which throws its bright beams even into the dark tomb of Christ, the tomb of the only righteous One, and the trophy of the apparent victory of the prince of this world. It is the resurrection which explains the reason of that momentary submission to the power of the devil and subjection to the necessary judgment of God. We see also how this truth characterizes the preaching of the apostles. We read (Acts 4) that the priests were "grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." "This Jesus," said they, "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses"; and when they were about to choose someone to fill the vacancy which the crime and death of Judas had made in the number of the apostles, Peter, standing up in the midst of them, declared that the

resurrection ought to be the solemn subject of their testimony. “Wherefore,” said he, “of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be a witness with us of his resurrection.” And, not to multiply passages, Paul says, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15); and the whole chapter shews us the importance of the resurrection of believers as well as that of Christ Himself—two truths indissolubly united and developed in the New Testament. And it is a remarkable thing, amidst the subtleties and resources of Satan, that as he opposed the pretended righteousness of the Pharisees to the perfect and divine righteousness of Christ our Saviour, so had he prepared the incredulity of the Sadducees to oppose this fundamental doctrine of the resurrection preached by the apostles who were witnesses of it (Acts 5:17).

It is by this doctrine of the resurrection, and by the glory which shall follow the resurrection itself, that the foundation and the hopes of the Christian faith are bound together; and by the same doctrine it is that justification and that which is the power of the Christian life—sanctification,34 are necessarily united.

It is commonly said that the resurrection of Christ is the proof of the truth of the Christian religion, and the demonstration that the work of Christ in His death was accomplished. That is indeed a truth for infidels. If we would prove the truth of Christianity to those who do not believe, the fact of the resurrection is the pivot, so to speak, on which the evidence of its truth turns. God gave it for this end. But for Christians, for those who

already believe in the blessed Saviour, for those whose hope is already founded on the certainty of the word, and who desire to find the power of that word in their regenerate souls, the resurrection, as set forth in the Scriptures, contains much more.

The misery of the Church, and one of the consequences of her long slumber, has been to be satisfied with having, by the grace of God, recovered, as far as it is indeed the case, the truth of the completeness of the work of Christ. There Christians are too often apt to stop, or rather in the hope of having a part in it. We little think of searching the word to discover the riches contained in it, to find the revelation of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the portion and heritage of every regenerated soul.

Sometimes this indolence of the flesh excuses itself under the name of wisdom, which would avoid speculative knowledge; sometimes even under an outward activity which has little real power, because it is habit and duty (or, at least it is the consequence of habit and duty), and not the expression of the life of a soul constrained by the love of Christ acting powerfully in it. It is not thus with lively Christians: they hunger and thirst after God. And where shall they find that which shall satisfy their desires, if not in Christ, and in all the glory which is His, in the goodness and power He has shewn forth, and which alone can satisfy the souls of His believing people?

Paul had none of those thoughts, wise as they may seem according to the flesh, when he spoke of the doctrine in question. He regarded all things as loss in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord,

for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, so that he might win Christ and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which was of faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith; that he might know Jesus Christ, and the power of His resurrection from among the dead. One thing he did, forgetting the things which were behind and reaching forth to those which were before, he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3).

He found, then, in the resurrection, not only the evidence of the foundations of his faith (Rom. 1:4) and the proof of the accomplishment of the satisfaction for sin (1 Cor. 15:17), but much more still. The resurrection was, to this apostle of the faith as to Peter, the object and source of a living hope, the power of the life within. He sought to know the power of the resurrection: he suffered the loss of all things, if by any means he might attain unto it. If the Church has lost her life, her spiritual power, it is not by concealing from herself that which acted with such energy on the soul of the apostle Paul, which presented itself as the dawn of blessing to the mind of Peter, that she can hope to recover it. Beloved brethren, let us then seek the truth on this point and examine the blessed word of our God, that we may be instructed on these powerful objects of faith; and may the Spirit of God guide us into all truth, according to His gracious promise—a promise He never fails to fulfil: let us then expect its accomplishment!

I said that the foundation and the hopes of the Christian faith are bound up together in this truth, 1 Corinthians 15 clearly shews the resurrection to be the object of Christian hope. As it regards ourselves, the same

chapter teaches us that it is also its foundation. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

With regard to the Person of Christ (the fundamental truth of the whole of Christianity), we find that He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). In the same epistle we read, “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,” chap. 4:25. In chapter 8 of the same epistle we find that the glory of the risen Christ is the object of our hope: “He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren “(v. 29). What can be more beautiful, more striking? The manner in which these are brought together is very clear. The Church sees Christ glorified at the right hand of God. There she sees the evidence that all has been accomplished for her, and that a righteousness belongs to her in the Person of Christ, which will not defile even the throne of God. But in this glory she also sees the result of that righteousness. (See Phil. 2:6-10.) She sees in the Person of Christ the glory consequent upon it; that is to say, the glory which belongs also to the Church herself, as participating in this righteousness, by union with Christ. “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.” Here we have the true sense of Galatians 5:5: “We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” We do not wait for righteousness, we have it already in Christ by faith. Such is specially the position of the Church. Justified by faith, but seeing in Christ not only this righteousness accomplished, but also the glory and, so to speak, the recompense consequent upon it,

we, as justified, as filled with the Spirit through which we thus behold Christ—the Spirit whose presence is the seal of that righteousness, we wait for the glory as that which belongs to us, as that which is due to the righteousness in which we participate.

The use which Paul makes of this truth as regards the justification of the sinner, is very remarkable; and we shall see that, by laying the resurrection as the foundation of justification by faith, justification is inseparably united to sanctification. In the end of Romans 3 the apostle had spoken of the blood of Christ, as the thing which God had proposed as the object of justifying faith. In chapter 4 he continues the subject; and, speaking of the justification of Abraham, he proves that he was justified by faith: but the subject of his faith was, that his seed should equal the stars in number. How could such a truth as this become the subject of a justifying faith? We have the apostle's answer: "He considered not his own body now dead," "being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able to also perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness; and not to him only, but to us also, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Faith, then, in the power of "God who quickeneth the dead," was the faith that justified Abraham. Peter gives the same character to justifying faith: "You," says he, "who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead," 1 Pet. 1:21.

The Church sees Christ dead for the sins that she had committed. This is the end of all that she had done, as descended from the first Adam; of all that the members do, as having in them, by extraction from him, the nature of the first Adam. The amazing love of the

Saviour led Him to put Himself in the place of the Church, and to become her substitute in meeting the pains of death, the just judgment of the most holy God, and the sufferings consequent upon His wrath—a judgment which He felt in all its power (because He was Himself holy), even according to the power of God—wrath of which He felt all the weight, all the horror, because He loved according to the love of God. He, I say, having given Himself unto death for that object, giving up the ghost, bowed beneath the weight of our sins. Satan, the prince of this world, who had the power of death, though finding nothing in Christ to give him power over Him, rejoiced in his victory over the only just One, the only hope of the world, saying, by the mouth of his servants, "Aha! aha! "and death boasted of having swallowed its only noble victim. But its joy was short; the triumph of the prince of darkness was but the display of his defeat. He had had to meet, not men captive in his power in the first Adam, but the Captain of our salvation. He had had to enter into combat with Him —he had had to put forth all his power, all his strength, against Him who had taken our cause in hand. But Christ had submitted Himself to the justice of God, not to those who persecuted Him whom God had stricken. The devil outwardly carried out the sentence, because he had the power of death over us by the judgment of God, but the sentence itself was God's justice against us; and God's justice was satisfied, and Satan's power destroyed: "Through death he destroyed him who had the power of death," Heb. 2:14.

The resurrection shone upon the world, like the rising of the sun. Faith alone beheld it, the faith of those whose eyes were opened to see the great and sure result of the

combat, the consequences of this judgment of God—the faith of those whom God had chosen to give testimony to the complete victory of Him, who alone had undertaken, who alone could undertake the combat; to give testimony, I say, to a world whose blinding by Satan was clearly demonstrated. The victory was gained by Christ alone; but the Church, as the object of it, participates in all its results. It is very much to lower the position of the Church, merely to say she is blessed by Christ, blessed of God. She is blessed with Christ; she is the companion of His glory, the co-heritor of all the promises. She has fellowship with Him who blesses; she enters into the joy of her Lord. Partaker of the divine nature, she feels derivatively, and in communion with Him who is its source, the joy, the delight which the God of love finds in blessing, because He is love itself. How is it, then, that the Church participates here below in the victory of Christ, and in the fruits of that victory? It is by union with Him, who has been to every one of her members a quickening Spirit, and has quickened them and united them to Himself as members of His body.

Christ is their life, and they are rendered partakers, in virtue of their union with Him, of all the consequences of what He has done, of all that is in Him as risen, of all the favour in which He stands before God—a life and union which make them the objects of the satisfaction which God takes in Him, and which will make them, when the time is come, participators in all the glory to which He is heir, and in which He will be manifested. The Church is looked at by God, and consequently by faith also, as dead with Christ: her sins being put on Him, the remembrance of them before God is buried in the grave of Christ. As the just God He remembers them

no more: to do so would be not to estimate aright the blood of Christ, not to be just towards Him. “He is faithful and just to forgive us.” The blood of Christ, and not our sins, is before the eyes of God. He esteems us as bought with the price of His blood.

But the saints are also looked at as risen with Christ, living before the Father in the life of Christ, chastised by the Father (who loves them perfectly as He loves the Son Himself) when they turn aside from the ways which please Him—ways suitable to such a life, to such a union. “I am the vine,” said Jesus; “my Father is the husbandman.” God righteously regards us in Christ, as perfect before Him as Christ Himself is perfect— our sins gone in the cross. In love He chastens us as being in Christ, when we do not walk in His ways according to the power of the risen Christ, as inheritors of the glory which He inherited in resurrection.

The Scriptures speak thus on the subject: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,” Col. 1:12, 13.

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross 1 and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of

them openly, triumphing over them in it," Col. 2:12-15. The victory of Satan over the first Adam rendered him master of his possessions and of his inheritance: "The creature is subject to vanity." The victory of the Second Adam over Satan spoiled him of all that which he had taken from the first Adam.

God, in the loving-kindness and wisdom of His counsels, has not yet manifested the results; but the victory is fully gained. The Church knows it—at least she ought to know it. The consequences to us are these: "If ye then be risen in Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," Col. 3:1-4. The prayer of the apostle for the Ephesians on the same subject runs thus: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling," the calling of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (He is called the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, because Christ is regarded as Head of the Church and as man), "and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of

him that filleth all in all." And when we "were dead in sins," continues the Spirit by the mouth of the apostle, "he hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. 2:5, 6.

The saints, then, are regarded by God as risen with Christ, and consequently as perfectly justified from all their sins. They are clean, according to the cleanness with which Christ appears before God, being presented to God in Him and with Him. But how does the saint actually now participate in blessings so great? It is by partaking of that life, in the power of which Christ is risen. Thus it is, then, that by the doctrine of the resurrection, as it is set forth in the Scriptures, justification and sanctification become necessarily united; thus it is that I share in the righteousness of God, by being quickened with the life in which Christ was raised from the dead, coming up out of the grave, all our trespasses being forgiven. But this life is the life of holiness here below. It is the source of holiness in us; it is holiness itself, the life of God in us. It is in this that we have the will to belong to God, acknowledging the grace which has redeemed us, and convinced that our life is not of us but of God. It is in the power of this life that we seek the things which are above, which are in Christ and which are His, that our affections are carried out towards God; and in this consists true sanctification, the old man being judged as dead, because Christ has died on account of it. "The body is dead on account of sin"—that is its only fruit—"the spirit is life because of righteousness." Christ then, in giving us the life, which is a new and holy nature in us, makes us partakers of all

that He has done for us as risen from the dead, and of all His acceptance before the Father of glory.

Moreover, we cannot rightly estimate sin but by the resurrection, and for this reason, it is the doctrine of the resurrection, and of our being raised with Christ, which teaches us that we were dead in sin. Otherwise it would perhaps be a healing, an amelioration of man such as he is, a preservation from death by the help of Christ, a troubling of the waters, that we might plunge into them ourselves and be healed. In this way it is that the natural man looked at the extent of sin, as the Jews and Martha and Mary expressed it, when they said, “Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?” “If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

But if we have been raised with Christ, it is because we were dead in our sins. The doctrine of our entire misery, our complete fall, flows from, and (so to speak) springs out of, this truth. And the blessing is proportionate; for death is passed, and everything that belongs to the old man is dead, through faith, with Him. We have another life quite new, in which we live, saying, “We are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh.”

There is another consequence, namely, the feeling of the entire favour of God attached to the idea of being a son — “the grace in which we stand.” Having entered by the cross, we stand in the favour of God in the holy place; having received not the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, we cry, “Abba, Father!” Our participation in the resurrection is our being born of God. As delivered, we stand before God as His children, His accepted ones, His holy ones. Love was manifested towards us in that

we are in Him, such as He is before God, even in this world, because we are united to Him by the Spirit He has given us. Our filial relation to the Father, as being purified from sin, clothed with the robe of righteousness (a relation which gives joy to the soul), flows from this doctrine. He has given us the privilege to become children of God—not servants, but children.

Here then are some sweet results from this truth, which exist even here. Our union with Christ is the foundation. We may follow these results, even as regards our body, into the glory. The resurrection of Christ is the firstfruits, that of the saints the harvest. There is an intimate connection between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of Christ, on account of the union of the Church with Him, because of the one Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ, and which dwells in Him and in all the members of His body.

It is not thus with regard to the wicked, although it is the power of Christ which raises them; yet it is not because of union with Him, nor by His Spirit dwelling in them; for the Spirit does not dwell in them. Therefore actual resurrection is a thing which belongs to the saints, as a full accomplishment, in result, of their union with Christ, not as a necessary preliminary to their judgment; indeed Christ has already been judged for them and suffered the penalty of all their sins. The resurrection of the saints is the consequence of their having passed through the judgment of their sins in Christ, not the preliminary to their judgment by Christ.

It is the reception by Christ of the Church, who suffered with Him that she might be in the glory with Him in His kingdom; as in John 14, “In my Father’s house are many

mansions." Christ is not gone there to be alone: "If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." This is the judgment of the Church at the return of Christ. They are manifested before His judgment seat, but already glorified. This does not deny a difference of glory among the saints, that some will be on His right hand and others on His left in His kingdom. It only shews that the resurrection of the saint is the result of the accomplishment of their judgment in Christ, and the full completeness of the life which she already possesses as risen with Him, the effect of the union of the saints with Him, as dwelt in by the same Spirit. It is necessary that, when Christ is manifested, the bodies of those who are His should also enjoy the privileges of the kingdom, as part of that which He has purchased, thus delivering them completely and finally from the power of Satan and of death. "If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead," says the apostle to the Romans, "dwell in you, he who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you"; a passage which evidently reveals to us, that the resurrection of the saints is a consequence of the resurrection of Christ; that, in fact, the resurrection of the Church is a consequence of the interest which God takes in her, as He does in Christ her Head.

We shall see then that many passages manifest this special place of the saints in the resurrection, and that the Scriptures speak of the resurrection of the Church as a thing entirely distinct from the resurrection of the wicked. In this manner Paul, in a passage already

quoted, says (Phil. 3), “If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.” Also in 1 Corinthians 15: “Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming.” In Luke 20 we find in one of our Lord’s discourses on this subject, that the existence of the relation between God and Abraham necessarily supposed the resurrection, not merely the life of his separated spirit. Many other passages declare also this truth, and moreover that this resurrection was a thing which belonged exclusively to the children of God. He speaks of “those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain… the resurrection from the dead.” How are they found worthy to obtain the resurrection, if the resurrection is a thing common to the saints and to the world (in a word, if the saints and the world are raised together)? The Lord adds, “Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” See how the power of the resurrection is identified with this privilege of being children of God.

The subject is treated of in a connected manner in John 5:21-29: “For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father… Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life… The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.” Here

are two great means of upholding and of vindicating the glory of the humbled Son. He quickens—He judges. He quickens and the Father quickens also. He alone judges; the Father judges no man.

The saints are quickened in order to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Christ, in judgment, claims and maintains His glory and His right over all those who have neglected Him, or who were opposed to His glory, in order that all, even the wicked, should honour the Son as they honour the Father.

To this end we find that there are two resurrections: the resurrection unto life, that is to say, the fulfilment of His work in the quickening of the saints, applying to their bodies the power of the resurrection which had already been applied to their souls, when they were regenerated; and the resurrection unto judgment, in order that those who have done evil should be judged. I do not here speak of the interval; but I merely say that there are two resurrections, which are different, as well in their objects and character, as in the persons who will take part in them. I will just remark, by the way, that the expression, on which those who object to the interpretation which supposes an interval of time between these two resurrections rest their opinion, has in no respect the force which they attach to it. The Lord says, “The hour is coming.” See, say they, a proof that the resurrection of the just and the unjust will take place at the same time, forgetting that the Lord uses the same word (in verse 25) to specify the time of His ministry, and, at the least, eighteen hundred years of a new period which commenced at His resurrection.

These two characters of the two resurrections, of which I have spoken, are very important, and distinguish in every sense these two events. The one, that of the saints who have suffered with Christ, is the application to our bodies of the power of the life of Christ, who has saved us, in order to accomplish His word toward us—resurrection being the redemption of the body, and the consequence of what Christ did when He saved us from the judgment; the other, the vindication of His glory in judgment, and the exercise of the justice of the living God against all those who have sinned. The first resurrection, consequently, is that which we anxiously wait for, to the end that we may be with Him, and, when Christ appears, we may also appear with Him in glory—an epoch which the whole creation is expecting. See Romans 8:19, where it is called "the manifestation of the sons of God," "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

There is a passage in the Scriptures which has struck me much on this subject, and which conveys a special instruction on the difference there is between viewing the resurrection as an event common to the Church and the world, or as a privilege which belongs separately to the Church in consequence of the power of the life which is in Christ. I speak of John 11. Jesus says to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Here is real faith, a truth she had well learnt. She was not a Sadducee. This is the faith of the Church generally; "He will rise again at the last day." Without doubt. The same thing might be said of the most wicked man. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were

dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?—that is, the power of Jesus when present, the power which He will manifest when He comes again. “She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.” Here again is a good confession: those who are saved doubtless believe it also. But here, in fact, the faith of the greatest part of the Church stops.

“And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” Why did she do this? why so much haste to quit Jesus that good Comforter, and to call her sister? Was there not the secret consciousness that she could not hold converse with Jesus on subjects such as these? She believed Him to be the Son of God; but “I am the resurrection and the life “was something too deep for her; her heart was not at ease in the company of Jesus speaking thus. And have we nothing similar to this? Are not the sweetest, the most blessed privileges of the Church too often the things which send the children of God away? They are not at their ease when Christ speaks of such things. They must go and seek some Mary. It is a call for some other person than for them. What were the different characters of these two women, both loved of the Lord? “A woman, named Martha, received him into her house; and she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving.” The heart of Martha was not at ease, through her want of communion with Jesus, and could not enter into the most blessed and encouraging truths in the things which the heart of Jesus, full of consoling power, poured forth

to relieve the miseries by which it was broken. To understand them was beyond the habits of Martha's mind; and, saying all that she could say in answer to Jesus, she goes to seek some one who, her conscience tells her, is more capable of understanding that which had just proceeded from the heart of Jesus—more capable of maintaining communion with Him and of sustaining a conversation which was painful to herself, because her spiritual understanding was unequal to it. How often is Martha's state called wisdom! How often are the things with which the heart of Jesus overflows—the revelations of our blessing— designated things likely to trouble the Church, perhaps regarded even as reveries! How often does the Church persist in remaining in darkness, fleeing from Jesus and His goodness, to conceal from herself her incapacity of communion with Him in these things—satisfied with herself because she can make the confession of Martha, because she can say with her, "Yea, Lord, thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

"I am rich, I have need of nothing." Poor Church—yes, poor every one of us! May the love of Jesus shine upon thee! O may He give thee such confidence in His love that thou mayest never tire of drawing from His heart those sweet truths which are enclosed therein—truths which attach the soul to Him, and which give strength of soul to walk in the world separated in heart unto Him—truths which give power to that secret communion with Him which will make us faithful in His absence, joyful in His presence, calm in soul in the midst of all the misery of a world ruined by death; hastening to run towards Him when we hear those sweet words, "The Master is

come, and calleth for thee." Be it so, O Jesus our Lord! Deign, O deign to look upon Thy Church, Thy poor Church, who loves Thee and whom Thou lovest. If she is weak, strengthen her; if she has turned aside, O God, she loves Thee. Bring her, O bring her back to Thyself, even to Thyself—her blessedness and her joy, her eternal joy, her Saviour, and her strength. Bring her near to Thee. Where can she find that which shall renew her strength, if not in Thee, who art the resurrection and the life?

One thing only remains to finish the sketch which I have attempted to make of this important subject. I well know that, far from having exhausted, I have but slightly touched upon it.

With respect to the dispensations of God, the resurrection is the fundamental subject of the word of God, since sin and death entered into the world, and sin reigns unto death. If sin reigns unto death, then resurrection only can be the victory over it; and it is a complete and final victory. For he that is dead is freed or justified from sin. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him," Rom. 6:7-9. Throughout the Scriptures we find this truth more or less fully disclosed—the foundation of every hope and of all moral judgment. (See Psalms 17, 49; Isaiah 38.) And even the restoration of the Jewish people is described as a resurrection. (See Ezek. 37; Isa. 26.) There is the source of joy, as in Psalm 16, Job 19. And it was a truth so positive—a notion so necessary to the thoughts of God and of His righteous ones, that when God said, "I am the God of Abraham," the Lord explains it as

shewing that Abraham was to be raised; for “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” Matt. 22:32. I said that one thing only remained.

It is generally thought that Revelation 20 is the only support which the word of God gives to the notion of a separate resurrection of the Church. We have already seen that this idea is connected with all the truths in the word of God.

That the saints will rise when Christ comes, is a thing acknowledged, as we have seen (1 Cor. 15:23; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Thess. 4:15-17.) In the Apocalypse 19, 20 we get the details. There we see that the resurrection of the saints will precede, by a thousand years, the resurrection of the rest of the dead, in order that they who have suffered with Christ, should also reign with Him when He takes the kingdom, and that they should appear with Him in glory when He appears who is their life. This is the important and striking completion of this great truth—a completion which crowns with results so important a truth—which, having its root in the lower parts of the earth, that is, in the grave of Christ, drawing its strength from the life of God, stretches out its branches, and lifts its glorious head towards heaven, covering with its spreading boughs all the inhabitants of a blest earth—the tree of life, from which are gathered the fruits of all the promises of God.

Christian, do you know the power of the resurrection of Christ? Are your thoughts those of one who is risen with Him, set on things above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God? Is your salvation a thing accomplished for your soul, so that in the perfect confidence of a new life before God, you can, under the

conduct of the good Shepherd, as sheep known of the Lord, go in and out and find good pasture in the fields of His delight? Are you, as being raised up with Him, dead to sin, dead to the pleasures, to the greatness, to the fading glory of the world which crucified the Lord of glory? Do the things of the world exercise no longer an influence over your thoughts—over your life; those things which, as far as man was concerned, caused the death of Jesus? Do you not desire to be something in the world? Ah! you do not hold yourselves for dead. The darkness which surrounded the cross is still upon your hearts. You do not breathe the fresh air of the resurrection of Jesus, of the presence of your God. Oh! dull and senseless people of God—people ignorant of your real treasures, of your real liberty! Yes, to be alive with Christ is to be dead to all that the flesh desires.

But if the risen life of Christ, the joy of the light of His presence, the divine and tender love of which Jesus is the expression and the object, beam on you; if the beauty of holiness in the heavenly places; if the universal and perfect homage rendered to God by hearts which never tire, whose adorations serve but to renew their strength; if all things full of the glory of God, giving occasion to praises, whose source never dries up, and whose subjects never fail; if these things please you, then mortify your members which are upon the earth. “Ye are come unto mount Sion, 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." And think you that the honours, the glory, the greatness, the pleasures, the lusts, of this world, of which Satan is the prince, can enter there? The gate is too narrow—the gate of death, the death of a crucified and rejected Christ—the gate of death, which, if it be deliverance from the guilt of sin, is also deliverance from its yoke. By that gate sin enters not: there must be left all that pertains to the flesh. Those are things which cannot be hid with Christ in God; they have played their part by crucifying Him on earth.

The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Christian, do you believe this? It is a new life which enters into those holy places, where all things are new, in order to be the joy and enjoyment of a risen people. Christian, Christian, death has written its sentence on all things here: by cherishing them you only fill his hand. The resurrection of Christ gives you a right to bury them, and to bury death itself with them in the grave, the grave of Christ; that "whether we live, we may live unto God," inheritors with Him in a new life of all the promises. Remember, that, if you are saved, you are risen with Christ. May He, from whom all grace and every perfect gift proceed, grant you this!

34 The believer is sanctified through and in Christ; and it is his actual sanctification which is the source of all practical holiness. He is holy, and therefore is to be "holy in all manner of conversation." This principle, that God has sanctified us and that therefore we are to be holy in spirit and ways, has ever been the same. God has separated from existing evil to Himself, and then given a variety of directions to keep the so separated person in practical separation. See, as to Israel's sanctification, Leviticus 20:24-26. Sanctification now is God's

separation of individuals from the world unto Himself in Christ, so that those so separated are “not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.” They are in Him as risen and sanctified in the power of a new life, if this be real in them.

The Doctrine Of The Wesleyans On Perfection

And Their Employment Of Holy Scripture As To This Subject35

Introduction

The main object of this tract is to establish the true meaning of certain texts, which, as experience proves, have been the occasion of much difficulty to sincere Christians. With this view the form of a dialogue has been adopted. In fact, certain conversations, of which this is a summary, gave occasion to the undertaking. That form seemed most favourable to the statement of objections, and of the texts brought forward. Whatever of importance has been advanced from the word is here answered; it is hoped that nothing of that kind has been passed over. It has struck us, that the best reply to the entire work, which contains many of the arguments it was judged necessary to meet, is to be found in the character and tone of that work itself.36 It appeared, therefore, essential to confine ourselves to warning simple-minded believers against the way in which God’s word is therein quoted. This, in fact, is all that we have done.

One important remark, omitted in what follows, may be here introduced. The source whence John Wesley derived this doctrine was by no means the Bible; he himself honestly confessed it. He believed the Bible confirmed his ideas, but he did not derive them thence. He learned them from Bishop Taylor, Law, and Thomas à-Kempis. It was not till four years after he had studied

the first of these writers, and while he was still deeply imbued with his doctrines, that he took the Bible as the sole standard of truth.

Thomas à-Kempis is well known by his work on the imitation of Christ. He was a Catholic, who, as far as he had light, was pious; but in whose writings the cross of Christ scarcely once appears as an atonement and the way of salvation. He must be regarded as a man who endeavoured to love God, but who had the least possible knowledge of the love of God, and of the truth of the gospel.

Law and Taylor, though nominally Protestants, were much his inferiors; they were less humble, and, if possible, yet more ignorant of the gospel. Both of them were mystics: Taylor was likewise very superstitious; and neither the one nor the other had the slightest conception of grace. No one charges them with insincerity; but no instructed Christian who has read their works doubts their utter ignorance of the gospel. Such are the three sources whence John Wesley acknowledged he first derived the doctrine which he has introduced into the Church. Their influence is easily perceptible in his ideas of perfection. We shall see that in the exposition which he gives of his doctrine, there is not so much as an allusion to the love of God to us.

The zeal with which God inspired many Christians in Wesley's time was tarnished by these opinions—opinions derived from very different sources from the word of God: but a great number of those who partook of the revival, and laboured with equal or even greater blessing, never received them.

* * * * *

A. Good morning, brother; I am very glad to meet you. I have been wishing to see you, for I am told you have adopted these new opinions; and I desire to learn from your own lips what you think of them. For my part, keeping to the word of God, I cannot receive them.

N. Why do you call them new opinions? They are God's truth. Does not God command us to be holy as He is holy — perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect? Would you have us preach sin, and tell Christians that they must needs go on sinning to the end of their days, and thus make death their saviour? Thank God, I cannot admit such things; I ought to be free from sin; and if I am not so yet, as God has promised it to me, He will fulfil His promise. He has commanded it; and He commands nothing which cannot be realized. The word of God is full of exhortations to perfection. And behold the fruits of this doctrine: what holiness, what zeal, what love, and that in a body of one million, two hundred thousand Christians: admirable testimony to the grace of God!

A. Softly, my dear friend. You have brought forward so many things at once, that it will take a little time to answer you. As to the fruits you refer to, I must differ from you; I suspect such boasting. I readily admit that there are many dear Christians among the Wesleyans; and then, the Church of Christ in general is, at the present time, in such weakness: there is so little liberty and joy; there is, in my judgment, such glaring deficiency in the manner of presenting the gospel, that I am not surprised that many are led away by a doctrine which promises something better. By a freer testimony, for example, of the love of God for sinners; by presenting, more decidedly, Christ as the means of

deliverance, it may in some degree supply the deficiencies in the present style of preaching.

N. But how can good be done by a doctrine which, taken as a whole, is false?

A. I will tell you. They say, “We ought not to seek sanctification by human effort; but that by receiving Christ as our sanctification the germ of sin is destroyed, and we are perfectly holy, and without sin or evil concupiscence.” It is true that we shall never, by any strength or effort of man, attain to sanctification; and that if we look to Christ, we shall find an abundant spring of life and holiness. I grant also that a soul which is under the law, and groaning beneath the burden of its wretchedness, will get no blessing by useless struggles for deliverance. But all this does not hinder the doctrine, as a whole, being false. For it is false to say, that by receiving Christ as our sanctification we can ever, on earth, attain to perfection, and extirpate entirely sin from our nature. It is an error which connects itself with a host of other errors, destructive of the most precious truths and consolations of the gospel; and which injures, in a high degree, our sanctification itself.

N. But how can it injure sanctification?

A. Before I answer, let me briefly state my judgment as to the history of Wesleyanism. The ruinous condition of the Church, a century ago, gave rise, through divine grace, to a remarkable movement. Some truly devoted men felt impelled to preach, and to call men to repentance. But instead of adhering to the word, certain of them framed for themselves a system of doctrines and discipline—doctrines which, while admitting salvation by Jesus, have put aside many of the most precious truths

in connection with it—a discipline admirably suited, in a worldly point of view, like that of the Jesuits, for the aggrandisement of their society (for indeed it is a society, not a church), but in the highest degree injurious to the souls of men. I am perfectly convinced that Christians who are not members of their body, but who well know them, will not be found to confirm the testimony which the Wesleyans bear to themselves.

Let us now turn to the doctrine of God's word. I observe, in the outset, that the reproach which you have learned to cast upon preachers of the gospel does not appear to me to be a fruit of the Spirit of God—when you say, for example, that such persons preach sin. Do you believe, then, that all who have not received the doctrines of Wesley love or preach sin?

N. Not exactly so: but you say a Christian will go on sinning to the end, and that it is death which delivers us from sin.

A. My dear friend, that is not what I say, but this: that the root of sin will remain in us until we are dislodged from the body, or until we are changed, because we expect the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23), which has not yet taken place. But I do not say that we ought to walk according to this evil principle: quite the contrary; we ought to walk "in the Spirit," although "the flesh" still exists.

N. I do not understand what you mean by the flesh. It is said (1 Thess. 5:23), "May the God of peace sanctify you wholly, body, soul, and spirit. God is faithful, who also will do it." Now what is there more in man than body, soul, and spirit? And if we ought always to walk in the

Spirit (Gal. 5:16), then it follows that we are disputing about words.

A. By no means; for the moment you affirm that we can be perfect, and that there is no longer sin in you, a multitude of things, which the word of God calls sin, cease to be so in your estimation. The contrast between your condition and that of Jesus Christ becomes less sensible to your mind. You attenuate sin. Real sanctification suffers in proportion, and the distinction between sin and sins is entirely lost sight of. It is because your doctrine attenuates the idea of sin; because it does away with the rule, and lowers the standard, of sanctification, that I oppose it with all my might. This is no difference on a point of knowledge or speculation merely, but involves the question: What is sin?—a question that is evidently fundamental and of the highest importance in practice.

When you say, that body, soul, and spirit are the whole man, I reply, Alas! no. Before the fall, body, soul, and spirit were in Adam; and after the fall there was additionally in him a will in rebellion against God; there was in him sin, which the word of God calls “the flesh,” Matt. 26:41, etc. There was a something which “lusteth against the Spirit” (Gal. 5:17), and which “cannot be subject to the law of God,” Rom. 8:7. This is that truth, which those who preach perfection carefully conceal, a truth bound up with the whole doctrine of the “new man.” Now, to say, I do not know what “the flesh “is (an expression in the mouth of all those who have received this doctrine), is of itself a melancholy proof of the effect it produces. For it is certain that there are few words more frequently employed in the word of God than “the flesh,” or any subject more often and carefully treated;

for it is that principle which lusts and struggles against the Spirit of Christ in the man in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells, and which cannot be subject to the law, if we are under the law.

N. True; as long as the flesh exists, it cannot be subject to the law of God. But we are under the law of love; and Christ and Belial cannot dwell in the same temple, that is to say, in our body.37 A. I do not like to hear the word of God inaccurately quoted, as you have just done, to give the apparent sanction of its authority to a thought which is not in it. It is clear that Christ and Belial do subsist together. They were together in the world, of which Belial himself was “the prince,” when Jesus was alive upon earth. But the word says (2 Cor. 6:15), “There is no concord between Christ and Belial,” which is a very different matter. Our body is not the temple of Belial; it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, although the root of sin still remains in us. And herein consists the essential difference between us and Jesus Christ, according to the flesh. He was born of the Holy Spirit, even as to His flesh; but we were conceived in sin; Psalm 51:5.

There is to me, I confess, something very grievous in your incorrect quotations, for by such means you throw dust into the eyes of those who are not well versed in the Scriptures. When you say, we are under the law of love, you say well. At any rate, the expression does not displease me; but as I know what it means in your doctrine, I confess it conveys an idea which pains me much. We have a much higher standard of sanctification by the rending of the veil (Heb. 6:19; ch. 10:20.) Made partakers of “the divine nature,” we judge to be sin everything which was not in Christ while on earth, and which Christ risen cannot sanction. At the same time I

see the complete sanctification of our persons by the blood of the Lamb. Instead of this, your doctrine uses the gospel as the means of lessening our responsibility, teaching us to make light of things which would be condemned as sins under the law. The light of God's holiness ought to make us judge everything which is not agreeable to that light; whereas, we are told that under this law of love these things are not imputed to us as sins—that they are not, correctly speaking, sins at all. The gospel becomes, by this means, not salvation by grace, but only a less rigorous law. Sin, as I said, is attenuated, and that to a degree almost inconceivable.

And when you say, "As long as the flesh exists," where do you find in the word that the flesh has ceased to exist? I read there (Gal. 5:17) that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other. Again I read (2 Cor. 12:7) that Paul needed a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations. It appears, therefore, that a man's being caught up to the third heaven by no means changed the nature or tendency of the flesh in its opposition and unthankfulness to God. Peter learned this by humbling experience (Gal. 2:11), for although he was filled with the Spirit, he ceased to eat with the Gentiles, and did not walk uprightly. Instead of treating these things as if they were not sins, Paul withstood Peter to the face and reproved him before them all; Gal. 2:14.

N. I admit that in some Christians there is a conflict with the flesh—that all they can do is to get the mastery over sin; but there are some who, having received Christ as their sanctification, are dead to sin and have no more

conflict. They have crucified the old man with his affections and lusts. Several passages expressly declare this; and when you refer to the Galatians, you ought to remember that they had “fallen from grace”; and no one should speak as if authorized, from such a state, to prove what a Christian can be who has fully received Christ. In the same epistle (chap. 6:14) Paul, speaking of himself, says that he had crucified the old man; in chapter 2:20, that it was not he who lived, but Christ who lived in him; and he says, Reckon yourselves to be dead; and, as the apostle John affirms, such cannot sin, because they are born of God; 1 John 3:9.

A. You admit, then, in contradiction with what you lately said, that what you call Belial, and the Spirit of Christ, exist together in the same person. For if there are conflicts in Christians, and if the flesh can lust against the Spirit, it is evident your principle is altogether false. If you say, that the conflict is not against the Spirit, but is that of a man whose conscience is awakened, I reply from the word, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit” and not merely against the conscience. But taking this principle to be applied to the Galatians, it is added, in the broadest terms, that “these are contrary the one to the other “: and when the apostle adds, “so that ye cannot38 do the things that ye would,” it is only a consequence which he draws from it for the Galatians. And the apostle does not go on to say, But you have power to escape from this condition, but he introduces at this point an altogether new principle: “If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law “(v. 18). It is so far from true, that the apostle who, doubtless, was eminently faithful, speaks of himself only, or of his state of sanctification, when he says, “I am crucified with

Christ" (chap. 2:20), that he affirms that all Christians are crucified with Him. In this same epistle (chap. 5:24) he asserts, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Here, then, is no question of any degree of sanctification, or of the reception of Christ by certain souls for their sanctification; but the apostle is speaking of what is true of all Christians. This truth is clearly taught in Romans 6: i-ii, where Paul says, "So many of us"—mark the expression— "as were baptized into Jesus Christ… are buried with him [Christ] into death; … that our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed… For he that is dead is freed from sin." But the apostle derives hence this clear and simple conclusion—not, You have therefore no more evil concupiscence—not, You are entirely dead to all sinful inclination; but—" Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." A poor, miserable, and unintelligible conclusion to those who assert that sin no longer exists in a man who is crucified with Christ; a conclusion which we receive most heartily through grace, but one which is altogether different from that which you derive from this passage. It is indeed incompatible with your interpretation of it. If sin no longer exists in us, it is a weak conclusion to say, Let it not reign; and to say, Let it not reign, is incompatible with the thought that it no longer exists. The conclusion which the Holy Spirit draws, and which we have just pointed out, is constantly that of the word of God in similar passages. Paul says to the Colossians (chap. 3:3), "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." He then concludes thus in verse 5, "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." And if you would know how the Christian is

dead, you have only to read Colossians 2:11, 12, 20. To be dead, therefore, is really true of all Christians, according to the mind of God. There is very culpable negligence in quoting such passages in proof of a state of perfection in certain Christians. The same may be said of what you advance from 1 John 3:9. When I examine the passage, instead of rinding that the apostle is there speaking of Christians who have received Christ for their sanctification, after a particular manner, and one which makes such persons perfect, I find, as in the passages we have referred to, that he is speaking of all Christians. For, as a distinctive mark between them and the children of the devil, he brings forward the character of that nature which they have received from Christ, and consequently that of their life and conduct, etc. (v. 9). The quotation of such a passage shews, I repeat it, very great negligence, not to say more.

N. Do you think, then, that we must always go on sinning? Is it not said of many of the faithful, even before the coming of Jesus Christ, that they were perfect? So far is it from true that we are saved by death, that Enoch and Elijah were translated without passing through death. Job was perfect. Noah was perfect. Abraham and the Jews were commanded to be perfect. Paul says to the Philippians (chap. 3:15), “as many as be perfect.” There are more than a hundred passages which affirm the same truth. The Lord Himself has said, “that they may be made perfect in one “(John 17:23); and Paul says to the Ephesians (5:27) in speaking of the Church, “That he might present her to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” In truth there are so many passages which

speak of perfection, that I do not understand how you can deny it or attribute to death what the word of God so clearly applies to our state, whilst we are in this present life; for that word to Abraham was, “Walk before me, and be thou perfect” Gen. 17:1. And it is manifest that the thorn in the flesh of Paul, of which you have spoken, was not a sin, for God could not try him in this way.

A. I hasten to reply that I am quite of your opinion respecting Paul’s thorn in the flesh. It assuredly was not a sin, but some chastening, something outwardly painful, which God sent to arrest the working of sin, and to prevent it from hindering the apostle’s labours. All that I infer from this passage of Paul is, that to be caught up to the third heaven does not change the flesh; that the flesh being ever the same may grow proud even of this higher knowledge of God; that the remedy does not consist in a change of the nature, but in some means of subjecting and taming that nature, which is still evil. The passage from Paul is a clear proof of this. When you ask, Are we to go on sinning? I answer, No—assuredly not! Your question evidently betrays that device of Satan which I wish to expose, and by which he beguiles the simplicity of men. The advocates of this doctrine confound, as far as they can, sin with sins; that is to say, they confound the actions we commit in following our evil nature with that nature itself, so as to deny the very existence of sin in the man who has put on Christ. I do not say that we ought to sin; for we ought to walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh; Rom. 8. But I say, on the other hand, that sin is in our nature. The precept, not to walk after the flesh, shews that the flesh is a thing evil in itself. Still the flesh is neither temptation nor

Satan, but something in the man, which is not at all sin actually committed—a something which, in our fallen and corrupt nature, cannot, as it is written, be subject to the law of God; Rom. 8:7. Now we ought never to live according to this principle; and God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear; 1 Cor. 10:13. And herein consists the difference between Christ and us as to His humanity. He was born of God, as to His flesh—we are not.

As to Enoch and Elijah, if they did not see death, it is because they were translated, which comes to the same thing; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; 1 Cor. 15:50.

Our death does not save us;39 still it is equally true that we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit are not yet made partakers of the fulness of salvation; for we are “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,” Rom. 8:23. We have not yet got possession of it. Meanwhile, there is an immense difference between my condition in this body and that in which I shall be stripped of it after this life, as there is likewise between the latter state and that in which the redemption of this body shall be completed in the resurrection. After death I am unclothed, but I am not yet clothed upon. Absent from the body, I am, already, present with the Lord; 2 Cor. 5:8. Although I am not, then, perfect in the glory, I am nevertheless delivered from this body, which as yet does not partake of that resurrection which I enjoy in my soul through the Holy Spirit. This body, which caused me to groan upon the earth (not, it is true, without consolation), and which made all groan who then had the firstfruits of the Spirit, has to all of them ceased to be a cause for groaning. That which held us bound (in

fact and not in heart) to the creation which is still subject to the bondage of corruption, no longer binds us down— the link is broken. If the goal of our hope is not attained when we are unclothed, we at least, in dying, lay aside a burden, a spotted garment, that we may at once enjoy the presence of the Lord, without hindrance; and so that the pure air and genial warmth of His presence may penetrate our souls, now liberated from every obstruction. My death, therefore, is not my saviour. When death approaches, it finds me already saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I am already risen with Him. It is a fact already accomplished in my soul, which, by the Holy Ghost, experiences the blessed effect of it, and triumphs already in a “hope which maketh not ashamed.”

The putting off of this body adds nothing to my title in the presence of God; for I am there, by faith, what Jesus is. I am merely stripped of a body, which had not partaken of redemption, to be introduced to the presence of Jesus before my heavenly Father, waiting for what remains, to wit, that I should be clothed with “a glorious body, fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ.”

I have again to reproach you with negligence in your manner of citing Scripture. I take this opportunity to press it seriously upon you, that when quotations are turned aside from their drift and true meaning, we not only deceive ourselves, but it is certain we are not led by the Spirit of God. All confidence is shaken, and the practice to any extent, if it be habitually repeated, and for the support of that which is not the truth, forces on me the conviction that he who so does is really, although unconsciously, the instrument of the adversary. Alas! we

are too apt to lose sight of the agency both of the Spirit of God and of the spirit of the enemy. I look not at the man; but I repeat that, when I see the word of God quoted in a way which is evidently false, and continually for the same purpose, I can see in it nothing less than the work of the tempter. Shall I remind you of the passages you quoted respecting the state of death as to sin, in which you say the perfect Christian is found? Well, the more I read them, the less do I think them applicable to your doctrine, and the more evident it is to me that all, without one single exception, are spoken of all Christians, to whom the Holy Spirit addresses analogous exhortations by way of practical conclusion. “Mortify you remembers which are on the earth.” “Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies.” And the same remarks apply to Romans 8:10-12, which you have not quoted.

I have the same complaint to make as to two passages which you just now brought forward. You say, Christ “will present the Church to himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” But this presentation will take place in glory, when all the children of God are glorified. This passage, therefore, is opposed to your view and does not convey it; for it is above, through resurrection, they will be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and not here below. Just so, when you say, “That they may be perfect in one “(John 17:23), you pass over what goes before and determines the sense of the passage: “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be made perfect (or consummated) in one “(v. 22).

As to the examples you have pointed to in favour of your doctrine, I will use that of Job only, because we have his

history in detail. The principle which you have advanced seems to me to have been there discussed pretty much at length. There was “none like Job in the earth.” If, therefore, we find, in the instance of such a man, that your idea that he was without sin is utterly false, all the examples which you have cited fall to the ground at once. The question opened in the book of Job is this: Can a man, full of grace, a perfect man, be said to be entirely exempt from sin, so that he may present himself before God as being without sin, and rest in his state as righteous before Him? Or is the contrary true—namely, that sin is still in him; and if, through grace, he has walked worthy of his vocation, ought he not still to consider and judge his state before God more and more? Instead of resting satisfied with the grace which has been given to him, ought he not to judge himself, forgetting the things which are behind (in other words, all his spiritual progress), in order to refer always to God alone in this respect, reaching forth, with a humility which, in the fulness of confidence in God, nevertheless judges itself continually? I do not say that he ought to watch only, but ever to judge himself; that is, he ought always to have before God a consciousness of the nature which is in him, although it may not act, which indeed is not necessary to our recognizing its existence. Now Job was a man full of grace. He recounts his experience. We at once perceive that his mind was taken up, not with the grace of God or with the grace which is in God, but with that which was wrought in himself. He looked upon the manna which had been placed in his hands—he kept of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank. God had seen all this before Job was sensible of it, and He sent him successive trials, until they brought out the workings of sin, and from his heart—where it lay hid—

brought and laid it on his conscience. Having turned back to his own heart, the flesh claimed to itself the effect of grace, and poor Job took pleasure in himself. His conscience and his heart became, in consequence, less impressed with the abounding goodness and perfect holiness of God. He was taken up with his own goodness, and that of God was necessarily lost sight of in proportion. He contemplated his own holiness, and that of God had, by so much, less hold on his conscience. But God, who loved him, sent him sufficient trials to shew him what was in his heart and to bring him back to the contemplation of the goodness and perfection of God only. We see in chapter 29 what was Job's sentiment about his own holiness and the grace which dwelt in him. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness and it clothed me: my judgment was a robe and a diadem," etc.

In fact, Job was a man full of grace; but, alas! he felt it; and his heart needed to be better taught to know what he was before God, Trials came: Job remained as exemplary in his adversity, as he had been in his prosperity. The root of sin was not yet reached. He then became more remarkable for his patience than even for his goodness, and the scripture bears this testimony to it, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job," James 5:11. God at last permits his friends to come and offer him consolations. Ah! how many privations we can endure in solitude; but no sooner do our friends become witnesses of them than our pride is aroused. The compassion of man often excites our impatience; and Job, so

distinguished for patience, at last curses the day of his birth! What, afterwards, was the final result of all these trials and of all the lessons which Job gathered from them? Instead of repeating that the eye which saw him gave witness to him, no sooner has he looked upon God than he exclaims, “Now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” chap. 42:5. Such is the history of the perfect man according to the Bible. You will say, perhaps, that I take pleasure in iniquity, and that I am seeking to defame the most eminent saints. Not so: but with all these saints I rejoice in God rather than in man, having learned with them that “were I to say I am perfect, my mouth would condemn me.”

N. But I fully acknowledge that it is the grace of God which produces perfection in me.

A. That may be. But, in speaking of your perfection, you dwell on the effect produced in yourself, and not on its source, which is in God. You do not forget your progress, that is to say, “the things which are behind,” to press toward the prize of your high calling. You manifest, unconsciously, the spirit of the Pharisee. The Pharisee began by giving thanks. What distinguishes the pharisaical spirit, therefore, is not the omitting to give thanks to God for His blessings; but its essence is this: that instead of saying, I thank Thee for what Thou art, it says, I thank Thee for what I am. The Pharisee thinks of the grace which is given and he is exalted, instead of thinking of the grace which gives and forgives.

N. But how will you get rid of the passages which I have quoted, and which speak of perfection? You have not replied to them.

A. I have not forgotten them; they are the least tenable points of your doctrine; and prove that it is entirely contrary to the truth and the holiness of God; for you thereby attenuate holiness on the one hand, and sin on the other, by not properly taking God into the account. You say, “Be ye holy, as God who hath called you is holy,” 1 Pet. 1:15, 16. But the passage reads, “Be ye holy, for he is holy.” Now every Christian acknowledges the force of this exhortation. I repeat, therefore^ that to cite such passages in proof of a state of perfection in certain Christians, is to throw dust into the eyes of the simple: for you very well know that no one is holy as God is holy. In fact, when I examine what you mean by being “perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” and “holy as God is holy,” I find that in your opinion the most pious are guilty of errors, which are departures from the perfect law, and require the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ, without which they would be exposed to eternal condemnation.40 But pray tell me, what you mean by being perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect, if the most pious do things which, but for the blood of Christ, would expose them to eternal condemnation. Could we have believed* if we had not had it before our eyes, that any one would be found to affirm, that a man who does things deserving eternal condemnation, is nevertheless sinless, and the germ of sin so entirely eradicated that he is perfect as his Father who is in heaven is perfect? And if it is said there is a divine perfection to which neither man nor angel can attain, why mock us by pretensions which are afterwards reduced to so low a standard? You say that a perfect man has all the sentiments of Jesus Christ, and that he always walks as Jesus walked,41 yet the most

pious do things which deserve eternal condemnation. Truly, you would plunge us into unheard-of confusion.

N. It is not I, but Jesus, who says, “Be ye perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect,” Matt. 5:48. And “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked,” 1 John 2:6. And again, “As he is, so are we in this world,” 1 John 4:17.

A. I know very well that these words occur in the Scriptures; but the use you would make of them is to persuade us that there are Christians who are without sin, perfectly purified from all sin, and clear from the existence of sin in their nature. But the word of God does not make use of these expressions to this end. When it is said, “Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48), Jesus Himself explains the passage by that which precedes it. This perfection consists in acting according to love, and not according to the law of retaliation, which says, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”; it is to act towards men, according to the principle of the divine conduct towards us, according to the grace of our heavenly Father. There is no allusion here to the root of sin in our nature.

The word perfection is employed with reference to the three great revelations of God. For He made Himself known to Abraham as “the Almighty,” to the Jews as “the Lord [Jehovah],” and to Christians as “the Father.” God said to Abraham, “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1); which means, that he was to walk before God, always confiding in His almighty power. Abraham did not so, he failed in this respect; for he told a lie (Gen. 20:2), precisely because he did not confide in God’s almighty power. Here, again,

the passage has no reference to the sin which had descended to Abraham by nature; but it has to do with his acting in full confidence in the almighty power of God. In point of fact, Abraham still had sin, and therefore had a fall. It is said to the Israelites, “Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord [Jehovah] thy God,” Deut. 18:13. Now this referred to their not imitating the abominations of the Canaanites in their idolatries; and not at all to the state of purification from all sin of this or that Israelite. The contrary is so true, that in the same book (Deut. 29:4) Moses tells them, “Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.” It referred, therefore, solely to their faithfulness towards God in rejecting every species of idolatry.

N. But the fulness of grace was not then existing, for it is said that the Holy Ghost was not yet given. But when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, then it is we arrive at the state of perfection.

A. Why, then, did you cite these passages, as though they supported this doctrine of perfection? But I turn now to the third passage: “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” Matt. 5:48. Observe there is a difference in the expression. It is not said, Be ye perfect before me, or, with thy God, as it had been said to Abraham and to the Israelites; because the name of Father reveals to us the fulness of grace. According to that precious name we are already children, accepted in Christ as Christ is accepted by the Father; we are already made acceptable in the Beloved, righteous before God as Jesus Christ is righteous, loved as Jesus Christ is loved. Now it is not said, Present to God a character of perfection, so that by this means ye

may be accepted and made well-pleasing to Him; but, Ye are the children of your heavenly Father: shew forth, therefore, His character in the world; “for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” He acts according to grace, and not according to law; ye saved sinners, ye are the proof of it; be His witnesses. The publicans love those who love them, but your Father loves His enemies. Act by this rule; and “be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” It is not said, Be ye perfect with Him, or before Him (as though you were without sin), but as He, act in love towards your enemies. I therefore repeat, that the question here is, not whether or not sin is in the flesh, but what is that principle which ought to regulate the conduct of the children of God, in contrast with the principle of law or of natural justice. But if by being “perfect as my heavenly Father” is to be understood the absence of sin from my nature—if it really means that I am perfectly to resemble Him in this respect, then, as perfection in us, according to you, still leaves things which expose us to eternal condemnation, it would be the same with the perfection of God—an impiety and absurdity too gross to delay us for a moment!

I said that you attenuated the idea of sin and holiness to bring them on a level with the state of your own soul. You say that man is not now bound to fulfil the law given to Adam, or that of Moses, but only the law of love, which tolerates many errors and deviations from the perfect law. If you had said that you cannot be what Adam was (although some have gone so far as to maintain the contrary), and that we do not fulfil the law of Moses, because we are sinners; if you had added, we

ought to be humbled on account of it, because sin is the cause of it, I should have nothing to object. But you assert that we are not bound to fulfil these two laws, and thus you reduce the standard of holiness; and instead of confessing such things, and humbling yourself on account of them, you say they are not sins at all. So true is the charge I bring against you, that you even tell me that deviations from the perfect law are not properly sins, although they expose us to eternal condemnation. According to you, nothing is properly a sin but a voluntary transgression of the law of God. It follows that the lusts by which Paul was convinced of sin were not really sinful, for his will was entirely opposed to them; and so with faults and sins of negligence. Except voluntary sins, for which we read in the epistle to the Hebrews there is “no more sacrifice,” all the rest are neither sin nor sins. So that when Paul exclaims (Rom. 7), “The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do,” he was quite wrong in considering such things as sins, and still more in being so distressed on account of them.

N. But Romans 7 does not describe the state of a regenerate man.

A. I am not of your opinion. I admit that Paul is there describing not a state of freedom, but the judging of the flesh in the presence of the law. This, however, is not the question which we are now considering. Whether it be or be not a regenerate man who is speaking, if nothing is sin but the voluntary transgression of the divine law, it is plain that sin in the flesh, of which the apostle is here writing, is a mere fancied thing: for what can be less voluntary than the doing that which we “would not”? If, therefore, he did the things which he would not, it was

no more a voluntary transgression; and on your principle he was quite wrong to be so distressed about it.

N. But in chapter 8 he declares that he was “free” from it.

A. Doubtless he does. But that does not hinder that, according to your system, it was not sin at all; for in chapter 7 he declares that it was so little voluntary, that it was not he who did it, but sin that dwelt in him. My dear friend, all the experiences we find in the New Testament are quite against your doctrine; and your definition of sin, that it is nothing but the voluntary transgression of the divine law, absolutely denies the existence of sin in the flesh—the existence of that sin which dwells in us even when it is subdued by the Spirit. It is a definition which attenuates the idea of sin, to make us satisfied with ourselves, instead of adoring the grace and the goodness of our God. Assuredly lust is sin; my failures in the fulfilment of the duties of love proceed from the sin which is in me. These things were not in Christ, because He was “without sin.” He ever did the will of God perfectly. He never acted, as I at times do, with precipitation. This forwardness of the flesh, even when I am doing good with all my heart, will not be imputed to me, not because it is not sin, but by reason of Christ’s expiation of it. These things are, nevertheless, the consequences of a nature which is in me, and was not in Christ, who was perfect, not only as God, but also as man. There is a principle at work in me, to bring forth evil, which principle there was not in Him. I shall not be judged on this principle because Jesus has borne the guilt of it and put it away; but that is the very reason why I should judge it.

Finally, the passage which you have cited, “As he is, so are we in this world “(1 John 4:17), is something quite different from what you would make of it. In the first place, the reference is to Christ and not to God. It is said in chapter 3:3 of the same epistle, “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” And what is this hope? It is that, “we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is “(v. 2). Thus, “as He is,” is to be as Jesus is now in glory, and not as He was, which is never said in the word. Now it is certain that, in our present state, we are not as He is. If we examine the whole of this passage (1 John 4:17) attentively, we shall clearly see what the Holy Spirit designs to teach us. It is said (ver. 9), “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” And in verse 17, “Herein is love perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.” Now love perfected with us does not make us say, So that we may be such in ourselves; but, “that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.” And what gives us this boldness? It is that God has manifested His love in sending His Son into the world; and He has finished or perfected this love by putting us into Christ Himself before His face, and that in the power of the life in which He lives, and by union with Him through the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. United to Him, even while here below, we (in this world) are not what He is personally in the glory, but perfectly as He is before God, and that by a real union, which communicates His life to us, and makes us to be accepted in the Beloved. We are loved as He is loved; righteous as He is righteous. In principle and in hope we are made partakers of His glory. And this life is imparted

to us here below, so that we walk in it in the certainty of being accepted as Christ is accepted and loved as He is loved. Whoso touches us touches Him, and Himself can say, speaking of us, “Why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4). God, in Christ, manifests His love toward man; but man, in Christ, is presented to God in the perfectness of Christ’s acceptance, and he has the enjoyment of it in the nature which has been communicated to him, and by which he participates in it. The nature which we have received is the nature of Christ Himself. It manifests itself in our walking according to its own principles. Yes, we are partakers of the divine nature: we are one with the last Adam. But then this nature does not change the old man, but judges him in all his thoughts and in all his ways.

N. But I do not say that lust is not sin; it is desire which is not sin. And when you maintain that we cannot observe the law, you seem to forget that it is written, That the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; Rom. 8:4. In fact God never commands man to do what man cannot accomplish. And in this epistle of John, which you imperfectionists would get away from, it is declared, eight times over, that he who is born of God sinneth not.

A. You certainly did say that lust is not sin, and your definition expressly declares it; for the lust in my nature in not a voluntary transgression of the divine law, if I have a will, through grace, directly opposed to it.

N. If I said that lust is not sin, it is because James says, When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin (James 1:15), and you confound temptations with lusts.

A. Alas! into what uncertainty and contradictions does error plunge the mind of man! As to the argument you derive from James, that apostle himself affirms that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed."

N. No. The proper translation of that passage is not, of his lusts; but, of his desires.

A. Your distinctions are deplorably subtle and dangerous. Thus men play with poison. It is in vain that I look for this difference; for the word which you translate desire, is the same Greek word which Paul employs in Romans 7 to express the lust by which he had been convinced of sin. And pray observe, it is there said that sin produced lust (v. 8). It is true that when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin as an act; but it is just as true that sin, which is in our nature, produces all sorts of lusts. With your definition of sin, which it totally anti-scriptural, you may indeed reason on the subject; but you will find yourself constantly in opposition to the declarations of God's word. Temptation may, doubtless, be distinguished from sin. When I abhor the evil, and the new man rejects with indignation that which Satan presents, or, it may be, flattery, it is a temptation and not a sin. But lust in me is always sin. I do not say it will be imputed to me; but that is solely and absolutely because of the blood of Christ. But the "new man" judges it as sin. Woe is me, if I do not judge it!

N. But Christ had desires.

A. Oh! see to what you are reduced, to bring Jesus Christ down to your level in order to exalt yourself! It is a fearful principle. No, no; you dare not say that Jesus Christ had desires like those which are found in our

fallen nature. You will reply, that there are desires which are not sinful. I admit it. There are for example hunger, thirst, and such like. These desires are the result of wants which our heavenly Father knows to exist in us. But would you venture to compare those desires which are in the human heart, and which, you say, occasion in the most pious, errors which require the blood of Christ, with the desires which were in the heart of the adorable Saviour? Is it not true that all the thoughts of Christ proceeded from the Holy Spirit, while He still felt the wants and sufferings of a man? Did then those evil desires which are in us, which require to be kept under, and which, if not restrained, produce sin, exist in the heart of Jesus Christ? My dear friend! the more I look into your doctrine and its tendency to reduce to the same level God, Christ (who knew no sin), and us poor vile creatures fallen from our first estate, the more do I see that, instead of being a doctrine of sanctification, it is a doctrine which, while it pretends to exalt our condition, abases all that is worthy of being exalted, exalts all that should be abased, and destroys the distinction between good and evil. You tell me, moreover, that God commands nothing but what man can accomplish. Where do you get that in the Bible? The law, for example, was given to the Israelites, that is to say, to man in the flesh. Can man fulfil it?

N. No: but we can by the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus.

A. In one sense that is true; but that, by no means, establishes the principle upon which you lay so much stress, that God commands nothing but what may be accomplished. The law was given to man in the flesh, and the New Testament teaches me, very clearly, that

God did not give the law in the thought that man could keep it. The carnal mind pretends to do so; but the word tells me that the law of God was given to convince man of sin, by the discovery that he did not keep it, so “that sin might become by the commandment exceeding sinful.” The law entered, says the apostle, that the offence might abound. Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin is dead; Rom 7:8. Remark here, in passing, that sin produces concupiscence or lust. When the law had said, Thou shalt not covet, then Paul knew sin. “The strength of sin is the law,” says the same apostle elsewhere; 1 Cor. 15:56. I gather, therefore, that in giving the law, God’s purpose was to convince man of the sin which is in him; and not, as you say, with the thought that man could and would keep it.

N. But it is said God has 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; Rom. 8:3, 4.

A. That is true; yet the iniquity of the flesh is there again pointed out, as being ever the same in its nature. But we have been made free from the law of sin and death, by the new life which we have in Jesus Christ, strengthened by the Spirit of God, which is here called the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus. We are able then, in walking according to this new life, to keep from failing in obedience to His commands, while we still judge and because we judge the flesh. But as soon as we think and act after the flesh, the law is no longer fulfilled. On the other hand, God, in giving us this life, in which we walk in love, has, at the same time, given us the knowledge of a state which convinces us that we are very far behind

Jesus Christ (that is to say, from the perfection of the example set before us). I “know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him [does not look merely at the law, but] purifieth himself, even as he is pure,” 1 John 3:2, 3. If then God gives us strength to walk in His ways, that strength is given to us through a knowledge, which, at the same time, makes us understand that we cannot, here below, attain even to that which we know. Thus, instead of an end which we can attain to embolden us, God sets before us that which hereafter will assuredly be accomplished in us, but which preserves us ever in humility, ever in the feeling that we are not all that we would be. But this very thing keeps us ever advancing towards our great end. Your principle, which has a semblance of requiring nothing but what is just and suitable, is, accordingly, entirely opposed to the mind of God; it is akin to self-righteousness, which, instead of being “strong in the grace” which God has given to us, prefers saying, I have attained to the end. God has given us a full pardon at the very outset of our career; and at its termination He has set before us a glory, the power of which is in us by the communication of the life of Christ: but the nature and the very excellence of this glory make it evident to us that it is not a thing to which we can ever attain while here below. We “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God,” Rom. 5:2. “We are saved by hope” (Rom. 8:24); and in the confidence of the certainty of God’s grace, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

N. But it is said that we are “made free “from sin itself, and not only from the law of sin.

A. If you had read the passage, you would have seen that the apostle, in saying “made free,” tells them that he speaks “after the manner of men,” because of the infirmity of their flesh. He says made free, as contrasted with slavery; and therefore he adds, by way of marking the contrast, that they had become servants to God; Rom. 6:22. It is a simple comparison between a slave and a freed man, introduced to make the matter better understood. And pray observe, that it is not the condition of a perfect Christian only, but of all Christians without exception; so that this passage is not at all applicable in support of your doctrine.

The same observation applies to the eight passages of John, whose epistle is loved by all who love God, notwithstanding the misplaced reproaches of those who so despise their brethren. Do your eight passages prove that certain Christians have attained to perfection, so that they no longer sin, while other Christians have not attained that end? By no means; they are spoken of those who are “born of God.” “He that committeth sin is of the devil; neither hath he known God” (1 John 3); so that, according to your quotation of the passages, every one who is not perfect is of the devil. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; and he cannot sin because he is born of God.” This is true, therefore, of every Christian; and I cannot understand how anyone, ever so little conversant with this matter, can reconcile such quotations with a simple heart, except by singular prejudice of mind. You will reply, that many scholars in one and the same class may have made very different progress; but this is said of the entire class and does not apply to the greater or less progress of the scholars.

N. But is it not said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself?

A. I have already answered you in principle. God necessarily commands what ought to be, not what man can perform; for this commandment, which is the essence of the law, was given to man in the flesh, when he was “without strength.” And we have already seen that, although it is the eternal law of perfect beings, it becomes, when it is imposed upon those who are already under sin, a ministry of death and condemnation; 2 Cor. 3.

N. I admit it: but we who are under grace can accomplish it.

A. I have answered you, likewise, on this point. Under grace a new life has been given to us. It is the life of Christ in us, which sees and considers Jesus Christ glorified, and which knows that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Now this life judges all things in us according to the perfection of our hereafter state in the resurrection. It discerns that we have not yet obtained the redemption of our body. It judges the old man in us—his root, his trunk, and his branches. But all the while the Christian purifies himself as Christ Himself is pure. Observe, it is not only said that he aims at growth in Christ, but that he purifies himself as He is pure. He does not say that he is purified, but that he purifies himself after the resemblance of Christ glorified; and, knowing that the time is not yet come for the redemption of his body, he dreams not of perfection here below.

N. I think I understand you. The Christian has already in his soul “the power of the resurrection.” Nothing which is not after the power of the resurrection can satisfy him. He does not think that he has attained it, although he follows after such a purification of himself as he sees in Christ, whose life he possesses, and into whose image he is already changed from glory to glory; 2 Cor. 3:18. Yet it seems to me discouraging to say to a Christian, You never can attain the object you have in view.

A. But he is certain of obtaining his object! And it is evident that, instead of discouraging him, it is, in God’s mind, the very way to urge him onward; “for every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure,” 1 John 3:3. And Paul says, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; Phil. 3:13, 14. This view, according to your system—which lowers all the privileges of Christianity—this view, I say, according to your system, may discourage; but it is because your Christianity is, in a great degree, man’s Christianity and not God’s: a Christianity which works in order to obtain eternal life, and not because God has given it to us. What you really want is, not to be able to say, “I shall apprehend here below”; but it is to be able to say with the apostle, that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus; Phil. 3:12. What you really want is to believe that, through grace, we have in us the very fife of Jesus—eternal fife by our union with Him; that all things are ours; that we are joint-heirs with Christ; that we are assured of the love of God; that we are loved of Him as Jesus Christ is loved.

Therefore with joy and gladness of heart we press onward, while on earth, toward the realization of this glory. By the power of the Holy Ghost we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory; by faith we are already made partakers of a perfection which will be given to us in its fulness, when Jesus Christ returns. “We have our citizenship in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself,” Phil. 3:20, 21.

No; we say not that we must stumble; for, theoretically, why cannot we walk every moment after the Spirit? But, practically and by experience, we know that in many things we do offend all; James 3:2. But, while confessing our fault, and that we are without excuse, we know that God is faithful, and that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. God, who loves us, and brings good out of evil, although He never justifies it—God, I say, humbles us either by His Spirit or by His chastenings, and gives us a deeper understanding of the boundless riches of His grace. And even I speak not now of outward falls; and I am very far from affirming that failures are necessary for our instruction; but in point of fact we do learn, in the tender and faithful care of our God, that His grace is sufficient for us, that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. But your doctrine fixes the heart upon low views, and in the belief that you have realised them, your Christianity becomes debased and proud. Your watchfulness is no fruit of confidence in God’s love, and joy in His holiness and in communion with Him, but of fear; for one of your perfect men may,

at the end, find himself in hell! In fact, one of your most distinguished teachers, who assuredly was a child of God, was four times perfect. He fell away from this state, he tells us (and the reason assigned is curious enough), because, in the state of perfection, there was unfaithfulness in his conduct: he consequently lost what had been given to him; and you caution us against those who profess that once in grace we are always in grace and infallibly in glory. I admit that the presence of the Spirit gives a happy inconsistency to those who are in this system; and I bless the Lord for it. Air. Wesley, who thought at first that a perfect man could not fall from that state, afterwards affirmed that it was a great error to think so.

N. But we see some who are in this state of perfection and divine joy. They are made perfect in love: loving them is perfect. They are filled with the Holy Spirit and with all the fulness of God. Moreover, Jesus Christ, “in whom was no sin,” has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

I quite see that you have a principle which, in virtue of our union with Christ, places perfection higher and presents it to us such as we cannot realize upon earth. On your principle, although we heartily follow Jesus Christ, the old man remains unchanged by nature, even when it is so kept under that it cannot act. Notwithstanding, I cannot renounce my views of perfection here. It is a state so full of joy and so desirable! I have seen individuals so blessed and so sanctified!

A. It is the truth that sanctifies: and if your doctrine is not truth, notwithstanding all appearances—

notwithstanding the reality of a portion of this blessedness—after all, it cannot be a sanctification according to God. In fact, instead of making me advance, that which you offer makes me retrograde. By what you call the law of love and the life of Christ, you send me back to the perfection of Adam, and even much lower; for you cannot deny the presence of evil, and that boasted perfection of yours you consider quite reconcilable with things which may expose us to eternal condemnation, and which require to be expiated by the blood of Christ.

You will say, perhaps, that there is a more exalted perfection and which is heavenly and divine. But why, then, do you understand of your notion of earthly perfection all the passages which speak of the former? I believe, on the contrary, that the entrance of sin has completely altered the nature of our relationship with God. I could never more return to the state of Adam before the fall. I now partake of “the divine nature “by promises infinitely superior to anything Adam enjoyed. I do not see that God has restored the first Adam, but He has united us to the last Adam. Our glory does not consist in our ignorance of evil, but in the enjoyment of the results of a complete victory over evil itself. Although the law, in its essence, is the rule of every pure being before God, it is, on that very account, no longer the character of our state before Him; for we are very far from being pure according to its requirement. And the thought of grace does not exhibit the creature in its perfection before God, but is the bringing in of the nature, goodness, and power of the Creator into the midst of evil, over which His perfections are victorious.

Grace, therefore, recognizes the existence of the evil, over which it triumphs.

By our union with Christ the divine nature is communicated to us; but the final result (that is to say, perfection) will be found only in resurrection. Until then, or at least so long as we are in this body, we ought always to live according to the Spirit. But we ought not to deny the existence of evil; for to deny it is to change the very essence, riches, counsels, and all the fulness of grace. You would replace me before God in the condition of our creation and even much below it. I, on the contrary, see the introduction here below of the life and nature of the Creator into the midst of evil itself. But I see my perfection only in my being presented before God when, the last victory having been won, I shall be fashioned after the resemblance of the last Adam, who is the accepted and glorified Man according to the counsel of God the Father. In the meanwhile, all the riches of the "divine nature "are developed in my heart and understanding, in order that, when I shall be made perfect, I may find myself in the presence of God, whom I know, the friend of my weakness and the glory of my strength. It is to this end the Spirit has been given to me. He is the seal of my redemption in Jesus Christ. He is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory; Eph. 1:14. He is not in me the seal of the fruits which He Himself produces; but He is the seal of the redemption which has been accomplished in Jesus Christ.

I now return to some texts which you have cited. "Made perfect" say you, "in love." If you do but read the passage, you will see that it has no reference whatever to the absence of sin in the flesh, but to that full

confidence in the love of God which sets the heart at liberty in His presence, and gives us peace and joy in communion with Him. The whole passage reads thus: “Herein is love made perfect with us [see margin of our Bible], that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love,” 1 John 4:17, 18. You see at once that there is no question here touching the absence of sin from the flesh, but concerning an entire assurance in the love of God; for His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us: not that we loved God, but that He loved us. There is, therefore, an essential difference between these passages and your doctrine.

This love of God is shed abroad in the heart: God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us. Made partakers of the divine nature, and filled with the Holy Ghost, we are hence filled with love, that is, with the consciousness of His love; and, consequently, we love in a divine manner. But it does not follow that the flesh is changed. The soul which is full of the Holy Ghost thinks of the love which is in God, and not of the love which we have for God—it, consequently, acts in love.

And this leads me to what you say about the condition of certain souls, when they are set at liberty, and have tasted of this love. The truth of their state, I doubt not, is this: they are filled, they are absorbed with it; hence, as the capacity of the heart is limited, they suppose that nothing else exists, or ought to exist, within them. But sin is still found in their nature. Nay more; it sometimes sends forth shoots, precisely because they stop and

dwell on the effect of this love in themselves, instead of on the source whence it springs. For from the moment we look on ourselves, and on the effects which grace produces in us, communion with the source of grace is suspended. Owing to the deceitfulness of the heart, the very effects of grace become an occasion of sin and especially of falling into pride.

Vain is the effort to draw fresh strength from the effects of grace already received; for the conscience is never therein brought into exercise, not even in our most elevated spiritual life; whilst it is in continual exercise so long as we are thinking of God. And as the liveliness of conscience in the presence of God is ever the cause of our safety in practical walk, the moment I look back to myself to contemplate the grace which is in me, from that moment I am in a way to fall, and am very far departed from the source of my spiritual strength. Think of this: for, notwithstanding all you say, the heart is deceitful. I believe that the feeling of God’s love shed abroad in the heart is, by the persons you refer to, confounded with the absence of sin. But to be occupied with this feeling is, in reality, a way to fall into sin.

Mr. Wesley distinguishes this state from a state of perfection, which, in his opinion, shews itself in three ways, by the experience of the heart, first, in the absence of sin; second, in perfect love; and third, by the witness which the Holy Spirit bears to the perfect man, of His complete sanctification, as of his justification. But when I search the Scriptures for proofs of this witness borne by the Holy Spirit, I nowhere find them. If I consult Mr. Wesley, the only answer he can give me is, that if these things are affirmed to me by a true man, and no sufficient reasons exist for disbelieving the

statement, I ought not to reject his testimony. “But not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth,” 2 Cor. 10:18. When I turn to Paul, I meet with very different language. Does Paul go back to rest upon his own feelings? His conscience bears him good witness. “I know nothing by myself,” says he, “yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord,” 1 Cor. 4:4. Again, I say, that it is in vain I search the whole Bible for this witness, given by the Holy Spirit to our souls, of our complete sanctification. I clearly see in the Scriptures that we are children, heirs of all things, objects of God’s perfect love—that in communion with Him we have the enjoyment of this love, that we may glory in Him; but as to our entire sanctification, I nowhere find it. It is a notion which can in no way be made to accord with the true perfection—that perfection which is ours, and already enjoyed by us in hope, but which will be completed only in the resurrection. For we “ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,” Rom. 8:23. “For we know that the whole creation (of which our bodies are a part) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now “(v. 22). Observe, these words do not occur in Romans 7 but in chapter 8, which speaks of the soul set at liberty—the soul that has received the witness of the Spirit, and is at liberty, because it has received this witness. As to the other passages which you have quoted, you join two together, which, however, are not connected in the word, that you may derive from them an inference which may have some appearance of truth. You tell me that He in whom was no sin (1 John 3:5) has left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). This is not in the New Testament. We

read (1 Pet. 2:21, 22), that “Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” Now, He is the example, not of what we are (which it would be folly to pretend), but of what our conduct ought to be. Elsewhere it is said, “He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin,” 1 John 3:5. But in this latter passage nothing is said of Jesus Christ as our example.

John declares, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,” 1 John 1:8. This text is, of itself, enough to destroy your whole system. In order to elude the force of this declaration, you comment upon it by making it the same as another passage, “If we say that we have not sinned,” etc. But this conveys quite a different idea, and exposes the fundamental error of your doctrine, which confounds sins committed with the sin which dwells in us, that you may entirely deny the latter.

There are two passages which I should wish you to compare with your lamentable definition of sin, which consists, say you, solely in the voluntary violation of the law of God. The first is, “Cleanse thou me from secret [faults],” Psa. 19:12. The second says, still more expressly, “And the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass offering; he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord,” Lev. 5:18, 19.

N. But that was under the law.

A. True; but should your estimation of sin be less scrupulous, less exact, less holy, and less perfect, now

that we have a larger and deeper knowledge of God? See in this the fault of your system, which lays down that lust is not sin; that errors which expose to eternal condemnation are not sin; and that nothing is sin but the voluntary violation of the law of God. On the contrary, I am persuaded that whatever in my heart separates me from communion with God, because it grieves the Holy Spirit, is sin; for, whatever it be, it proceeds from my corrupt nature, and I have no desire to lower the standard of sanctification in order to escape from this conviction. Moreover, my assurance flows from quite a different source from yours. It is founded on the certainty of the love of God for me a sinner; and this love was manifested toward me while I was in my sins. It is founded on the certainty of my resurrection with Jesus, through the faith of the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead, and by which I am seated, such as He is before God His Father.

I am aware that you but seldom read the Old Testament: but have you ever noticed that leaven was forbidden in the cake which represented Christ, and which was an offering to Jehovah of a sweet savour; while leaven was commanded in the cake on the day of Pentecost? Now the latter was the type of the gathered Church, and, because of the leaven, which represents sin, it could never be burnt as a sweet savour to Jehovah; Lev. 2 and 7:13.

Once more I say, then, my opposition to your system is grounded on your definition of sin and on your lowering the standard of our sanctification; for sanctification is and ought to be founded on our union with Jesus Christ risen and glorified, which teaches us to purify ourselves even as He is pure, and not to say, as you do, that we are

without sin, and afterwards confess that we do things which expose us to eternal condemnation.

If you have comprehended what I said to you about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you will, without difficulty, understand what is contained in Philippians 3. This is, that the perfect Christian, instead of being perfect here below in this body, has apprehended the doctrine of the resurrection. He has been renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him. He does not persuade himself that he has attained the end, because he knows no end but the calling on high in Christ Jesus. And, instead of imagining that he is such as Jesus Christ, our well-beloved Saviour, was, when on earth, he says in this sense, Though I have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know I Him no more.

N. But you are opposing our views of perfection, because you require a more perfect sanctification—a higher perfection than we do.

A. Exactly so. But I oppose it likewise because you lower the notion of sin to place it on the level of your state of perfection. And why? In order that you may say you are perfect; and that from this perfection, thus lowered, you may finally conclude that you are without sin. You affirm that there is a second class of Christians who are righteous as God is righteous; who, in this world, are as God is. Then, by an inconsistency which, nevertheless, explains itself, you tell us these same perfect ones do things which, but for the expiation of Christ, would expose them to eternal condemnation. I add, likewise, on this subject, that you pervert texts by separating them from their context.

N. But I have some other texts to bring forward. In Ezekiel 36:25, 26, it is said, “From all your filthiness will I cleanse you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” And in 1 John 1:7, it is written, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.”

A. Dear brother! your first text is a promise which God makes to the Jews for the last days, as you may see in reading the chapter which contains it, and where it is accompanied by earthly blessings, particularly with the restoration of that nation to their land. It is a promise to take away their hardness of heart, and to give them a tender heart capable of receiving the instructions of the Lord; but it has nothing to do with the destruction of sin. Therefore this promise is also fulfilled in us as soon as we are “born of God “; for to me it is clear that our Lord in His conversation with Nicodemus particularly alluded to this; John 3. It is applicable, accordingly, to all those in whom, as you allow, sin is not destroyed; it speaks not of the radical destruction of the old man, but of the communication of the life of God. As to the cleansing from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, He has done that by His expiation; but the change of heart is constantly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, and to that water of which it is said, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet,” John 13:10. The priesthood of Christ is specially applied to this office; and the necessity for that priesthood is owing to the continuance of the existence of sin in us, and of its effects through our carelessness of walk.

N. But we find also in the Lord’s prayer, Let thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

A. That petition is a prayer for the state of the earth, and not of my heart. Christ, who did the will of God every day, might address it to His heavenly Father. It is a desire which will be fulfilled when the kingdom of the Father shall come; a kingdom which is the object of the preceding petition, and which petition, in fact, introduces the one we are now considering. How many are the ardent desires of the heart that are expressed by sighs and cries to God, and will be accomplished only by an entire change of the circumstances in which we are placed, when the children of God shall be manifested!

N. But if I am not entitled to say that I am perfect, I ought, at least, to aim at becoming so, for it is written, “Let us go on unto perfection,” Heb. 6:1.

A. Have you examined the passage you have just quoted?

N. No, not particularly; but the expression seems to me very simple.

A. I have already begged of you always to read the context before you receive a passage as having such a sense or such a bearing; and in order that you may ascertain the meaning of the Holy Spirit. For example, there is no reference in this passage to the state of sanctification, but to the advancing in knowledge. Paul, therein, draws a contrast between the principles of the doctrine of Christ (such as a believing Jew might have understood them before the day of Pentecost), and that knowledge which the Holy Ghost gives of the fulness of the glory of the Son of man exalted above all.

I add one remark in connection with this passage. You will find at the end of the preceding chapter (v. 13, 14) that milk is suited to babes, but strong meat belongeth

to them that are of full age. This character of men of full age is expressed in the original by the word which is generally rendered perfect. For, in Greek, the word perfect signifies also one of full age. To quote all the passages where the word “perfect” occurs is really a mere waste of words. The expression is most frequently applied to the state of a man who has fully apprehended the whole extent of the truth which is in Christ, both as regards the privileges and the conduct of Christians, which full apprehension leads us to the conviction of our state of imperfection. Therefore, when Paul says, “As many of us as be perfect,” he adds in the same passage, “I count not myself to have apprehended.” Jesus Christ had apprehended him for the resurrection of the dead. Having learned the purpose of Jesus, Paul pressed towards the mark, and, by so doing, acknowledged the imperfection of his actual condition. I might lay down that the ordinary sense of the word ‘perfect’ in the Greek, is to have reached our full stature in Christ, without any reference to the presence or the absence of sin.

N. But this sense does not rest solely on the word ‘perfect.’ For example, it is said, Every one that is perfect shall be as his master; Luke 6:40.

A. Well, this passage has nothing to do with the existence or absence of sin, but refers to the principles of the believer’s conduct (that is to say, to the complete reception of the principles of his Master, as a rule of conduct). Here, again, the Christian ought not to act on the law of retaliation, nor on the principles of the Jews, but on those of Jesus Christ Himself. The whole of the Lord’s exhortation is as follows: “Give to every man that asketh of thee,” etc. (Luke 6:30). “Love ye your

enemies," etc. (v. 35). "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful," etc. (v. 36). "And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? "(v. 39). "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master "(v. 40). You see therefore, that there is no allusion here to the nature of the disciple, but to the light and principles which ought to guide him.

For my part, I admit no example but the perfect walk of Jesus Christ Himself. But Christ, in His nature, was without sin, and I was shapen in iniquity: and although I put off the old man and put on the new, the work of God does not consist in restoring the first Adam here below, but in communicating to me the life of the last, to which I shall be made conformable when I see Him as He is, and never till then. It is a fact that many passages are brought forward, as though they were applicable to us on earth, which in the word are applied to the glorified state; such as Romans 8:23; Ephesians 5:25-27; John 17:22, 23.

What we have just said of that text ("Every one that is perfect shall be as his master "), equally applies to the following expressions: "for the perfecting of the saints" (Eph. 4:12); "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. 3:17. The words here translated 'perfecting' and 'throughly' are different Greek words from that which is employed in Philippians 3:15, and in other places. They have no reference to indwelling sin, or to that which exists in our nature, but to the teaching of Christ, and to the reception of all the principles of His doctrine, in order to the full edification of all believers.

N. Have you read the pamphlet which has been published lately?42 A. I have examined what appeared to me the most important part of it, namely, all the passages of the word of God which are therein quoted. We have already spoken of the principal ones. The greater part have not even so much as the appearance of relation to the subject. For example, in order to shew that we may attain to perfection on earth, this passage is cited: “Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,” Heb. 3:7. There is not, in the whole chapter whence I take these words, a passage that has more reference to the subject than that. Again, in that work, these expressions are brought forward—” to be full of the Spirit,” “to be filled with the Spirit,” to prove that we ought to be without sin. It cannot be necessary, I should think, to refute such reasoning. There are many passages referring to the work of Christ for us, which are applied to the work of Christ in us; as, for example, “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” Heb. 10:14. “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” which “cleanseth us from all sin,” Rev. 7:14; 1 John 1:7. “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” Heb. 9:26, etc., etc.

As you have yourself referred to this pamphlet, I have some further remarks to make upon it. You may observe, in the first place, the way in which the question is stated: it is not at all the love of God for us. The perfecting of love and the accomplishment of love are nowhere in it presented as the love of God for us; but as a love which is required from us and which is exacted in the very language of the law. This is the leading idea.

Christian perfection is represented as consisting in the accomplishment, on our part, of the highest requirement of the law; and it is added as a second principle, that God commands it and declares it indispensable. I fully admit that the knowledge of the perfect love of God (1 John 4:10) necessarily produces in us a reciprocity of love. It is feeble, doubtless, but it is real, and it is pure; for we know the love of God, by being made "partakers of the divine nature," and by this love being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. Then God dwelleth in us and we in Him. The love with which He loves us is, therefore, shed abroad in our hearts; and the consciousness which we have of this shews itself in our love for Him. The brightness of His countenance shines on ours, and ours reflects its mild and powerful rays. This reflected shining is well pleasing to Him, because He knows the source whence it proceeds. And as it is by the gift of the Holy Ghost that we have known the love of God, it is by that same Spirit that the love of our hearts returns, without effort, towards the love which we have known in Him.

But when you tell me that God commands this love, and requires it as indispensable, you place me under law, and do away with the very principle of justification by confounding it with sanctification; you put aside grace, the grand principle of the gospel, God justifying the ungodly. By thus confounding this love where it exists, with perfect holiness and with the absence of sin, you assuredly give proof of a deep ignorance of your own heart—an ignorance which must go on increasing, and which is found in all whom I have met with entertaining this thought. It is possible that some who are sincerely seeking communion with God may escape this delusion,

by those happy inconsequences which result from the working of the Holy Spirit within us; but these errors and this darkness are the natural consequences of the principle itself, and are seen in the great majority of those who have embraced this doctrine.

Let us never confound a conduct void of offence with absence of all sin (that is, with the extirpation of the germ of sin from our nature). The Christian ought, certainly, to maintain a conduct void of offence; he ought ever to walk in the Spirit; he can never justify himself for having walked one moment in the flesh; all his faculties should be used, not by the flesh, but by the new man, that he may never stumble. He can never excuse himself by saying, “Alas! it is the flesh which is still in me, which occasioned my fall”; for that flesh ought to have been mortified, while the Spirit ought to regulate all our thoughts. He ought to have exclaimed, “Alas! I have failed in watchfulness, in prayer, in the use of the means of grace.” Perhaps he has not sufficiently examined the state of his own heart; and his distress, as in the case of Job, has been permitted for his instruction. Still he is without excuse. The blood of Jesus Christ, doubtless, expiates the sin; but as for himself, he has failed; for God is faithful, who would not have suffered him to be tempted above what he was able to bear. And if he should go on to plead, “I am but a child; I am still so weak in faith”; I reply, It makes no difference; for if the fear and distrust of self, which properly befit weakness, had been found in his heart, he would never have failed in this way: if he has fallen, it is because sin (that is, the principle of selfwill) was active within him.

Allow me to direct your attention to another defect in the reasoning of those who propound this doctrine. You

bring forward the cases of several believers of the Old Testament, who were called perfect. I prove to you that they have sinned: on this you reply, “That proves nothing against those who are under the more excellent grace of the new dispensation.” But why, if so, did you cite them?

It is remarkable, that after the day of Pentecost, not even a single instance can be mentioned of a man’s being called perfect. There is an important reason for this. The gift of the Holy Spirit has made us capable of detecting and judging the “old man,” of condemning sin in the flesh, and judging nature; because we have the full knowledge of the relationship between our new man and Jesus Christ. Under the former dispensation, a man, who kept the commandments and ordinances of the law blamelessly, might be called “perfect,” because it had not taught them to discern between the old and the new man, as we can do in the full light which the new dispensation has brought us. A man who walked well was perfect. But the manifestation of the new man, Christ risen, has caused us to know and discern, as a perfectly distinct thing, the old man Adam and his condemnation. With Paul we now can say by the Spirit, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20); and in another place, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,” Rom. 7:20. The being “made free,” spoken of in Romans 8, has rendered us capable of judging the old man, as a nature condemned by God, because we assuredly know that we have another nature, in which we live, and by which we can thus judge it. Your doctrine of perfection, on the contrary, carries us back to the law, and takes away the full light of Christ, in order to make us satisfied with ourselves.

But, observe, the principle which I have advanced supposes that we walk “in the Spirit” by a much higher rule, which admits of no pattern of conduct save the life of Christ on earth; and no standard of perfection but the glory of Christ above in heaven. What we do is not what we are. Since the fall, and since our regeneration, these two things must be distinguished. Jesus Christ is the example of what we ought to do, but He cannot be the example of what we are; for we are, actually, born in sin, and He was not.

I will add another remark, connected with what I have just said. One would never have believed that anyone could have maintained that a state of perfection here on earth was the chief end of the birth, life, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, of the Christian revelation, of the preaching of the gospel, and of the scripture truth of election. And who indeed could have imagined that heaven, that our being made like unto Jesus in glory, our being with Him, the joy of His presence, that the exemption from all evil, from sorrow and from tears, that the possession of the glory of God, and life with Jesus Christ in His presence—in a word, that the union of Christ with the Church in glory should form no part in the great end of all that God has done in Christ, and that all these things (and even many of the texts which speak of them) should be taken as referring only to what we are on earth?

Raise, as high as you will, the standard of holiness which we can attain on this earth, I hope to agree with you. But, as I have already told you, your standard is too low for me; for, according to you, a man does not commit sin although he does things which expose him to eternal damnation. And again, you say, the very highest point we

are to aspire to is to be made like the first Adam, not like the last Adam. But at least do not refuse me, as the chief end of the work of Christ, the presence, glory, and heavenly rest of God. Say not, as you do say, that that which I can realize on earth is “the rest which remaineth for the people of God.” Alas! if it is thus with you, your religion, my dear friend, is of an earthly character. Instead of opening heaven before us, instead of encouraging us by such a motive to advance indefinitely in the career of holiness and piety, instead of making us feel, by that which imparts to us this new strength, that we are still far from the end to which, through grace, we shall surely attain, all your efforts are directed to the making the whole revelation of the grace of Christ serve to set up again a sort of Judaism. Paul, who perhaps attained the highest rank among the soldiers of the faith, has said, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,” 1 Cor. 15:19. It was because he had received the first-fruits of the Spirit that he groaned within himself (Rom. 8:23), that he fought, not as one that beats the air, but kept under his body and brought it into subjection; 1 Cor. 9:26, 27. Is this, then, the rest which remaineth for the people of God? Alas, what delusion! What, then? are there no internal combats? I will admit, if you please, that we may go on until we no longer have to struggle in conflict with our enemy, who harasses us with all his might. But what?—shall we not want continual watchfulness to hold in an enemy who is our prisoner, but whose enmity and malice are unchanged, and who at any moment may break out and do us hurt?

I have but one more remark to make on the manner of quoting scripture that occurs in the pamphlet of which

you spoke. I desire to call your attention to the criminal practice of joining the middle of one passage to a part of another, just as if the Holy Spirit employed the latter on the same occasion as the former, when it is not so. Take the following instances. I am struck by this even in its title-page. I read there, “Be ye perfect,” which is part of a sentence taken from Matthew 5:48. “Every one that is perfect shall be as his master,” another portion from Luke 6:40: and to these is joined, in a manner still more surprising, this fragment from Paul, “Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded “(Phil. 3:15), the whole concluding with the verses, “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing,” etc. (1 Tim. 6:3, 4).

A simple mind would naturally conclude that “teaching otherwise “was a reference to the thought continued in the preceding verse. But no; the beginning of the third quotation is in Philippians 3:15; and the last passage, “If any man teach otherwise,” etc., is taken from 1 Timothy 6:3, 4, in which the Holy Spirit applies the words to the duty of servants to their masters, and the honour which servants owe to the latter, if they are children of God. What can be said of such quotations?

Sometimes two passages are mingled in one quotation, and the reader is left to unravel its parts. It is said, for example, “He that shall endure unto the end, in the faith which worketh by love, that man shall be saved.” There is no such passage in God’s word. The author has inserted a portion of Galatians 5:6, into the middle of a passage taken from Matthew 24:13, and has connected it by the words in the and that man, which are not found

in either verse. Now the verse in Galatians has no reference to the “enduring to the end” mentioned in Matthew; and this last passage speaks of the afflictions of the disciples in the distress of Jerusalem.

“By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified … if they do but hold fast the beginning of their confidence.” It is true the places are given whence the texts are taken; but the condition, appearing in the latter words, is not at all connected in God’s word with the truth laid down in the former.

Let these examples be a warning to you to be on your guard. And beware of receiving as a genuine quotation— either as to its terms, or as expressing the meaning of the Holy Spirit— any passage, the sense of which you have not verified in the context.

I have now two general observations to make on the two principal parts of this pamphlet. To prove the point that the state of soul depicted in Romans 7 is no other than that of an unregenerate man, the writer proceeds to bring forward, on behalf of every regenerate man, all the texts which had been brought forward as characterizing the state of a perfect man, in contradistinction with a Christian who still knows internal conflicts. Then, when the writer is trying to prove that such or such a passage does not apply to a regenerate man, in order to bring out the contrast, he quotes the very same passages (chap. 8), as if they were only to be understood of the regenerate generally. One example will explain what I mean: (p. 101)— the regenerate man: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” etc. Now we have before seen, that this text has been

already quoted to shew that the state of a perfect man is altogether distinct from that of a regenerate man. It is now applied to the latter, in order to make it appear that Romans 7 does not at all describe the state of regeneration. Such inconsistency cannot be of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. What purpose can it serve to plunge us into principles which contradict each other? Such confusion ever marks false doctrine.

The assertions which we find at the beginning of the article, entitled “Evidences of the New Birth,” etc., p. 170, appear to me entirely at variance with that instantaneous change, greater than justification itself, of which Mr. Wesley speaks. Here it is a question of degree, “in some degree,” as it is said, in the condition of all. But, tell me, what mean the words, “at the commencement of our justification? “Is justification a work which is effected in us progressively? Here, again, all the characteristics of perfection are given as evidences of the new birth.

I now come to my second remark. In the whole of Mr. Wesley’s work on Christian Perfection, the love of God towards us is never once mentioned, either as the subject of our gratitude, or as a motive to obedience. We are not told that the thought of this love holds any place in the heart of the perfect man. This is an extraordinary fact. I read in 1 John 4, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us”—a doctrine very remarkable in this epistle, which treats of that “perfect love which casteth out fear.” It finds place there, precisely that we might be kept from the error into which Mr. Wesley—too confident in himself—has fallen, in company with all mystics: an error natural to the heart of man, who, when through grace, he loves God, turns back upon himself,

reflecting upon what he is towards God, and forgetting what God is towards him.

Two great truths are constantly to be kept in view. First, To love God, because He ought to be loved, and so to reflect His image in purity. This is what the law requires, but man has failed in this. Secondly, Grace presents to us the love of God towards us, when we were unworthy of it. It places us in Christ, on a new and immutable foundation of eternal joy; it presents to us God Himself under an aspect unknown to Adam, and which was impossible under the law (for the law necessarily requires perfect love in us; it cannot, it ought not to spare any sinner). But, by the regenerating power of the life of Christ, we are renewed in the image of God; but we are renewed entirely on the principle of an eternal gratitude, which alone puts God in His right place with regard to the creature; and which puts the creature, dead and made alive again, in its place in relation to God. The Wesleyan system deliberately replaces the creature under the requirement of the law, and thus overturns the entire gospel.

N. But there can be no doubt that Mr. Wesley preached the love of God to sinners.

A. I do not deny it, though it was in a vague manner. He preached it even more than some others who proclaimed the necessity of regeneration rather than made proclamation of the love of God. Nevertheless, he replaces the regenerate man under law. In other respects there is a great deal of confusion in his doctrine; for in the midst of the highest requirement of law, he allows of things which require the expiation of the blood of Christ. However, he clearly proves what I

say, by the very fact that, in the character of a perfect Christian, he makes no mention of the love of God towards us. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” The same remark may be made on the note, entitled “Evidences of the New Birth,” in which, as in his exposition of Romans 7, the author again completely confounds the regenerate with the perfect man. Confusion and error always go hand in hand.

Allow me, on this subject, to quote a text which has struck me forcibly. Ignorance and error are spoken of among you as distinct from sin. But I read in Matthew 6:23, “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” If, therefore, I am in error, in darkness as to certain things, my eye also has been in some degree not single. Nothing remains then but the alternative—thine eye is evil. Darkness has ensued. A false judgment ever proceeds from wandering affections.

To conclude, I think that Satan has been jealous of the work of the Holy Spirit, which was awakening a desire of some better way. To destroy the effect of this desire, in whole or in part, he has mixed up his work with those right desires which were stirred in the hearts of many Christians. Alas! that is what he often does. Let us ask of God to guide us into all truth, and, in His mercy and the multitude of His loving-kindness, to bring good out of evil itself. May He give us to try all things by the fight of His word, and with the power of His Holy Spirit. Amen. 43 35 Lausanne, 1840. (Translated from the French.)

36 The reader will be reminded, by occasional references to the tract here alluded to, and also by the concluding remark, that the original of this dialogue was

published in a foreign country under peculiar circumstances.

37 See Wesley, p. 17.

38 I quote from the authorised version, but, excellent as it is, in this verse it contains an error. It states an impossibility of walking according to holy desires; the original does not. It says, not “so that ye cannot,” but “in order that ye should not.” It does not affect the question here.

39 Yet if taken in its full sense, it is nothing less than death that does save us. “He that is dead is freed from sin.” In this true scriptural sense it is death, and nothing else, as regards the first Adam state, which saves us. Christ saved us by dying for sin; and we are dead to sin, and have to reckon ourselves dead by faith.

40 See Wesley, p. 40.

41 Ibid., p. 17.

42 Exposition de la Perfection Chretienne par Jean Wesley, et suivie de notes par Anthelme Boucher. Lausanne, 1840.

43 The references to Wesley are to the “Plain Account of Christian Perfection,” by the Rev. John Wesley, 16th edition, Mason, 1835.

On The Presence And Action Of The Holy Ghost In The Church:

In Answer To The Work Of Mr. P. Wolff, Entitled, “Ministry As Opposed To Hierarchism And Chiefly To Religious Radicalism,” Valence, 1844

Preface

This answer to Mr. Wolff’s pamphlet upon Ministry was written immediately after the publication of that work. The author of the answer having been absent from the country for eleven months, the manuscript remained in the hands of a friend until his return. Since then, evangelistic labours and other occupations, still more important than controversy, have retarded the preparation of the manuscript for the press, to which it is at last given up.

In this interval the Evangelical Society of Geneva, and the Lay Society of the Canton de Vaud, have recommended Mr. Wolff’s pamphlet in their reports; so that the approbation which is given to this pamphlet, pretty plainly marked by facts, is now avowed. This renders my task more painful, but less difficult; for I can treat the writing which I am answering, not as that of a young student who is making, so to speak, his first campaign, and whom one would desire to spare, but as a work sanctioned by grave men who must have weighed things, who must have felt their own responsibility towards the Church of God, when they publicly recommended a treatise upon a subject so serious as that of ministry. It is to be supposed that they have examined the reasonings and the proofs advanced as

having been taken from the word of God; and, by recommending this work to the whole Church, they have made themselves responsible for its contents.

The Lay Society, it is true, is careful not to take the responsibility of all the contents of the work; but, desiring the refutation of the system which it calls “Plymouthism,” it points to Mr. Wolff’s pamphlet as answering this end. (Sitting of the Committee of June 9th, 1843: Bulletin, No. 5, pp. 155, 156.)

The Report of the Evangelical Society of Geneva makes no such reserve. These are the words (p. 35): “Others have combated this [Plymouthism] with advantage; more particularly a student of our school of theology, in a work whose scriptural arguments cannot be shaken.”

There will be found, in the body of this answer, inconsistencies in the feelings which I have expressed with regard to that work. Sometimes my heart has spoken in favour of the writer; sometimes I have not been altogether able to contain the indignation which I felt in seeing the way in which the word of our God has there been treated.

I have left these inconsistencies such as they are, because it was the true expression of what I felt. But now that this work must be regarded as the statement of the feelings of the Evangelical Society of Geneva, or at least of its leaders, and that they have put their approbation upon these arguments by calling them scriptural, the reserve which the circumstances of a young man called for no longer exists. Looked at as coming from the hands of learned, grave, and pious men —men in a responsible position—men who, in other respects, I esteem and love—this work coming, I say,

from their hands, requires to be put in its true light. I have not in my life (and I have been in painful controversies) seen such a pamphlet. Of what are these gentlemen approving? It is a temerity which erases with a dash of the pen all that has been written on ministry from the time of Chrysostom until our own; there are self-contradictions of the grossest kind, provided that in both cases these opposed sentiments serve to establish at all costs a system that one loves; it is profound unbelief as to the presence and operations of the Holy Ghost; it is a contempt for the word, such as I have never seen the like of in any controversy; it is assertions boldly made as to the contents of the word and the use of words to give the advantage to the views of the author, which, when one examines the passages in which the word is found, are not supported by a single example, and which must have weight with those who do not know Greek, and who would not suppose—God be thanked for it—that things are affirmed in spite of all truth and of all honesty.

All is levelled to the present system in the desire of saying, We are rich. Ministry is not the exercise of a gift; no gift exists; nevertheless, the Church enjoys all its blessings! And why all this unbelief, and this lack—what shall I say—of conscience? It is this: having too much light to go on at ease with the deadness and the errors which they acknowledge in the systems that surround them, they have too little faith to free themselves from a yoke under which they groan in the work they are doing. They have resolved to flatter the flesh as well as the forms of the systems which shackle them, in order that these systems may lend them the liberty of following out the work which they do not dare to do without that.

As to the pamphlet which is before us (every one will judge of it when he has read the following pages), I can only see in it the public statement of the infidelity of the professing church of these last days—a contempt for the word of God, which deserves to be branded in a much more powerful way than I could do it—assertions the most false, which it is impossible to attribute to the ignorance of those who recommend this work; and which proves a use of the word which (if one must attribute such a use of it to the force of party spirit) marks, in a terrible manner, what the estimation is in which the word is held, when it is a question of the interests of a party. These are strong expressions. I should not have used them, if it were only a question of an opinion on ministry, or if they were not Christians who had made themselves responsible for them: but it is a question of the whole basis of the hopes and of the activities of the Church of God, and of the authority of His word, which are sacrificed without hesitation to the interests and to the pride of an irritated party. Weariness of controversy almost stopped my pen. I thought that tears would be more suitable than an answer. But there are souls who have a right to the explanations that are necessary for exposing what the bold assertions are worth which characterize the pamphlet patronized by the Committee of the Evangelical Society of Geneva, and of what weight is the authority of those who can patronize it: and I have deeply felt that he who uses the word in such a way, by concealing himself under Greek, does not deserve to be spared, when presented to us by men quite capable of appreciating the use and the consequences of it. The more they are esteemed (and in many respects they deserve to be so), the more necessary it is to expose the roots of bitterness which

they wish to sanction. If it were a Peter who had become guilty of that which draws others away into a path of dissimulation, it would be so much the more necessary to resist him to his face.

Introduction

I do not expect to see principles which are of faith adopted by those who have not faith to follow them. Neither do I think that, at this moment, it is controversy that leads souls to enter the path of faith. It is the time for walking in it by the grace of God, and not for talking about it. The circumstances which surround us, and the progress of evil, call for that which God alone can give, a firm and active walk in the path in which faith alone will find means to exist; for events press upon us every day more and more.

If I answer Mr. Wolff's thesis upon ministry, it is because it is a subject of the greatest importance, and because it will furnish the opportunity for developing the truths which are now most precious to the Church.

If Mr. Wolff's pamphlet were only the production of the student whose name is attached to it, I should probably have said nothing about it. Let us do justice to the writer. It is a work which displays a tolerable amount of diligence, and shows an application the fruits of which at such an age do honour, according to men, to the writer, and are worthy of a more advanced period of life. If anything here or there betrays youth, that will not be a subject of reproach with me. That the activity of a youthful mind should have produced, as he says, a new system, does not surprise me. That, in the eyes of its author, it should be a system before which all that has been said upon ministry in all ages of the Church, passes

away like a shadow—that the author should manifest a certain self-confidence, this may be natural to the ardour of youth. I shall not stop at it. He may dispose in twelve lines of all that has been written on ministry from Chrysostom to Mr. Rochat, confessing that he lacked the means of enlightening himself, not having been able to found anything upon the works of his predecessors; and he may deal thus in order to introduce a system of which "the systematic whole is entirely his own": I have no feeling against him on that account. I only recall it because of the importance which this fact acquires, when one reflects that such a judgment is approved by the party to whose jurisdiction the writer, so to speak, belongs. It is at least clear, according to this, that every system of ministry hitherto acknowledged, all the principles upon which ministry has been based, have been obliged to fall before the light which has entered by means of the discussion which has taken place on this subject. In order to combat what is advanced, it was necessary to set aside all that had been said on ministry by all theologians, both by those of primitive times, and by those of the Reformation and modern times. I acknowledge, however, that Mr. Wolff's treatise is the cleverest and the gravest that has appeared in the controversy begun upon this subject.

This pamphlet, appearing at the moment of such a controversy, is evidently more than a student's thesis; while it is one fruit of his labour, it is the expression of far more than that. Puffed in the journals of his party, printed with encouragement and the concurrence of persons of that party who seek to profit by its publication, and spread it abroad by their friends and their agents, this opuscule must be considered in the

main, as the expression of those who propagate it; for one must not attribute to them the dishonest tactics of a corrupted Christianity, which would like to profit as much as possible by a work, with liberty to disown it afterward, if one saw itself in danger of being compromised by its means.

My intention is to bring to light, for upright souls, the principle of this pamphlet, and to point out the force of certain reasonings, which have a hold upon the flesh and may act upon it, and which are calculated to trouble simple hearts.

The evident and even avowed object of this work is to attack what I shall allow myself to call the new light which God has sent, and to maintain, such as it is, all that exists. In order to this, he borrows all that he can of this light, so that in many respects I find myself agreeing with the writer. After all, this is the road that many are following now. They borrow all the light that they can without troubling themselves to walk in the path of faith which this light has revealed.

In order to sustain at all costs existing things, it became necessary to sacrifice all the principles of ministry established by the Reformation. We must not mistake. When the author says of Calvin's system on ministry, "good as a theory based upon the experience of the Church," that is tacitly saying that this system is not based upon scripture; for he overthrows, without warning his readers of it, all Calvin's system in the body of his work.

Sufficiently young only to be enamoured of his own ideas, he has not been able to keep silence about it, as one may see in his preface. All his system is his own. He

has not been able essentially to base his work upon the works of his predecessors. The thoughts of Calvin were in effect based in great measure upon the Bible: but, as Mr. Wolff says, his theory, or rather his practice, was based upon the experience of the Church. A man of sufficient integrity of heart by grace deeply to honour the word, and energetic enough to create a system, Calvin acknowledged, in many respects in theory, the truth as to ministry. In practice, he formed for himself a system adapted to circumstances and to his own character. More light has entered; the word has been searched; the energy of the Holy Ghost is at work; and what he created as a system answers no longer, either to the creative energy of its author, or to the need produced by the Holy Ghost. Those who, led by the Holy Ghost, have searched the word, have, while following the word and the principles and truths that Calvin himself found there, found themselves outside his system in several particulars. They followed the word and not the system. From that time, war has been waged against them. They were innovators, etc.

Meanwhile a class of persons has formed itself (the party with which Mr. Wolff is connected), a party which wishes to attach itself to Calvin’s ecclesiastical system and to profit by it as much as possible, because this does not require faith (for a Socinian does it as well as themselves), and at the same time to introduce a spiritual activity subordinate to that system.

Mr. Wolff is a partisan of this new system; but he has been consistent. He has felt that, in adopting the principles which Calvin drew from the word, it would be impossible to maintain his system. He therefore denies

those principles. His object is to justify at all cost what is being done. I shall give sad proofs of this presently.

Let us first state this important fact that, in order to combat those who follow the word, he has felt himself obliged to set aside all the principles of the reformers on ministry. He has felt that, once admitting what they had drawn from the word, it would be necessary to go still farther and to abandon their practical system; but this requires faith.

Fundamental Difference between Calvin's System and that of Mr. Wolff

Calvin's theory is based upon the existence of gifts; the theory approved by the party which Mr. Wolff represents is based upon this—that gifts have absolutely ceased. It is evident that a system which is based upon gifts, and another which founds itself upon their absence and which makes of that absence its fundamental principle, are two thoroughly opposed systems. One may, in order to spare the flesh, practically follow the same forms, but the principles are completely opposed.

Calvin divides the gifts into ordinary and extraordinary, as the basis of the difference between the present and the apostolic condition of ministry. Mr. Wolff affirms that all the gifts were extraordinary, and that Calvin's whole system is false with regard to this, and that ministry has undergone no modification. Calvin's system is founded upon the difference between charges and gifts; consequently, he distinguishes between a bishop and a pastor. Mr. Wolff's whole system is based upon the identity of the bishop and the pastor. If bishop and pastor are not the same thing, all his system falls at once to the ground, because in that case the pastor is a

gift given by God, and he has need neither of the imposition of hands, nor of being established by man. If the author can, on the contrary, identify them, he will in this case apply all that is said of the bishop in the epistle to Timothy to the pastor as well as to the bishop.

I do not enter into the detail of differences, for Mr. Wolff's system changes all the Calvin system. I only call attention to the great principles, or rather principle, by which they diverge. Calvin admits that gifts are needed for ministry; Mr. Wolff absolutely denies all relation between these two things. "Ministry," he says, "is exercised without gift." He is consistent: he felt that it is impossible to reconcile the existence of gifts with the system of his party and with Calvin's ecclesiastical system. Calvin admitted the things that he found in the word, then added traditions and customs. He created a system which the light that then existed bore with. The party which now opposes the light is bolder; feeling that they cannot reconcile them, and determined to remain attached to existing things, they confess this unbelief on this point, and set aside at once, the gifts, the Holy Spirit, and the word which speaks of them.

Ministry, according to them, has no connection with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It is good at least to be clear as to the true foundations of the system which opposes the brethren. It is merely a question of purely natural gifts; the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with it, absolutely nothing. It is not (mark this well) a conclusion which I draw; it is the avowed basis of the whole system. A man must be regenerate by the Holy Ghost in order to be a minister, as he must to be a Christian; but as to his ministry itself, the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with it. These are Mr. Wolff's own words (p. 68): "It is only

because their ministry is not a gift of the Holy Ghost, that ministers are ambassadors of Christ."

I fully admit that he is perfectly consistent. At the close of the Jewish dispensation, the forms (such as priesthood, etc.), and the power (Christ, who was without forms) are found in opposition. The same thing is true now: faith chooses power and eternal things; unbelief always attaches itself to forms. The Reformation, so precious in many respects, mingled together some things which were of God and others which were of man; the manifestation of the energy of the Holy Spirit disentangles them. Those who have not faith to lean upon God alone now throw themselves boldly on forms and applaud the avowal which flows from youthful candour, or from a certain self-complacency. This avowal is, that power does not enter into their plan. They are ministers, or rather their ministers are ambassadors of Christ, because their ministry is not a gift of the Holy Ghost!

Is it necessary to write any further for simple souls who walk in faith? No. But unhappily there are not wanting persons who seek to embroil others, nor persons who, attaching themselves a little to the light, a little to their own fleshly ease, are ready to fall into the snares that human reasonings may spread for them.

I only desire that great attention should be paid to what the thing has come to. God has permitted it to be said loudly; one can no longer mistake. Mr. Wolff is perfectly right: we must deny the existence and the operation of the Holy Ghost in ministry, or abandon the whole system. Things are coming out every day more distinctly. Such an avowal as the one of which we have been

speaking is more than I should have dared to expect for helping souls to see things clearly, and to make them understand that the true question for each one of them is this: Do I believe that the Holy Ghost acts in ministry, or not? Such is the question which arises between our brethren and their adversaries—such is the question which agitates Christendom.

We shall see what are the grave consequences of this question; but it is very evident that the position taken by those who embrace Mr. Wolff's system is to deny the operation of the Holy Ghost in ministry and to resist His energy wherever He may be at work; and this is what I have seen becoming continually more distinctly marked.

Mr. Wolff's Judgment of the Rochat System

I have said that the object of Mr. Wolff's pamphlet is to maintain existing things, and to oppose our brethren. He says of Mr. Rochat: "a scriptural system." This is good, because Mr. Rochat opposes the brethren, and maintains more or less a clergy appointed by men. It matters little who appoints them, as Mr. Wolff says elsewhere, provided that it be men, and that there be no gift.

But, at the same time, although it may be convenient to establish a unity of opposition to our brethren, in order to maintain a clergy appointed by men, in some way or another he must, in another part of the pamphlet, destroy all this in order to maintain with exactness the system of the party. The following are the terms in which, after having called Mr. Rochat's system a scriptural one (p. 9), Mr. Wolff expresses himself with regard to the very same system in page 37 of his work, "I must add here that an election by a church, in Mr. Rochat's sense, cannot agree with a divine vocation of

the bishop “; and lower down, “If a church, when it needs a pastor, sets about voting, by means of which the member who receives most suffrages is constituted a bishop, that bishop has received no vocation from God; he is established in the name of man, and by man only. This result is inevitable.” I am therefore obliged, according to Mr. Wolff, to suppose it a very scriptural thing, that the one who is bishop over the flock of God should be established without any vocation from God. It matters little. There are thirty-seven pages between these two sentences, and in each place these contradictory statements are made in order to sustain what is existing in his party.

Example of the Same Spirit with regard to Evangelists

After having secured the distinction of an official evangelist, in order to support the clerical principle, Mr. Wolff extols (p. 43) the employment of those who have not received this charge by the imposition of hands. But why so? Because “they are employed at the present time.” They ought not to be called evangelists; because “we must carefully distinguish between what is a ministerial charge, and that which is only a testimony rendered to the gospel, voluntarily preached by a zealous and able Christian” (p. 43). But alas! they are so called. This title, therefore, may still be preserved, provided that it is explained, and that one avoids a confusion which would be dangerous for the Church, between those who do the work, and those who are charged by men to do it. I say, those who do the work; for we must suppose that these men who evangelize thus approved, are sent of God. Hence, in our days we

see many of these who are sent by men, but “they have not received the imposition of hands.” The whole thing, then, is to distinguish the clergy.

Another Example with Regard to Teachers

From page 45 to page 48, Mr. Wolff absolutely denies the charge of teacher in the Church. But he fortunately corrects himself (p. 49) by adding these words, “That which has just been said with regard to teachers must be considered as in no wise affecting the degree of doctor of theology that the universities confer.” It would be difficult to understand how it did not affect it. If I have rightly understood, this doctor is a kind of pastor, who, by means of the students, extends his functions to a larger portion of Christ’s flock. But we have had enough of this adulation of everything which supports the interest of a class and of a party, at the expense of faith, of the action of the Spirit, of the word, and of the truth.

On the Pretended Connection of Political and Religious Ideas

The thought of the influence of political over religious ideas is a vulgar one, though well calculated to exercise an influence over those who are, after all, governed by political motives of a special kind; but it will have no hold upon those who are guided by the Holy Spirit and who seek His teaching in the word.

For the rest, it is a very superficial idea. I notice it, because the true Christian is so characterized by a spirit of submission and of obedience, that sincere souls might be troubled by it; and this is how Satan seeks to take advantage of the spirit of obedience, in order to lead the

Christian to obey man. No one who has read history a little but is aware that there is not a single accusation brought against the religious movement of our days, that was not brought against the Reformation, and that every movement of the Spirit of God, acting, as it does, upon the inert mass which renders it necessary, is treated by those who love to sleep, or at least to remain on their bed, as a spirit of innovation and of radicalism. Everyone who asserts the rights of God in presence of those who are in possession of an authority which despises those rights, will be necessarily a despot and a radical in their eyes.

This is an old accusation, and one which always comes from the wrong side. When Pontius Pilate could find no fault in Jesus, the priests and the rulers insisted the more, saying, “He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place,” Luke 23:5. What do they say against Paul and Silas at Philippi? “These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,” Acts 16:20. And at Thessalonica? “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also,” Acts 17:6.

I exhort those who are simple, not to make themselves uneasy about a political principle or any other, but peacefully and firmly to follow the path in which the Holy Ghost leads them, walking by faith, and remembering that these accusations (for in how precious a way the word provides for every need of God’s children!)—that these accusations, I repeat—are always found in the Bible to proceed from the enemies of the truth.

Moreover, this appearance of discernment and of philosophical depth is nothing but the superficial spirit of unbelief. God has at all times so prepared the suitable circumstances, for the impulse His Spirit should give. The circumstances for the Reformation were all prepared beforehand. They were equally all prepared for Christianity. The blindness of philosophy sees only these circumstances, and does not discern the power of God which is acting in them.

Unbelief is always the same; but those who act by faith know very well that they are led by something very different from, circumstances; and often, in their simplicity, they do not know that circumstances favour them, save by the promise that all things shall “work together for good to them that love God,” and “who are the called according to his purpose,” and such are by no means the weakest. If I must speak “as a man,” I say, that the man of one idea generally does more than the one who knows how to philosophize about everything. The energy of the one, and the abstraction of the other who judges everything, very rarely meet.

For the rest, the application of the pretty common and true principle, that Christians in general alas! yield more or less to the influence of that which surrounds them, is somewhat badly made. As to the brethren whom the author attacks, he is singularly mistaken; for in England, on the contrary, they are accused of being all aristocrats, and the system is accused of being made for aristocrats who are discontented with nationalism. Philosophers look upon them as a reaction from the extreme democracy of the English dissenters.44 If the Spirit does but act, it matters little: God produces effects of His grace, and the world judges them, passes

on, and perishes in its wisdom. Some Christians perhaps yield also to the philosophical and systematizing influence of the age. I hope our brethren will avoid this, as much as they avoid politics. Scientific reasonings upon what is passing do not save souls, neither do they lift up Christians who have fallen. We are the servants of God: God will prepare, and God will direct, all the circumstances; we need not even occupy our minds with them, save in order to admire in it the good hand of our God. Our part is to follow the impulse of the Holy Ghost, and to be guided by the word.

The truth is, that the democratic and radical principle (that is to say, the will of man) is found both in Presbyterianism and in Dissent.45 When the Holy Spirit acts, He knows how to touch all the chords of the human mind and to adapt Himself to them in grace, reserving for God all His rights and all His sovereignty; but God alone knows how to do this: it requires power.

What we must seek for is the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, and not be either democrats, or aristocrats, or despots; but we must be what is divine, and walk according to the principle of the grace of Christ, in whom the sovereignty of God and the heart of man unite, and are at peace. God’s will is not that things should go on without this, for they would be going on without Him.

Let us examine the contents of the pamphlet.

On the introduction of Mr. Wolff’s Pamphlet; in which, while denying the continuance of gifts, he asserts his intention of defending ministry from the attacks directed against it, and from all the various modifications men have sought to make it undergo.

In the introduction, the writer declares that his object is to defend the primitive state of ministry against the modifications of all kinds, which people have sought to make it undergo. At the same time, let us remember, the writer affirms that all gifts have absolutely ceased to exist. This is already rather strong.

Ministry exists absolutely without modification; but all gifts have ceased to exist. How then could ministry subsist without modification? In the days of the apostles, as well as now, gifts had nothing to do with ministry!

Let us take the list of gifts preferred by Mr. Wolff himself, the list given in i Corinthians 12:28. “God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

This list mentions apostles, prophets, teachers, governors. These are evidently gifts; hence all this had nothing to do with ministry! The prophet might edify, comfort, exhort; but that was no ministry. What does the word of God tell us? We read there, that the Lord put Paul “in the ministry “(1 Tim. i:12); and Paul says of himself, etc., “Who then is Paul… but ministers?” (1 Cor. 3:5). He approved himself in all things as God’s minister; 2 Cor. 6:4. If he was “made a minister, according to the gift,” he says, “of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power,” Eph. 3:7. In spite of all that, according to this system, Paul, as apostle, was not a minister of the word. On the contrary, “it is” (says Mr. Wolff, p. 68), “because his ministry was not a gift of the Holy Ghost, that he was an ambassador of Christ.”

This we can understand, that his ministry was the exercise of his gift in responsibility to Christ, and not the

gift itself; but I think one could hardly believe that in all the apostle says of his ministry in the passages quoted, and in so many others besides, he never speaks of his apostleship, and that this is another thing, altogether distinct; he spoke of his ministry and not of his work as an apostle. Reader, can you understand that? There was no connection between his ministry and his apostleship; so that, his apostleship being a gift of the Holy Ghost, it could not be a ministry! The ministers of Satan might be false apostles (2 Cor. 11:13, 15); no matter for that: the true apostles are not ministers of Christ. There exists no connection between the apostleship and the ministry!

The writer, p. 67, insists on the word gift, declares it impossible that it can be connected with the idea of ministry, and grounds his reasoning on this. In the passage quoted above (Eph. 3:7), it is grace (charis) and not gift (charisma), a word on which the writer insists, p. 70. But in 1 Peter 4:10, we read: “As every man has received the gift (charisma), even so minister the same one to another”—literally, exercise this ministry “as good stewards of the manifold grace (charis) of God.” In Romans 12 ministry—if even one alleged it meant serving tables—is called a gift (charisma), according to the grace (charis) given.

In 2 Corinthians 3:8, so far is it from true that the word separates ministry, as being from Christ, from gifts, as being from the Spirit, that there the ministry of the gospel is called “the ministration of the Spirit.” In Acts 1:17 the apostleship is called “this ministry.” So also, in verse 25, “That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship.”

It will be objected here that the gift of apostle was not yet given. This is true; the gift was necessary for the accomplishment of the ministry. But the apostleship, which is here called ministry, is called gift (charisma) in 1 Cor. 12; so that the distinction between gift and ministry is completely false, unless the writer means that the apostles exercised their apostleship or ministry without gift, in the face of the words of the Lord, who told them to tarry in Jerusalem, until they were “endued with power from on high,” that is, with gifts for that ministry. See also Acts 6:2-4; ch. 20:24; ch. 21:19, etc., and Romans 11:13, where Paul says, “I speak to you Gentiles—I magnify my office”—ministry (diakoniari). See 2 Corinthians 4, 5, 6, and 1 Corinthians 4.

After these quotations, one can simply leave to the confusion it deserves, a theory which, in order to justify a ministry without gift, has been willing to affirm that ministry has undergone no modification, and to deny all connection between gifts and ministry even in the days of the apostles. In the case of the apostles themselves, we have seen that it is completely false, and that (instead of its being true that the minister could not be an ambassador for Christ if his ministry were a gift of the Holy Ghost, and that ministry was exercised without gift), the word, on the contrary, affirms that the apostleship was a gift and a ministry;46 and that the apostles could not be ambassadors of Christ, that is, exercise their ministry, until they were endued with power from on high, that is, until they had received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost; which Mr. Wolff himself calls, by way of distinction, the gifts. We have seen at the same time that Peter extends this principle to every gift, whatever it may be; and that each one,

according to the gift he had received, must exercise his ministry. Mr. Wolff applies this passage to what was properly called a gift (P- 73).

We have anticipated a little; but all this is the whole subject. We have been brought to this point by the introduction itself. There the writer declares that his task is to shew “that ministry has undergone no modification”; and his system, for the demonstration of this, is, that ministry is exercised without gift, and that there is no connection between gifts and ministry.

Chapter 1 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 1, Entitled, Priesthood And Ministry.

I will say but few words on this chapter. It is not true that in both covenants the title of priest is given to all the faithful. It is singular that opposition to the light always shews itself united with the desire of lowering the distinctive privileges of Christianity. The nation of Israel was called a kingdom of priests because of their nearness to God as a nation, but without a distinction of believers or unbelievers; whereas, in the present covenant, believers are called priests because of their nearness to God in heavenly places, a nearness infinitely above what belonged to the Jews; and even what will belong to them during the millennium.

As to the word ministry in Greek, what Mr. Wolff says is entirely incorrect: it is a sample of the way in which the word is used in this pamphlet.

First, when he says that we find the word used in two distinct senses: in a general way for all that is outward ministry, administration, etc.; then in a special way to designate a special service; and when he says

afterwards that “when we find this term used absolutely, it always designates the ministry of the word”; all that is false, though convenient for the end he has in view. What does he mean by this, at the same time, in a special and absolute way? And if it be not his intention to put the absolute use in the category of special use, then absolute and general become the same thing, and the contradiction is flagrant. For how can it be, as Mr. Wolff says, that when it is used in a special way it is called the ministry of the word, if, whenever it is used absolutely, it signifies the ministry of the word? It is evident that one of these phrases contradicts the other; one says, that in a special sense it is called the ministry of the word, the other, it has this sense when it is not called so. The fact is, that ministry of the word is found but once; and that in that case it is contrasted with the absolute use of the word in the sense of serving tables (Acts 6:1-5). All this proves that Mr. Wolff only thinks of his system, and in nowise of the word in the Bible, save to pick out of it what may suit him, if one does not take the trouble to examine things for oneself.

The Greek word is simple enough: it is one who serves, any servant who was not properly a slave; diakonia is any service whatever. It was very natural to use this word in speaking of evangelical service; but the word is used in the New Testament as elsewhere, to signify service; this service might be the ministry or service of the word, or of tables, or of angels, or any other service of whatever kind. The word is used in an absolute way with respect to service of angels in Hebrews 1:14. In 2 Timothy 4:11, it is said of Mark, “He is profitable to me for the ministry”; here it does not appear that it is merely a question of the ministry of the word; we see

the use of this word diakonos with respect to Mark; when Paul and Barnabas departed from Antioch, they had Mark to “their minister [here, hupereteen]”; it was not, I suppose, to preach to them. At some later period perhaps he may have purchased to himself “a good degree,” in the ministry, a more honourable service in the family. When Paul says (2 Cor. 11:8), “I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service”; it is evident that it is in a figurative sense, however absolute, and it does not refer to the ministry of the word as such. He had been servant of the Corinthians, and others had paid his wages. In Romans 12:7, we find the word used absolutely, together with, and as distinguished from, divers ministries of the word; and in 1 Corinthians 12:5, it is used for all services, of any kind, done to Christ. The only time when it is used with the expression “the word,” it has its usual sense modified by the expression “word,” as it might be by any other. That is, “that service was occupied with this,” in contrast with serving tables. But the service of tables was just as much a special service as that of the word; only of a lower character evidently in the administration of the family. And the fact is, that the only time this expression “ministry of the word “is found, the word ministry is used in an absolute way to signify the service of tables (Acts 6:1); and it is thus explained, in verse 2; then verse 4, the ministry of the word is contrasted with it; but it is added, “of the word”; and thus this word is not used in an absolute way with respect to the word, but on the contrary with respect to tables.

It appears to me, that it is Hmiting the thing, as the word does not limit it, when they pretend to confine the work of the ministry to the ministry of the word: for

instance, Ephesians 4:12. Moreover, it is affirming what ought to be proved. At all events, in most of the passages, it is not so, as we have just seen. Angels have not the ministry of the word; and ministry is contrasted with that of the word in Acts 6:1-5. The fact is, that what Mr. Wolff says is absolutely false and contrary to the ordinary known use of this word in the word and outside the word. If we consider attentively the use of the word diakonos, minister, he who does the service, this will come out with still greater evidence. For the word diakonos used absolutely one may consult John 2:5, 9; Matthew 22:13; ch. 20:26; ch. 23:11, and the parallel passages; also John 12:26. This idea of servant must naturally be modified (as the word 'service' (diakonia); see 2 Corinthians 3), according to the person whose servant one is, or the service one has to fulfil; one may be minister of,God (2 Cor. 6:4), of the gospel (Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23) of the Church (Col. 1:25), etc. The word, taken in its general use, has its general acceptation of servant (Rom. 16; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12). Finally, the word diakonia has the general sense of service, and has to be modified in its application by words which are added—of the word (Acts 6), of death, of righteousness, of the Spirit, etc. (2 Cor. 3). There is not one passage which shews that the absolute sense signifies the ministry of the word, but quite the contrary.

Chapter 2 Observations On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 2, Where He Speaks Of The Vocation To Ministry

It is true that the substantive "vocation "is applied to the effective calling of God in a general sense:47 but called (as an adjective) is applied in the same sense to

Christians and to ministry. In Romans I: i, we read that Paul was called an apostle; and in verse 7, that the saints at Rome were called. The same term is applied to the vocation of apostleship, and to the vocation to salvation.

This chapter of Mr. Wolff presents to us all that is false and ridiculous in the principle of his pamphlet. Ministry is exercised without gift; such is the principle of Mr. Wolff. These two things, ministry and gift, are totally distinct. Ministry, he says, is connected with the Lord Jesus; gift, with the Holy Ghost.

And yet Mr. Wolff speaks here of the ministry of the prophet, which, we must therefore suppose, was exercised without gift. A singular ministry this!—that of a prophet without gift; a ministry the vocation of which was from God alone. So that, in this case, we cannot speak of an outward vocation. It would be very difficult to conceive what could be the ministry which a prophet exercised without gift.48 The case is more striking than that of an apostle, because the office of the prophet was not so varied as that of the apostle. The only thing the prophet did was to prophesy. Of two things, one, according to Mr. Wolff's system: either they prophesied without gift; or else, exercising a gift, it was no longer a ministry.

One might perhaps have found the means of escaping this contradiction, by saying to oneself (as I endeavoured to do myself in order to find some explanation), It might be that the prophets exercised their ministry when they spoke to comfort and edification, and that it was a gift when they revealed the future. Not so. All was gift—and miraculous gift; for

what is said in 1 Corinthians 14, on edification through prophecy, is quoted by Mr. Wolff as a proof that prophecy was a miraculous gift, the signs of which, when exercised, shewed that all pretension to possess it now was merely a delusion (p. 73, No. 12). So that, in the case of a prophet, a person was called to a ministry by God alone; but then, at all events, it was wholly a gift, and the exercise of this gift is no ministry at all.

All that can be said on such confusion is, that, the object being to strengthen that which exists, without real fear of God, the consequences necessarily become apparent, if the word is consulted. God has not permitted it should be otherwise. Here the contradiction is ridiculous.

The division of vocation to ministry, which Mr. Wolff establishes, is not even exact. As an instrument, a person might receive his vocation by means of an angel, as well as by means of men. Under the Old Testament it was much more the case. There is something similar in Revelation 1:1: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave … and he sent… by his angel unto his servant John.”

We have, then, to remark, on this chapter, that prophecy, which was wholly a gift in all its parts, is acknowledged to be a ministry, and that consequently ministry was the exercise of a gift, because the prophet did exercise his gift when he prophesied, and if that was not his ministry, it is very difficult to know what was his ministry as prophet; this is a positive contradiction of chapter 5.49 One remark more on this chapter. Whoever is somewhat familiar with the word of God would have supposed that, after having spoken of apostles and prophets, coming to evangelists and teachers, one would have again found

the list of Ephesians 4, or at least some other Ust taken from the word of God; but not so at all. All lists are given up, because what is now in existence is the only object that one has here in view, and the train of thought in the word is of small import. Thus, after apostles and prophets, we have bishops, evangelists and teachers, because such do exist, but such an enumeration exists nowhere in the word; and the bishop is not found in any list whatever among all those contained in the word of God.50 This already presents something equivocal. They are compelled to abandon the Holy Ghost's way of thinking and teaching, so as to carry their point, even to include in the list what is never found there in the word of God, what the word never places there, and to make up for themselves another list, totally different from every list which is found in scripture.

I repeat, when, to support a system, one is thus compelled to abandon the word of God, that alone is a sad thing.

Chapter 3 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 3, Concerning The Name Of Bishop, Elder And Pastor.

Mr. Wolff supposes first that there is the ministry of a bishop, properly speaking; but he does not say if it is a general administration or a ministry of the word. Nevertheless, as the writer here uses this term in an absolute way, and as, in that case, according to him (p. 13), the word "ministry always designates the ministry of the word," it seems to me that it is in this latter sense what he calls the ministry of the bishop51 must be taken. But he lays down all this—without any proof—at the basis of his system. Mr. Wolff ends his chapter 2 by

saying, “we shall first treat of the bishop”; without even mentioning where he finds, according to the word, that it is a ministry. In that case, this false basis once admitted, the only thing that remains, is to shew the identity of the word ‘bishop’ with other terms; this appears simple, and it would be hard to know why there is such haste to bring forward that point. But, in effect, the whole of Mr. Wolff’s system rests on this basis.

The apostle had said, Christ “gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” According to Mr. Wolff himself (p. 50), it is a classification of ministry, and he gives it with others in the place we quoted. But the bishop is to be found in neither of these classifications, and, for the system, God’s classification does not suffice; a classification must be made on purpose, striking out the pastor from the list of the word, and inserting the word ‘bishop’; and then, as a consequence, it must be shewn that pastor and bishop is the same thing. And wherefore all this? Because in Ephesians 4, the ministries are gifts given from on high, and one has to get rid of the pastor as being a gift given from on high.52 The pastor, then, is laid aside, and hidden behind the bishop, for whom, says Mr. Wolff, it is but another name—a function of his—and the bishop who is not in the fist, the bishop who, according to the word, is not a gift, but a charge, is carefully and with great effort presented to view, to shew that the pastor is nothing else but the bishop.

Whence so many efforts to change what is simple? Christ ascended on high and gave gifts unto men: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Why avoid so carefully the plain testimony of the word? It is a bad sign; it is more than a bad sign. The

revelation from God has authority; it is perfect, and it cannot be altered without introducing error. The pastor is given by the Holy Ghost in the list of gifts.53 One cannot make Ephesians 4:11, to be a classification of ministries to the exclusion of gifts, erase the pastor and substitute the bishop in his stead, without betraying oneself as supporting a bad cause, based on something else than the word of God, a cause which cannot bear the testimony of the word, such as God has given it to us. I may be told that no allusion is made to Ephesians 4:11—they have made a list for themselves. First of all, this is not true; it is the list of Ephesians 4:11, with the substitution of the bishop for the pastor. And if even it were a list made up for the occasion, how comes it that the lists and classifications which God gave do not suit our adversaries, and that they must have fresh ones? The reason is very simple; their system is not taken from the word of God.54 They wanted to get rid of the gifts, and the pastor is a gift given from on high. And why get rid of gifts? Because, “to pretend to the present existence of these gifts is to set up by the side of ministry a rival power which impedes it” (Wolff, p. 69).

Such is the sad part which the gifts of the Holy Ghost are made to play, according to that system.

But, one might say, in the days of the apostles there were, according to your system (p. 77), gifts, and by the side of these gifts a ministry, entirely distinct, it is true, but which subsisted at the same time (p. 69), which was neither destroyed by means of them, nor “compelled to throw itself into clerical despotism, to maintain its rank and dignity.”

This is an evident difficulty. Here is the way in which they seek to remove it. There was among these gifts (p. 77) “the gift of discerning of spirits, which could judge of these gifts and assign to them their proper importance and place.” Where is all this to be found in the word? “The prophet had to be subject to this”; and it is added (p. 74), “how much more the other gifts.” All this is an invention of the writer’s imagination.

The apostle, settling the order of service, says, “Let the prophets speak two or three,” he refers to prophets, “and let the others judge.” Not a word about him who had the discerning of spirits. The apostle laid down the rule for this, as for every other arrangement in the Church, and those who spoke acted according to those directions.

The idea of the writer is subversive of the apostolic authority. He who discerned the spirits did just what those very words express; he judged if it was by a demon or by the Spirit of truth that any one spoke.

Having based his system on a principle which is false, the consequence and the errors which flow from it are endless.

The writer tells us against that the only time the word ‘pastor’ is found in the New Testament, it presents itself as the ideal expression of what a good bishop should be. But this “only time “is very awkward for him; it is the passage we have quoted. Christ, having ascended on high, gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. This is what Christ gave. How this word ‘pastor’ is the ideal expression of what a good bishop should be, one cannot say; but the writer cannot deny that the pastorship connected with the doctorship is a

ministry, unless a passage of the word of God is not to be received as evidence. As “in this enumeration of the charges of ministry there is no mention of the elder, or the bishop, nothing can prevent assigning the denomination to the bishop” (p. 15). What a mode of reasoning! Because God has not named a charge in a list of gifts, one of these gifts must be that very charge!

The grand argument by which Mr. Wolff seeks to assimilate and confound the pastor given from on high (Eph. 4:11), with the charge of bishop, a charge unto which the apostle or his delegate can appoint, is, that it is said to the bishops of Ephesus, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God,” Acts 20:28.

That the bishop is exhorted to feed, that I do not deny; but if such a gift be useful in the charge of a bishop, it does not follow that all those who possessed it were in that charge, and still less than that charge was the same thing as the gift. I can exhort my clerk to write well and to count aright, and he must know how to do these things in order to be a clerk; but it does not follow that every writer and book-keeper is a clerk. That charge supposes confidence, which extends to many other things: the handling of money and goods, intercourse with buyers, etc. Thus a man may be a pastor and be lacking as to many things requisite in a bishop, and may never have been invested with this charge. A man may be lacking as regards authority for governing, in discernment, oversight, the gravity necessary to act upon thoughtless minds in the details of life; or a personal knowledge of souls; and at the same time he may be capable of feeding souls with very great success,

without being invested with the charge of bishop. That gift, that of feeding, may, together with other qualities, fit him for the charge of bishop; but a charge with which one is invested is not a gift given by Christ ascended on high.

The falseness and the futility of this reasoning, which tends to justify the alteration they have introduced in the list which God gave us, are proved by a similar passage, John 21:15-17, where it is said to Peter, “Feed my sheep” and “Feed my lambs.” Do they mean that, because of these exhortations of the Lord to Peter, apostle and bishop were the same thing? It is of no use saying that he called himself “an elder.” He does it in effect, as a touching testimony of affection and humility; but do they mean that apostle and bishop are the same thing? Well, if the conclusion is evidently false in this case, it is equally so in the other, which is perfectly similar. See again 1 Corinthians 9:7, where Paul applies the word ‘feedeth’ to himself. He is never called an elder.

Moreover, Mr. Wolff is, in this respect, in contradiction with himself. He says (p. 14), that “the names of bishop, elder, and pastor, refer to one and the same charge”; and, on the contrary, he says (p. 15, 40), that “the function of pastor is connected principally with the episcopate”; and he gives as a proof of this that an apostle who was not a bishop calls himself a co-elder. This is very slight ground for denying that a thing called “gift” by the Holy Ghost is a different thing from a charge, of which the passage makes no mention. The last proof the writer gives, to establish the identity of pastor and bishop, consists in the denial that there is a particular ministry of pastor” (p. 16), and saying that it

is only the ministry of one who was, at the same time, pastor and teacher; and then he concludes that “the name of pastor is in this passage nothing but one among many functions, attributed to one and the same ministry.”

We must always remember that there is not a word of all this in the passage, which presents to us a list of gifts and not of charges, by Mr. Wolff’s own avowal, although he contradicts himself. I say, by Mr. Wolff’s own avowal, because he admits that the outward vocation was wanting in the prophet, who, consequently, had not, nor was, a charge. This is what I admit, that here, in Ephesians 4:11, the Greek supposes doctorship and pastorship to be connected; but that is all, absolutely all; and without a single word being said about the attribution of a charge. I say that doctorship and pastorship are here connected, because such a phrase in no way supposes the union of these things in every case; it only shews that they are joined together in this case. Of this we find one of the strongest proofs in the expression, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Greek form is exactly the same; but if these things can never be connected but with the same person, then the Son is no longer God. This remark overthrows all the reasoning that Mr. Wolff gives here, as well as that of page 47 of his pamphlet. Here again is another example which applies directly to the point in question. The same Greek form is found in Ephesians 2:20, where it is said, “Upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” The form is absolutely the same, and I can apply to it the phrase of the writer (p. 47). “It is only through error or through ignorance of the language that people can have seen in apostle and

prophet two different ministers." But everyone knows quite well that they were different, though connected in certain cases. So that the writer's reasoning as regards the pastors and teachers is false, and according to his expression (p. 47), "it is only through error or through ignorance of the language that he could say all that he has said." He has met with a rule laid down by Greek grammarians, which I admit as a general principle, a rule applied very extensively by Middleton and another English writer, Veysey, but particularly in the famous work of Middleton. But a little knowledge, people say, is a dangerous thing. Mr. Wolff has not had patience enough to examine carefully for himself the application of the rule, and he has applied it altogether wrongly.

The fact is, that Mr. Wolff's system cannot hold good in the face of Ephesians 4. This chapter, for his system, is a classification of ministries; but to come to that one must introduce the bishop. On the other hand, to say nothing of apostles, prophets who are mentioned there are for him a gift, and an extraordinary gift too. So that he must lop off prophets, and then expunge pastors from this classification of ministries, and bring in bishops in their stead. When once this is done, teachers still remain, but they are not a ministry; so that this title too must be eliminated and looked upon as a qualification of pastors and evangelists. Here is the process. He easily disposes of apostles and prophets—they are ministries established by God alone. That is soon said. But as to gifts, this they cannot be—they are ministries. But, finally, he is not willing to consider them: in effect it would be rather inconvenient, since he is compelled elsewhere to make them to be gifts. As to pastors, it is an easy matter. Bishops are employed in feeding,

therefore pastor and bishop are the same thing; we will put in bishop instead of pastor, and we have now two parts of the system of our day—evangelists, and bishops or pastors. But there still remain teachers in the list, and this is not a ministerial title now. Well, the gordian knot must be cut. It will be neither gift nor ministry, but a qualification of the evangelist or of the pastor. And thus is the revelation of God cut down to the measure of man's will and of man's sin; and man will be content with this.

In fine, according to Mr. Wolff, bishop was a charge and not a gift; and these are, according to him, two things essentially different: a gift cannot even be a charge, and the charge can exist without gift (p. 67). But it is quite certain that pastor is a gift. In the passage, Ephesians 4:11, the apostle speaks to us of gifts which Christ gave when He ascended on high. This evidently is a way of presenting gifts under the most important point of view. Christ, for the good of the Church and the perfecting of His saints, gave these gifts when He ascended up into glory unto His Father. There is no question here of any intervention of man to confer a charge; these are things from on high, which are to be exercised for the good of the Church. It is a question of the body of Christ, and of the joints of supply in that body—joints among which one may be more important than another, but which are all looked at under the same point of view. "Unto every one … is given grace." It is not a question here of a charge conferred by men, but of grace given according to the measure of the free gift of Christ.

Is it possible to be plainer or clearer on the nature of the thing itself?

Now Mr. Wolff admits that, in effect, there is no outward vocation for some; he cannot deny it. But does he not perceive that all here are absolutely in the same category and included in the same definition? And it is for this case alone that he chooses to substitute a charge. But the passage gives them all as being of the same nature, and in the same case, and in the same moral order. It is wresting the word in order to take out one of these “gifts “so as to stamp upon it another character and change its nature. The answer is “he gave “: it is a gift. Why do violence to the passage in order to make of the thing a charge under another name? Besides, these gifts, pastors and others, are placed in the body as joints of supply, according to the gift of Christ to each. This is never said of the bishop, who, in effect, was a charge, and not a gift, according to Mr. Wolff’s distinction.

The bishops (and not a bishop, for there were always several) were local charges; they only acted within the precincts of the particular church where they were found. The bishop was not a gift, nor a joint of supply in the body according to the measure of the gift of Christ, but a local charge, for which, among several other things, the capacity to feed was suitable.

The pastor was a gift, a grace; he was given from on high as a joint of supply in that body; he was to act according to the measure of the free gift of Christ, which was bestowed upon him.

The pastor is never presented as a charge established by men, although the bishops who were, according to God, established by men, with a special object of local oversight, may have enjoyed this gift and used it in their

locality. These things are connected by one end, as the authority conferred upon the apostles by Christ was connected with what was given to them, and the gift rendered them competent to exercise that authority. For the apostle, although directly from God, was also a charge, and that, we may say, given by Christ as man, acting with authority in the government of the Church; and the charges of authority flowed from that.

The pastor is a gift in the body; the bishop, a charge in a particular church.

If I am asked why I believe that, I repeat, Because God has said it in as many words in the word, and He has done so in the plainest and clearest manner. So that one must alter the lists God gives us, suppress the fact that the passage (Ephesians 4:11) is a list of gifts, and fall into the grossest contradictions* about ministries, charges and gifts, to enable him to get out of it.

The apostle, by way of comparison, applies the word55 ‘feedeth’ to his own ministry also; 1 Cor. 9:7.

Hence, according to God, the bishop is a local charge established by men, doubtless, according to the direction of God, by the Holy Ghost (Acts 13:23; Titus 1:3); and the bishop must possess divers qualities enumerated in the word. There were several in each church.

The pastor, on the contrary, is a gift given by Christ when He ascended up on high. The pastor is placed as a joint of supply in the body of Christ. He is therefore responsible for the exercise of this function, as for a talent entrusted to him; Eph. 4:11. Woe to the pastor who does not feed!

The bishop may be called to feed and to teach also—as a quality of charge. Historically I do not doubt, that, as man has ever more and more eclipsed the action of the Holy Ghost in the Church, the gift has by degrees been lost in the charge, but this does not change anything in the word; and we live in times, where one must have recourse either to the word or to popery.

If any one would know the history of local pastors, here it is. At first (and that even till rather recent dates in certain countries) the presbyters or elders (for it is the same word) from the central town where they resided, visited the villages around, in order to perform the service and edify the faithful. Gradually the villages wished that one of the presbyters should settle in their midst. This took place; and thus a parish was formed. From the same source came the origin of patronage, or the right of appointing, in the middle ages. The lord of the place promised to endow the presbyter, if he came to reside near him in his village. The right to choose the presbyter was then granted to this lord; and, in imitation of the Jews, tithes were granted. Those who have observed the ways of a separated flock in a large town, will feel no difficulty in understanding how villages were served, and the natural progress in the establishment of parishes—the village flock wishing to have in their midst the appointed minister. Ecclesiastical laws, feudal laws, and other circumstances greatly modified all this, no doubt; but historically the progress is very evident. For us, this in nowise alters the truth which is in the word, and in nowise modifies the duty of acknowledging that which it contains and the ways of God which it declares, and of abandoning, if God gives us light, the tradition of men. The increasing corruption of that which attaches

itself to those traditions demands imperatively that the faithful should be decided in this respect, if their desire is to be saved, or at least not be saved as through fire. It is sad preoccupation, to attach oneself to the hay and stubble men have built on the foundation, which is Christ.

Chapter 4 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 4, Concerning The Different Systems On The Vocation Of The Bishop.

In all the rest of the pamphlet we must expect to find the bishop and the pastor confounded; this will create much difficulty; but we will try to get out of it.

"The bishop," says Mr. Wolff, "can only, it is evident, receive his vocation from God, or from man, or from both together. Hence three different systems."

"In the first system," says Mr. Wolff, "the pastor holds his ministry from God alone; men are not to come in, in any way; this is the system of the Quakers, of the Irvingites, and of those called Plymouth Brethren."

All this is false. Firstly, the Quakers have elders who form a separate class, and who adjoin to themselves such or such other grave person to be elder with them, but with the consent of the assembly. Those who speak or feed may, or may not, be elders. Even their ministers (for the Quakers also distinguish between elders and ministers) are recognized by the elders after a certain time for the probation of their gifts, and they always remain subject to the judgment of the elders.

Secondly, the Irvingites have an angel, a sort of head pastor, and six elders besides, when the rules are

followed. All are established by men (namely, their apostles), and they hold to that like papists.

Thirdly, those whom the writer calls Plymouth Brethren (as far as I can dare to speak for them) believe that, as the bishop was established by the apostles, he cannot be established in our day with the same formal authority. They leave the pastor where God placed him, that is, as a gift given by Christ when He ascended up on high and received gifts for men.

In the second system, says Mr. Wolff, the bishop holds his ministry from men alone, and he attributes this system to Limborch and Neander. As to Limborch I know nothing of him. As to Neander, except the direct appointment by men, he is just what people call a Plymouthian, and therefore Mr. Wolff says of him (p. 9): “a new theory, original, wholly destitute of proof.” In the third system, which Mr. Wolff calls mixed, “the bishop receives his charge by a twofold vocation from God and men.”

As regard this point, or this system, we must always bear in mind that the ecclesiastical system of the Reformed Church of France, etc., distinguishes between the bishop or overseer, and the pastor, so that what the writer says is not at all the system of Calvin—a system based on this, that the ordinary gift of pastor, which is distinct from the bishop, still subsists. According to Calvin, for the Church to exist, it is absolutely necessary there should be gifts now. And Mr. Wolff, on the contrary, says (p. 78), “If there are gifts at the present time, unless they are all there, ministry cannot be maintained in the Church.”

He goes still farther. This doctrine of Calvin,56 he says, “is one of the principal sores of the Church; every church where it may be received will become only a volcano” (p. 70). If a minister believes in gifts, Mr. Wolff advises him to resign his charge. “It can no longer be allowed now for a minister to remain uncertain on this point.”

Finally, after having destroyed all the scriptural bases of the system of Calvin, in his desire to confound those who in their weakness rest upon God and the word, the writer goes on to establish this last system, which is his own. But what animosity of opposition does not this pamphlet manifest. To get rid of the activity of the brethren, their adversaries think proper even to undermine all their own house. As blind as Samson, without having his strength, they bring down the house upon their own heads, without touching those they wish to destroy. These, taught by the word as to the ruin which is coming, are already gone out of it.

Chapter 5 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 5, Where The Writer Shews That The Bishop Is Established Of God.

In general I agree with the writer that the bishop was established of God.

But we have to call attention to the confusion between pastor and bishop—a confusion in consequence of which the passages he alleges are, for the most part, wrongly quoted. The passage, Hebrews 13:17, “Obey them that have the rule over you,” does not speak particularly of pastors, but in general of those that rule—an expression, moreover, which does not prove there was a charge. Hence it is in no wise said that they must give account

to God for the souls they feed, God having entrusted these souls to them. They watch over the souls, “as they that must give account.” It has often been remarked that “give account for them” is not a faithful translation. We have already considered the passage, Ephesians 4:11: the bishop is not flamed there.

Acts 20:28. This passage is very clear, as proving that the bishops at Ephesus, and therefore elsewhere, were established of God; but here again is a confusion the importance of which is great enough.

The writer will have it that, because the Greek word translated established or made—is used in Acts 20 and in 1 Corinthians 12, the establishing is the same in both cases. But he has not perceived that, in the first of these passages, it is a question of establishing certain persons in a charge; and, in the second, of establishing the charge or the function itself. It is one thing to establish a professorship in a university, and to endow it, and another thing to set or establish an individual in the functions of rector of the same university. In the passage, Acts 20, God had set or established certain persons in the charge of bishop; and in 1 Corinthians 12 God had set or established in the Church certain gifts, certain joints or members of the body. He has constituted the body thus. So that there is no analogy whatever between these two passages as to sense.

Hence the writer has quoted no passage which speaks of an immediate or inward call. There is on the part of God the appointment of certain persons; but this is not an inward call. What the writer gives us is nothing but reasoning which ends in very little. One passage only declares that the Holy Ghost had placed certain persons

in the charge of overseer; and this I fully admit; but it is not said there was an inward call. And I make the remark, that it is not even said that God set or established bishops in His Church; this is nowhere said. Nowhere either is it said, that God, according to that power which creates and orders, has set such a function in the body. This is said of gifts, comparing them with the eye, the ear, etc., which God has set in the natural body. When He set certain individuals in such a charge, it was, in that case, sanctioning the existence of that charge; but the word of God does not go so far as to say that God has established the charge itself. A charge is not of the same nature as a function in the body. The fact is, that a bishop was a local government; it was not the impulse of the Holy Ghost acting in the way of gift; it was a charge to which one was appointed. The Holy Ghost had established certain persons in that charge. And here is the importance of this remark. It was not something that existed in the individual who acted in such or such a way. It was a charge—outward as to oneself—which one could desire, and for which certain qualities were necessary. Hence, one could be appointed to that charge, and the vocation from God was not, in that case, His own power acting in the way of gift (a power which He had divided, which the Holy Ghost had divided); but that vocation was merely the appointment, on God's part, of an individual to the charge in question, and his being established in that charge. Hence, when it is a question of a charge, we have the only true vocation from God—namely, His appointment of the individual. The Holy Ghost established him in that place, in that function; He did not establish the function itself, save by the act of appointing the individual. It need not be added

that the Holy Ghost appointed persons having suitable qualities.

What we have then to inquire into is—how God established these bishops. It is thus that we shall discover what that vocation is that is received of God.

Of this we have very plain instances in the word. A man is not established of God in a charge through a quality only; this may render him fit for the charge; but, as Mr. Wolff says, he must be regularly installed in that charge; he is not a bishop, he is not established as bishop, either by God or by men, before that, whatever may be, moreover, his qualities. Accordingly Christ appointed and sent the twelve, to whom, at a later period, after His ascension, He gave gifts, necessary for the charge of apostle, as He had, during His life here below, given that which was necessary to render them messengers of His glory as Messiah on earth. But He had appointed them in His stead. The apostle Paul, specially charged with such a function, appointed elders for the government and oversight of each church. He sent Titus invested with his authority to do the same at Crete. Thus, at least, God established them. This is all that the word positively says on the subject. Am I thinking that the authority of God was wanting there? In no wise. I say that God had established these bishops according to the authority conferred upon Paul by the Lord; an authority which he exercised through the power of the Holy Ghost, as he says on another occasion: “When ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Holy Ghost had established elders by his means.

Whatever be the means, that which we find in the Bible, and that which I consequently ask for, is, that the Holy Ghost may establish persons in those charges. For do not come and tell us that the Holy Ghost established the charge, and that it must be continued. That is not what the word of God says. It says that the Holy Ghost established the persons who were invested with it in the charge we speak of. That is what I ask for in those who pretend to be invested with it now. If the simple fact that they are in it were sufficient, without asking who set these persons in that charge, this fact would suffice just as well for the Romish priests as for any others. They would be established by the authority of God, by the Holy Ghost, and they ought to be recognized. It would be complete popery, in its real principle, namely, the authority of God attached to a man, without proof—the authority of the Holy Ghost attached to the possession of a charge, and not the legitimate possession judged by the proof of the authority of the Holy Ghost. That is what concerns the establishment of the bishop by God Himself.

I now ask for the proof of the establishment of the individual in the charge on the part of God. In the case of a gift, it is no longer the same thing; for it proves itself. But a charge of authority needs to be legitimated. One has no right to say that the Holy Ghost established bishops. The Holy Ghost did establish certain persons as bishops. Shew me this and I shall be content; but it is your.task.

Mr. Wolff owns (p. 37) that the election by the church excludes the vocation of God. But, to be consistent, you must shew me some one established by a perceptible intervention of the Holy Ghost (otherwise the choice by

anyone else excludes it equally); but this they do not pretend to. Or else, you must shew me someone established according to the word by some supreme authority. But in the word this is found to be attributed only to the apostles and their delegates.

If it be objected that it is written, “Obey them that have the rule over you … for they watch for your souls”; and, “know them which labour among you”;57 I reply, I consent to this, and I do still more than consent (for the word of God does not need the consent of man). May God lead His children to do so! Such is my prayer.

I bless God that there is in His word ample provision for times when a state of disorder prevents every thing from being outwardly legitimated. The heart of man is put to the test in a most precious way. Those who are humble will discern all that is of God, and submit themselves to it; the flesh will rebel against everything. But when, by using the phrase “The Holy Ghost has established,” people seek to force upon me that which man has established, and to determine an order of things as obligatory, in circumstances where God demands patience and humiliation, I require from such to produce their evidence. Such a pretension must be legitimated; otherwise, I dishonour the Holy Ghost, whose authority and name are introduced to uphold that which is only from man, which is only an authority, a ministry, without gift. But it is necessary, and it is the least that can be required, that an authority without gift should produce the clearest evidence that it is established by the Holy Ghost, before one can own in it such an authority. This is what I have not seen as yet. And when this pretended authority is used to hinder the activity of love, or to arrogate to itself the right of ruling it, as it were ex

officio, and to deny any gift whatever, the thing becomes most serious. Is it of God? Now this is a question of the utmost gravity.

But here is a person who desires that charge, who possesses all the qualities which the word demands, who is blessed of God in it: for my part, I would support him with all my might, and so much the more because he cannot legitimate his vocation in an outward way, nor say, “The Holy Ghost has established me,” and appeal to evidence. But let him abide in sincerity, in that position of acknowledged weakness, because we will both of us, then, rest upon God, and the strength of God will be there. If, on the other hand, I have laboured in a place, if God has blessed me there, if He has gathered many souls, if He has Himself raised up true bishops, who work together and help and teach and watch over souls; and if I have to labour elsewhere, would I scruple to exhort them, nay, to beseech of them, in the bowels of Christ, to watch over the souls which God had given me in that place for my reward? If I have love for souls, if I love Christ, and if I am led by the Holy Ghost, I could not act differently. If these same persons sought to place themselves in a position where it would be a question of a right, all the work of love would be thoroughly destroyed.

Whoever cannot feel the difference between such conduct, and the fact of insisting on a ministry without gift, I pity him.

Let us remember also, that elders (of whom there were always several established in each church by the side of gifts) are quite a different thing from a young man who leaves an academy, having perhaps natural talents,

perhaps piety, but not one of those qualities required by the word of God for elders. The elders which the word depicts are quite a different thing from the young ministers whom Mr. Wolff presents to us in that sad picture in which he sums up their features by saying, “After suitable study, all preach without gifts.” See the last page of his pamphlet.

To recognize a labourer according to his gift in his field of labour is a positive duty; he who does not will suffer for it. This is what religious societies are not doing in their pretensions to direct the work. They respect ministers whom they know to be not established of God; they often allow souls and their own work to pass into a system which they believe to be not of God, and they oppose every other labourer who is not subject to them.

Chapter 6 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 6, Concerning The Human Vocation Of The Bishop.

In this chapter Mr. Wolff shews that bishops were established by ministers. I have nothing to add to what I have already said, except that it is very convenient to speak of bishops established by ministers, because we have ministers now. Whereas the word of God speaks only of elders established by apostles and their delegates. Give us then, for the establishment of elders, either apostles or their delegates.

Chapter 7 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 7, Concerning The Election Of The Bishop By The Flock.

Here again the writer spares me the trouble of saying much. His desire is, at the beginning of the chapter, that

the flock should take a part in the nomination of the pastor, and that the ministry should have the right of presenting him. He states all this, without caring much to see what is found about it in the word.

All the system which chooses to appoint pastors in such a way is so much outside all that is found in the word, that I have nothing to say on the subject. I have already explained the origin, historically, of this custom. The flocks which one has in view being in fact unconverted for the most part, it is still less needful I should speak of it. “We cannot but approve of such a custom “(p. 20). It would be convenient to free oneself from the government and consistories, and to follow the liberal influence of the age. All that is outside my task. I have already discussed the subject of all the remainder of the chapter, in the same sense as Mr. Wolff.58

Chapter 8 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 8, Concerning The Imposition Of Hands.

In this chapter Mr. Wolff asserts that there were in the apostolic Church two kinds of imposition of hands; the one, miraculous, which communicated extraordinary gifts; the other, ordinary and without miracle, which was conferred by all ministers.

I agree also with the general idea of this chapter, namely, that there was an imposition of the hands of the apostles which was special to them, and which, in general, distinguished the apostle. Long since have I written, and even acted, in making this distinction.

But there are ideas in this chapter of Mr. Wolff, which require to be discussed, not only because of their importance, but also because those ideas bear on

subjects, with respect to which Mr. Wolff, while he has received certain views which the brethren whom he opposes have had long since, has nevertheless fallen into the confusion out of which these truths should have brought him. It is comforting, however, to have at least a certain ground, where there is some light in the understanding, and on which scriptural argument can have a hold.

When I say that Mr. Wolff had understood certain views which the brethren whom he opposes received long ago, I do not mean that he has borrowed them. I know not where he found them; but I am glad to bear witness that there is a very respectable production on the precious word of God. I will explain where it appears to me there are serious gaps in the system which the writer thinks he has found there; but, at least, he has searched the word on the subject, and this is always worthy of respect.

We must here notice a striking part. The moment one searches the word, it comes out that theology and theologians are worth nothing at all. As to the two kinds of imposition of hands (the difference of which forms the basis of the writer's production, and he is right in the main) "old theologians did not distinguish between them" (p. 27); "hence the vagueness and obscurity into which of necessity they fell" (p. 29). And the writer adds, "This confusion in the ideas has produced two results, both equally sad."

Poor theologians! Even when, at any cost, they will uphold the imposition of hands which is practised in our day, for that is always the object, at least they are compelled to throw aside all the system on which it is

founded. In short, it is impossible to search the word without putting aside all the theological system on ministry. This is a singular confession, when one chooses to support that system. It is true, that it is impossible to read the word and to follow, even one moment, the system of theologians, the established system, as to the ideas. It is what I have felt myself.

Here now is what Mr. Wolff condemns as one of the sad results of the confusion he spoke of. I am almost afraid I may be accused of irony in quoting, however seriously, what he says. “Some have thought they saw in ordination something mysterious and sacramental, I know not what magical transformation, which must stamp an indehble character on the man who undergoes it; and clerical pride has favoured that error” (p. 27). Such is one of the results of the theological system on the imposition of hands.

Further, the distinction adopted by the writer, and which old theologians had neglected, is, he says, of “so much importance, that it is only in this that I can see the means of restoring to the ordination of the minister all its dignity, by keeping it pure from superstitious ideas.”

Here, then, we have all the old system on this subject entirely condemned. Is it surprising that others, who have searched the word before Mr. Wolff, have condemned it also? And it is not merely a question of some flaw in the theory; the ordination of ministers is tainted with “superstitious ideas”; and “clerical pride has favoured that error,” the distinction which alone could keep it pure not being found in theology.

And if, on one hand, this was true, as I fully believe it was, and if the thing has gone very far on a very serious

point, which is nothing less than the ministry which God has established in His Church; and if, on the other hand, I have found, like Mr. Wolff, that, according to the dissenting system, the bishop or the pastor is absolutely without vocation from God, is it surprising that I should have withdrawn far away, on the one hand, from those superstitious ideas favoured by clerical pride; and, on the other, from a system which establishes pastors or bishops without any vocation from God? That is what I have done, because I believe what Mr. Wolff believes. I know not whether he has hitherto received or not an ordination conferred according to those superstitious ideas. If he has, I hope God may grant him more light. If in keeping away from both these things, I subject myself to the accusation of belonging to a new sect, I must bear it with patience: it is clearly what is demanded by light and a good conscience; and then the blame of men becomes of very little weight. Moreover, I am not the first who is of a “sect” which is “everywhere… spoken against.” May God give unto us, if we have not the same gifts, the same courage as unto him who endured such contempt from those who, calling themselves Jews, were, most of them, liars.

As to the imposition of hands, I do not at all reject it, provided it is left in its proper place. But this I ask, if an upright man, whose desire is to act according to the word, having the convictions expressed by the writer of the pamphlet, would not have withdrawn from national ordination, and from dissenting ordination?—from one, because tainted with superstitious ideas, and founded on an error which is favoured by clerical pride; from the other, because applied to men who have received no vocation from God; yet in spite of all, acknowledging

that, on both sides, there are individuals blessed of God? Then, having seen that theologians had based everything on a false system, he would have waited in order to see clearly the will of God, instead of building up again the things which the word of God had overthrown.

I have been present at the imposition of hands done with simplicity, when it went not beyond the light I had; I was present and felt much joy. But I think that ministry can be exercised without it, without any human vocation being necessary; and I found this on Acts 8:4; chap. 11:21; Philip-pians 1:15, etc.; because I see from those passages, that they preached, that they evangelized, that they announced the word (I will not even mention here either the prophets or Paul), all the words which can express in the highest way the act of announcing the word being used, without the idea of ordination; and it is said that “the hand of the Lord was with them “; and because I see and believe what Mr. Wolff carefully avoids seeing, and what he wants to fashion according to his own mind, namely, that the ministries which concern the edification of the Church are gifts; and if they are not called charismata they are none the less gifts which Christ gave. And I bless God for it; because His work is not hindered, nor clothed with superstitious ideas, although man has marred the outward order established by the apostles.

What I desire is, that ministry be independent, and that it enjoy its true dignity, as being of God, and dependent upon God; that it be the Holy Ghost who may direct both the work and the workmen; and that in the Church of God money may become servant (deacon)—and this is a great privilege—not the master of ministry.

Let us always remember that the ordination of young students, who have just left an academy, is as far as can be from the establishment of elders in the Church; that there is no similarity whatever between the two things; and that what “is practised now” has introduced into the ministry founded on that system, a mass of Socinians, Rationalists, and Arians, and conferred upon them all the rights of ministry.

Mr. Wolff was educated at a school formed by men whom the ministers, ordained according to that system, had expelled from their midst because they believed in the fundamental basis of Christianity. To see oneself reduced to the necessity of choosing between such a state of things and a system which, if it be more scriptural in its forms, establishes its charges in such a way as excludes the vocation of God, or to place oneself outside of all—is one of the most striking proofs of the state of failure in which the Church is.

Now what is the place given to the imposition of hands? This is shewn to us in Hebrews 6. The imposition of hands has its place there, as one of the elements of the beginning of Christ; an expression which, in effect, connects this ceremony with things that existed before the gift of the Holy Ghost. It seems to have been a very ancient ceremony, everywhere used as a sign of blessing.

The case of Joshua may be added to those pointed out by Mr. Wolff. This ceremony was at all events used as a sign of blessing, for healings, for children, for those who served the tables, and many others. We must not, I think, confound the case of the sacrifices with this imposition of hands. The imposition of hands on the

victim identified the victim with the sinner, or the worshipper with the victim; that is what we see in Hebrews 7:7. In that case, he who laid his hands on the victim was not a superior who blessed, nor a brother who “recommended “another “to the grace of God,” Acts 14:26. He who offered a burnt offering laid his hands on the victim, and was thus presented to God according to the acceptance and sweet savour of the victim. In the offering for sin, the sin of the guilty one was laid upon the victim, which, thereby, became sin in his stead. Neither in the one nor in the other of these cases was it a question of blessing; nothing was conferred. In the burnt offering there was not even transmission. In that case, the imposition of hands expressed an idea of representation. If one means to say that he who receives gifts or a charge must represent him who conferred them, in this very general sense one might recognize a certain analogy between the imposition of hands on an offering, and the imposition of hands on a man to confer a gift or invest with a charge. But in healings and in the case of children this idea also is lost. For the rest, I am not anxious to dispute anything here. The idea is rather vague and imperfect; but it does not affect the question we are treating. A brother, who has been dead many years, sought to establish, in a short publication, this analogy, and the connection between Hebrews 6 and the sacrifices; but it seemed to me that there was a certain confusion of ideas between blessing and identification or representation. All acts of power, in blessing, presented themselves under the form of imposition of hands—healings like all others; but then there was no representation. In the case of the burnt offering, nothing was transmitted; the imposition of hands expressed another idea.

I admit that, in the order of the Church at the beginning, the Holy Ghost was conferred by the imposition of the hands of the apostles: this is incontestable. It was, in my judgment, a sign of apostolic power.

But the writer has thoroughly overlooked the bearing of this fact, and in making gifts to cease (the possession of which he connects with the imposition of the hands of the' apostles), he brings in the cessation of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church. This I will now establish.

Mr. Wolff says (p. 270), first, that one must distinguish between the gift and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In this he is perfectly right: this is what the Irvingites did not do, neither also has the writer of this pamphlet on ministry done it himself. Hence I am anxious to call attention again to the point, that all that is found in Ephesians 4 is there called gift, not 'charisma tou pneumatos,' but equally gifts; the word used indicating, according to Mr. Wolff, a free manifestation of the Spirit (P- 72, 5°).59 Let us now examine the very grave subject of the gift of the Holy Ghost; for it is certain that, if Mr. Wolff is right, we must give up not only the gifts but the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It is possible, according to his system, that we may not have to give up the life which the Spirit has communicated to us, the life according to the power of the resurrection of Christ: but we must give up the gift of the Holy Ghost as seal, and not the gifts only.

According to Mr. Wolff, p. 73, No. 16, and p. 37, the gifts communicated by the imposition of the hands of the apostles were an extension of the gift they received at Pentecost. In effect, we see one and the same result in

what comes to pass on the day of Pentecost, at Caesarea (Acts 10), at Samaria (Acts 8), and at Ephesus (Acts 19). Those who received the gift “spake with tongues, and prophesied.” Whether at Csesarea, where the Spirit works in a special way, as a testimony of the admission of Gentiles; or at Samaria, where He is communicated through the imposition of the hands of the apostles Peter and John; or at Ephesus, where He is communicated through the imposition of the hands of the apostle Paul—a proof of his apostolic rights; it is evident that, in all these cases, it was an extension of what came to pass on the day of Pentecost. But what took place on the day of Pentecost was the gift of the Holy Ghost Himself; it was the promise of the Father; it was the Comforter sent by the Son from the Father, and by the Father in the name of the Son; it was the Spirit of truth, to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, to communicate the things of Christ to the Church; for it was the Spirit whom Christ sent when He went away (John 15; ch. 16; Luke 24:49). It was that other Comforter, who was to abide for ever with the disciples; John 14. But the gift which the apostles communicated or transmitted was only, by Mr. Wolff’s own confession, “an extension of that gift which the apostles themselves received at Pentecost” (p. 31). It is not a question of giving up gifts and saying they no longer exist; but one must say that the Spirit, who was to abide for ever with the disciples, has no longer an existence on earth. It is the gift that it lost, not the gifts; for the imposition of hands was a transmission of what had been received. Now, that which had been received, was the Holy Ghost the Comforter, the Spirit of truth; this it is, then, that has been lost. It is evidently of the utmost gravity; and, at the same time, nothing is more simple. The imposition

of hands transmitted that which the apostles themselves had received at Pentecost; and this it is which would be lost. But it was the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost Himself, that the apostles had received. It is this, then, which is lost, according to Mr. Wolff! What shall we say of those who, to sustain what is practised in the present day, treat with such inconceivable levity the basis of all power, of all testimony, of all manifestation of the glory of Christ, of the existence of the Church—that is, the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself? of those who recommend and carefully circulate a tract, which absolutely takes away from the Church the Holy Ghost, such as He was given at Pentecost, the Comforter; and who do so, either through partiality for the clergy, or through a sad preoccupation which prevents them from perceiving what they are doing?

Are we really come to this, that those who think they are pillars of the Church give their approval to that which denies the presence of the Comforter; and, while denying it, seek to persuade us that the Church enjoys “all the primitive blessings”? The gifts were only “the manifestation of the Spirit.” How much we have lost in this respect, alas! is but too evident. All that was, under the apostolic administration, a public sign of the presence of the Holy Ghost to the world— that was directed and even conferred by that ruling ministry— all this is lost. It is that very thing on which I insisted, as being a proof, among other things, of the state of failure in which we are; but to say, on that account, that the Holy Ghost no longer exists in the Church, except as grace of life— and that is what this pamphlet says—is to deny the basis of all Christian hope; it is that which at the same time shews what is at the root of the question

discussed, and that all is lost on the side of those who think to uphold such a system.

I do not conceal from myself that what I say is very strong language. I do not deny that some few have, through ignorance, maintained what I denounce; but the principle here professed takes absolutely away all source of power in the Church, all testimony rendered by the Holy Ghost. It puts out the Holy Ghost, as having no existence in the unity of the body. It is to deny, in its principle, the existence of the Church, and the glory of Christ, and all testimony to be rendered to Christ on earth; for there were only two testimonies: one, that of the twelve, because they had been with Christ from the beginning (and we may add to their number Paul as to the heavenly glory); the other, the testimony of the Comforter sent by Christ from the Father, of the Spirit of truth "which proceedeth from the Father," John 15:26, 27. As to the testimony of the twelve, we have it no longer personally; and, according to Mr. Wolff, we have not the Comforter either; for that is what the apostles received on the day of Pentecost. If you think that we have the word, as taking the place of the apostles and of the Holy Ghost, say so at least, that we may know what to abide by; and deny openly—not the gifts but— the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church. Say, it is no longer true that there is one Spirit and one body. You no doubt admit grace to believe; but as to that one Spirit, it is no longer any question of Him. What an awful confirmation of the failure of the Church!

Let us now examine the passages quoted for the miraculous imposition of hands; and we shall see that it is a question of the reception of the Holy Ghost Himself, as well as of a particular gift sometimes conferred in

that way; and we shall see at the same time by these passages, and by others that we are going to quote, that the reception of the Holy Ghost is never confounded with the faith which the Holy Ghost may have produced in the heart.

Acts 19:2. The apostle says, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost”—or rather, “if [the] Holy Ghost was [come]” — that is, if that baptism of the Holy Ghost, of which John had spoken, had taken place. It is clear then here, that, although the gifts of tongues, and of prophecies, etc., did manifest the presence of the Holy Ghost, they had not in any way received the Holy Ghost as the Comforter sent by the Son.

Acts 8:15-17. “Who”—Peter and John—“when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” We may well suppose that the Holy Ghost manifested Himself as elsewhere, since Simon perceived it; but it is not directly referred to. One thing is clear—that the disciples had not received the Holy Ghost before.

Acts 10:44. In the case of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost, without imposition of hands, “fell on all them which heard the word”: a proof that (although the imposition of hands, according to the ordinary administration at the time of the apostles, was the means used for communicating the Holy Ghost, that the manifestation of power might be there), nevertheless God was sovereign

in this respect. It shews, moreover, that when once the Holy Ghost was in the Church, He was to abide there for ever, and that the means of His manifestation was a secondary point. The Holy Ghost was there, ever abiding there; He did not content Himself with only giving unto individuals to believe; but He abode in the Church as in a temple, acting sovereignly for the good of the body, according to the will and the wisdom of God. That all the means of the manifestation are in a state of disorder, that the state of ruin in which we are throws obscurity on all these things, this it is on which I have insisted; but to use it in order to deny the presence of the Comforter is to do the work of the enemy; it is the spirit of unbelief and of impenitence.

Other passages present this subject to us under another light also, proving to us that the result of this doctrine is to deny the Holy Ghost, as seal of the promise to the individual; for this presence of the Holy Ghost is something added to faith.

John 7:38, 39. “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given],” etc.)

Galatians 4:6. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.”

Ephesians 1:13, 14. “In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.”

We see then in these passages that the seal of the Holy Ghost is added to faith; and if we have not that Holy Ghost of promise, we neither possess the Spirit of adoption, nor the rivers of living water, nor the earnest of our inheritance. It is not here a question of gifts; it is not a question of power in the Church. If we lose what was transmitted by the apostles— what they received on the day of Pentecost—then, that which we lose is the Holy Ghost of promise, who is received by all those who have believed; it is the source of all joy and energy.

Whatever may have been the manifestation that is wanting now; whatever may have been the apostolic administration which transmitted the gift, if the thing transmitted is wanting to us, it is not a question of gifts; it is a question, both for the Church and for the believer, of the Holy Ghost Himself. What the apostles transmitted was the Holy Ghost, and not merely gifts. If we lose that, where is the Church? and where is the Christian? See 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22.

Of The Ordination Of The Evangelist.

There is one thing more to notice on this chapter.

The prophets laid their hands on Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, when these were set apart for their work among the Gentiles. Reader, you will no doubt think that Paul and Barnabas (for he also was called apostle) acted as apostles in this mission; that what Paul did in all the churches to order what concerned their walk, that all his remarkable labours in Asia Minor, in Macedonia, in Greece, were apostolic labours— the work of an apostle. Not at all; that cannot agree with Mr. Wolff’s system, because the imposition of hands, in the ordinary sense, must always be “from the higher to the lower, never

from the lower to the higher. Everywhere the minister lays his hands for a charge either for an inferior or equal to his own, and never for a higher charge" (p. 32). That is all very well; but moreover, says the writer, "The blessing must always, in its importance and effects, be proportionate to the elevation of the one who gives it. Hence, when it is Jesus Christ who confers the imposition of hands, it operates miracles, it heals the sick, it raises the dead. When it is the apostles, they share with simple believers the miraculous gift which was laid on their heads at Pentecost" — a fresh proof, it may be said by the way, of what we have said; for it is certain that it was the Holy Ghost Himself, the Comforter, who came down, so that it is this which is lost—and not merely gifts. The writer confounds the special form of manifestation, and the administrative means of transmission, with the presence itself of the Comforter. "Finally," he says, "when it is a question of the other ministers, they invest the candidate with the charge they received themselves."

Thus the ministry which Paul exercised was not in the least the ministry of an apostle.

You may suppose that the conclusions I draw are forced. Listen rather to Mr. Wolff on Acts 13:1-3: "Paul and Barnabas," he says (p. 28, 2o), "were marked out by the Holy Ghost to receive the charge of evangelist, which was to be conferred upon them by their colleagues." Thus all the labours of Barnabas or of Paul were in nowise an apostolic work. This is rather strong. "But," says Mr. Wolff, "the text expressly tells us that it"—the imposition of hands—"was only conferred upon them with a view to their charge as evangelists." This I have not found. It is quite true that the apostles did not

disdain (very far from it) this solemn recommendation to the grace of God for the work (for it is thus that the Holy Ghost designates this imposition of hands, Acts 14:26); but to say that it was simply an ordination from the higher downwards! an ordination to the charge of evangelist, this, assuredly, is rather strong.

But there is still another difficulty. “As to the other ministries,” says Mr. Wolff, “they invest the candidate with the charge they have received themselves” (p. 32).

This is indeed very convenient, in order that pastors may make pastors of certain young students who are candidates; but Barnabas, Simeon, etc. (Acts 13:1), were prophets who had received a vocation from God alone, and not a charge; and Paul and Barnabas depart as evangelists. So that, according to Mr. Wolff, the prophets had invested the candidates with a charge which they had not received themselves.

I hesitated a little, lest it should be dishonouring the precious word of God to introduce all this, as shewing what a terrible mess is the result of the desire to authorize that which is practised. If I have been wrong, may God deign to forgive me, for it is very painful. But such absurdities and such contradictions are always the consequence of having adopted a system, and then seeking, at any cost, to establish it by the word. If the word has been dishonoured, it is the system that dishonoured it, and not I.

Of The Ordination Of The Bishop.

We have only one point more to treat, as regards the imposition of hands.

We have seen what is alleged for the ordination of evangelists. We have seen the preaching of the word without ordination presented under every form (Acts 8:4): they spoke, they evangelized or announced the word (lalountes), Acts 11:19; both words are used in verse 20. In Philippians 1:15 they preach, they are heralds (kerussousin)—a word habitually used by Paul for his own ministry and by which he indicates his own function. The only case alleged of the ordination of an evangelist being the mission of the two apostles at their departure from Antioch, there only remains to be examined the ordination of the bishop.

It was necessary for Mr. Wolff to point out the two ordinations, of the bishop and of the evangelist, because this answers to the evangelists and to the pastors of the present day. Having seen what is said about one, let us see what there is about the other.

I admitted the difference in point of fact between the imposition of hands by which the Holy Ghost was communicated, and the imposition of hands which was ordinarily practised (although, as a division, it is inexact). I acknowledge that when it is a question of the imposition of hands by Timothy, it is not a question of the gift of the Holy Ghost; but I stop there. All the remainder of Mr. Wolff's page 34 only contains arguments which are utterly groundless.

First, all this reasoning is founded on the idea, that the imposition of hands was only practised for evangelists and for bishops, which is entirely false. For it is never said that hands were laid on evangelists, and it is quite certain that hands were laid on deacons, at least in the case of the seven in Acts 6.

Secondly, Mr. Wolff (p. 34), in favour of the imposition of hands on the bishop, alleges the injunction given to Timothy, to “lay hands suddenly on no man,” 1 Tim. 5:22. But almost the whole of the epistle comes in between the rules for choosing elders and this verse 22 of chapter 5; and all kinds of subjects are treated between the two passages.

Thirdly, the passage, 1 Timothy 5:22, does not immediately follow after some exhortations about the elder;60 but it applies to Timothy’s personal conduct. I think it probable that hands were laid on elders; because I see that this ancient sign of blessing and of setting apart for a charge was universally used; and that, among other things, the epistle treats of the charge of elder. But so little is it true that it is impossible to apply to any other than the bishop the imposition of which this passage speaks, it is very evident that it is a direction for Timothy’s conduct in every case in which he might be called to lay hands on any one.

In favour of the imposition of hands having solely the bishop for its object, Mr. Wolff alleges a second passage, namely, 1 Timothy 4:14: “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” His reasoning on this second text may lead to a conclusion more or less just, but which only serves to establish the fact that the word of God never says that hands were to be laid on the bishop. It may be supposed, and one may reason about it with pretty much probability, but the word does not say so. All that Mr. Wolff dares to affirm on this passage is that it alludes to it; but we have only this reasoning of Mr. Wolff, “If the elders laid their hands on Timothy, it must be supposed that they had themselves received the

imposition of hands." But all this does not affect the question, which consists in inquiring who appointed these elders.

Chapter 9 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 9, About The Twofold Vocation Of The Elder.

On the subject of the twofold vocation of the bishop, I find nothing whatever that is scriptural in Mr. Wolff's system. What is called inward or immediate vocation is not to be found in the Bible in the case of the bishop. The Bible supposes that a person may desire to be a bishop, but that is all. Where that desire exists, not a word is said about an inward vocation as a quality requisite for the charge. If a young man desired to be a minister, according to the present system (and it would be very difficult to find the least analogy between that and the choosing of bishops in the New Testament), the first thing which an evangelical friend of the young man would ask him is, "Do you feel yourself called of God to the ministry? "Not a trace of such an idea is in the epistle to Timothy: "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," and thereupon follow the requisite qualities, without a single word about inward vocation. It was a charge entrusted to persons who were qualified.

But the confusion is the natural consequence of the confusion which is made between the pastor and the bishop; it results from having denied all the gifts and excluded them from ministry, and from the will to maintain, at any cost, the existing system and the flesh which rests there.

A second remark presents itself here. Mr. Wolff says (p. 36), "that it is God who gives, who sets the bishops in

the Church; it is men, the ministers, who establish them." But in the word of God the expression "given" is never used in reference to the bishop; never is it said that God, that Christ, gave bishops.61 Never is the word 'set' used as to the charge. The Holy Ghost had put certain persons in that charge. In Acts 20 it is nowise a question of an inward vocation, but of the simple fact that the Holy Ghost had placed them there; and Mr. Wolff himself acknowledges that a person is not set in a charge by an inward and immediate vocation. Hence it is not true that God sets bishops in the Church; but He sets persons in the charge of bishop in a flock.

All that Mr. Wolff says on this subject is therefore altogether false from one end to the other; it is a theory or arrangement for sanctioning that which exists without any scriptural foundation—a theory, which, after all, is a thing quite different from the theory itself, which makes bishops of young students who have none of the qualities which God demands.

Mr. Wolff says that the word of God contains nothing against the Church's choosing among those who have already been called to the ministry, or among those who are ready to be received. There is in such expressions a boldness which really demands something more than the brief remarks I can give here; it is sought to justify oneself by adding to the word of God systems and thoughts of which not one trace is found there. Where is there to be found in the word of God a single trace of choosing among those who are already called to the ministry—unless it be in the case of those who said, "I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos"?

The apostle or his delegates appointed certain persons having certain qualities to a certain charge: was the Church afterwards to choose among them, or even to choose others, leaving them aside? Is it not true that the apostle appointed such a person bishop in such a town? And how, if the Church took no active part in the vocation of the bishop, could it choose among those who were called? It is very convenient to say of any one that he is called to the ministry, because this is done now; but where is that to be found in the word? No one in that case was called to the ministry; but the bishop was established in a special charge.

In the case of the bishop, it was a question of a local charge; and Mr. Wolff admits that at that time there were ministries of apostles and of prophets, whose vocation was from God alone. Could the churches choose according to their will among the apostles and prophets? In all this portion of the pamphlet there reigns, in order to flatter that which exists, a contempt for the word of God, which one would do well to weigh before the Lord. God will judge.

When the writer speaks of the candidate for ministry, what does it mean? Was a person candidate for the function of apostle or prophet? Was a person then chosen by such or such a church? For these were ministries. And when the apostle chose and established bishops in each town, even if there were men who desired that charge, were these churches (one knows not where) choosing amidst a company of young ministers the one who suited them? It is wrong, very wrong, thus to treat the word of God.

Finally, whether one takes ministry as being the exercise of a gift, as was the case with the apostles or prophets (for it is absurd after all to pretend to say that the prophet exercised a ministry without gift); or looks upon it as a charge, as was the case with the bishops established by the apostle, by Timothy, or by Titus; the idea of choosing among candidates or among those called to the ministry, is equally foreign to the word, excluded from the word. And the idea that a young candidate or an ordained minister should go and make himself heard, that the population of a place may choose him, is certainly not to be found in the word of God.

I cannot admit that a bishop is not a bishop without the imposition Of hands. I have already said that, reasoning from analogy, it is probable that hands were laid on one who was to be bishop. But if the apostle had appointed certain persons bishops, and had established them by his own authority, they would be bishops. It is not a question of the distinction between desire and reality, for a man might have desired to be appointed without being appointed, not having the requisite qualities. It was only a question of this fact: had they been established by the apostles or by some other competent persons?

To insist on the imposition of hands as to the bishop (a thing which is not said in the word), then cleverly to add (p. 38, 20), “Thus he who will be pastor without receiving the imposition of hands, has not really received any charge; his ministry ought not to be received by any church”—this is nothing but a conjuror’s trick. For after all the pastor is not named anywhere except in a list of gifts. Such is the fact; and not a word

of what is said of the bishop and of his charge is applied to him in the word.

As for the testimony drawn from Acts 13 (p. 38, 30) we have already found the reasoning of the writer to be entirely false. Thus all the high words he addressed to the brethren at the close of the paragraph are not worth much.62 The man who thinks that Paul and Barnabas received the collation of the charge of simple evangelists from prophets and teachers at Antioch, and who makes this the basis of his reproof, needs in effect to cry out very loud in order to make himself heard.

That in the present system “ministry is debased, so as only to see in it an altogether human order of things,” this I acknowledge. Has one any trouble in recognizing the picture we find in page 41?63 Where did Mr. Wolff find the original of that portrait? Will he have us to remain in a system which thus degrades ministry?

Chapter 10 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 10, About Evangelists.

After having, in support of election by men and ordination, assimilated the pastor to the bishop, Mr. Wolff puts on the same line and in the same condition the pastor and the evangelist, in order that the election and the ordination which he connects with the first may be indispensable for the second. The charges of evangelist and of pastors,” says Mr. Wolff, “are so much of the same nature… that they may often be blended together, and that one may pass from one to the other,” etc. (p. 44).

The grand principles having been discussed, I will try to be brief, on this point.

The author has placed himself here in a complete confusion, which I shall only have to point out.

First, Mr. Wolff will have it that those whom the Spirit of God calls apostles can be nothing but bishops or evangelists.

What connection is there between a bishop and an apostle or sent one? This it would be difficult to discover. Moreover it is a merely gratuitous assertion. I allow myself to consider as being apostles those whom the word of God calls apostles, that is, as having been especially sent by the Lord, although it may not have been, as to all of them, with the same authority.

Secondly, Mr. Wolff confounds the messengers of the churches (2 Gor. 8:23) with the messengers of Christ. As to the application of the other passages, it appears to me more than uncertain. When Paul says “us the apostles,” it does not mean, necessarily, Silvanus and Timothy, who were with him. Even if it be so (and I am not anxious to dispute it), it is never said that their functions were those of an evangelist.

Thirdly, as to 1 Corinthians 12:28. In spite of Mr. Wolff’s assertion, the evangelist is not named here.

In fine, having done with this confusion, I acknowledge that the evangelist was a gift of God according to Ephesians 4:11.

As to the vocation which, according to Mr. Wolff’s assertion, the evangelist receives from men, I stop here. We have seen that all, according to their ability, preached; and that the mere fact that Paul wished Timothy to accompany him does not shew that he was called to a special charge as evangelist, and shews still

less that all evangelists had received a vocation from men.

Paul tells Timothy to do the work of an evangelist; and this seems to me rather to contradict the idea that a special vocation as evangelist had existed long before. Timothy, at that moment, was a delegate of the apostle for a special object; and Paul exhorts him to do also the work of an evangelist. This is most simple, but agrees very little with the notion of an evangelist specially appointed to that. We have already considered sufficiently the case of Paul and Barnabas.

I admit that all those who bear testimony according to their ability, are not, properly speaking, evangelists. The evangelist is a gift (Eph. 4:11); but the imposition of hands on an evangelist is never mentioned, either as necessary for his work, or in any respect whatever. We find ever and again in the author the desire to sanction at all costs the present order of things. An evangelist, according to him, partakes so entirely of the same nature as the pastor, that he may settle in a place, after having formed a flock; but I shall say nothing about it, for the reason—that there is not a syllable about all this in the word. If he who acts thus has both gifts, it is all well; if not, it is very wrong.

To understand the way in which Mr. Wolff draws conclusions from the word, I also beg of the reader to compare the quotations which he has made from Acts 18:26; 1 Corinthians 16:19, and Romans 16:3, with a view to shew that Aquila was in turn pastor and evangelist, having, we must suppose, received the imposition of hands. Perhaps we ought to suppose he had received it twice; for nothing authorizes us to

suppose that ministry was conferred by wholesale, as it is practised now. A special charge was conferred, those who received the collation of the charge being solemnly recognized by competent authorities, as being called to it of God. For otherwise, it would be a question, not of various ministries or of vocation, but of ministry in general, without a special charge. This is what is practised in our day. One man, after having been recognized as fit to be a bishop, goes on to present himself, upon his own authority, as evangelist; another, after having been ordained as evangelist, goes on to assume, upon his own authority, the charge of bishop in a locality which pleases him. We must remember, that, according to Mr. Wolff's system, it is by no means a question, in ministry, of the exercise of a gift, but of a charge which is only received by the imposition of hands. A man evangelizes without a gift, a man is a bishop without the requisite qualities, a man preaches without a gift, and if any one has been ordained as evangelist, according to this chapter 10, it becomes no longer a question either of the choosing of bishops by the apostle, or of their appointment by him or his delegate; all that disappears. A man abides in the place where he has evangelized and becomes a bishop, "having undergone," as Mr. Wolff says, "I know not what magic transformation, which stamps him with an indelible character, something mysterious and sacramental." After that, the charge is no matter; the qualities demanded in the word are no matter. Pastor and evangelist are charges which are "so near akin," that a man, when ordained for one, may establish himself in the other.

I do not know how this strikes the minds of others; but for me, there is something that is most shameful in this servile adulation of what now exists. I admit that there may be skill enough in this, and a certain cleverness; but in the face of the word, and the immensity of the interests which are found in it, thus to be able to use skill to flatter all that exists—and that in the face of the word of God, the testimony of His love—what shall I say?… Each one will judge according to the value he may attach to that word and to the grace of Him who gave it.

It is quite true that the church of Jerusalem was a centre, that it exercised a certain authority and a certain oversight; at least it was so during a certain time, the apostles being there. But that Barnabas had received a mission as evangelist or pastor, is what we see nowhere. It is true, that he was sent to Antioch by the Church, which took an interest in what was going on there; and when he arrived there, he exercised his gift, he "exhorted "those who had already been evangelized; that is what we find in Acts 13:23, in the passage quoted by Mr. Wolff, page 44. Guided by the same interests and the wants that existed, Barnabas goes to seek Saul. In that, he used his Christian liberty, as Paul did when he took Timothy with him.

When Mr. Wolff says that the functions of evangelist are described at length in the pastoral letters of Paul, I hardly know what he means. Nothing is said in the epistles of Paul of the functions of an evangelist. He writes as apostle, he commands as apostle: he shews what he was as apostle, and especially as apostle. Does Mr. Wolff wish to deny his apostleship or to bring down his apostleship to the level of an evangelist, in order to

exalt the authority of modern evangelists, as he has done by his pretended ordination to the charge of evangelist at Antioch? I repeat, I hardly know what he means, if it be not that; for otherwise the apostle never speaks of an evangelist except to name that gift (Ephesians 4), or to exhort Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5).

Chapter 11 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 11, Concerning Teachers.

First of all, I admit that there is not in the Church a charge of teacher. In the word, the teacher is presented as a gift.64 It is only those who will have doctors of theology like Mr. Wolff, who think that doctorship is a charge. Mr. Wolff, who denies (p. 45) that doctorship is a charge, says (p. 49), that a professor of theology ought to consider himself as a functionary in the Church.

When men choose to make all ministries to be charges, or a clergy, and deny at the same time that ministry is the exercise of a gift, they must naturally imitate Mr. Wolff, and seek for information as to those charges. It is not surprising that the author, after having called prophecy a ministry, and denied at the same time that ministry was the exercise of a gift, should meet with difficulties in this respect. But as for the person who, resting on the ground of the word, finds there—in Ephesians 4—that the teacher is a gift connected with that of pastor; who sees in 1 Corinthians 12 that God has set teachers in the Church; who reads in Romans 12 that he who has the gift of teacher is to be occupied in a modest manner with the accomplishment of the duty connected with the exercise of that gift: the person, I

say, who sees all this, does not find much difficulty as to such a simple thing.

All that Mr. Wolff says on the subject presents such confusion, that it is impossible to get clear of it; for he makes the teacher to be a sort of quality which pervades every charge; but in the passages already quoted, the word of God presents to us the doctorship as a gift. It is not only a doma, but a charisma; and, according to Mr. Wolff, gifts have absolutely ceased in the Church.

It is therefore somewhat bold to quote Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 as lists of ministries, and even to tell us (p. 46), “It is therefore in this last passage that we are compelled, by exegesis and grammar, to recognize the proper classification of ministry”; since he affirms that ministry is not the exercise of a gift, and that both these passages present a list of gifts; in Ephesians 4:11, they are called domata, and in 1 Corinthians 12, they are charismata. See verses 30, 31, 38.65 Hence in our turn we might ask ourselves, which was the ministerial charge—with imposition of hands—formed by the different kinds of tongues, and by the gifts (charismata) of healing? If one did not trouble the Church by such contradictions—if one did not seek to weaken faith, a confusion of that sort would only excite compassion. I question whether such a mode of treating the word and the Church might not rather call for severity.

The blame lies in a greater measure with those who encouraged the young man who is the author of such a pamphlet, than with him whom they have put forward, applauded and encouraged in such a work. It is the abettors of the thing who are the most guilty.

I have already answered the remarks on the union of pastors and teachers which the writer presents in this chapter.

In result, admitting there was no charge of teacher, as there was of bishop and of deacon, it is very evident that in the teacher was a gift which might be possessed by an apostle, or by a bishop, or any other, or by a man who only had this very gift of teaching.

Chapter 12 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 12, Concerning The Classification Of Ministries.

I have not much to say on this chapter. I will state my thoughts on the subject he treats when I shall speak of gifts.

We have already seen that ministry is the exercise of a gift: even deaconship (diakonia) is called a gift (charisma). I am not speaking of the charge of deacon, but of the service of ministry called diakonia (Rom. 12:6, 7).

The only remark which I have to make here is, that the things which Mr. Wolff will classify here as ministries are presented as gifts in the chapters of the word which are quoted— Ephesians 4, domata; 1 Corinthians 12, charismata; although, according to Mr. Wolff, ministry be not the exercise of a gift.

I shall add, that I do not deny the distinction between a foundation-ministry and a propagation-ministry—I would rather say of building on the foundation; 1 Cor. 3:10. Moreover, the two words are found in page 51; and I acknowledge that this ministry was to continue from age to age.

It is at least fourteen years ago that I insisted on these very things with Mr. Irving, before the system to which he gave his name was manifested.

Chapter 13 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 13, Concerning The Perpetuity Of Ministry.

Mr. Wolff says that ministry will continue to the end of the dispensation; that the apostles and prophets who are the foundation abide, govern, preach, and prophesy by means of their institutions and their writings, and there is no reason for ceasing to establish evangelists and bishops.

That ministry must exist is a point on which we agree.

But, first of all, where did the writer find, as a classification, and as a list of ministries, this catalogue: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and bishops? It is a purely arbitrary list, it is in nowise scriptural. Such an arrangement of ministries is nowhere to be found in the word.

It is well to remember that, to establish his system, Mr. Wolff is always under the necessity of altering that which is found in the word.

Further, I deny that the Church possesses every ministry, and that it has, as Mr. Wolff says, apostles and prophets. That, as foundations, they have accomplished their work, that their writings are of authority in the Church, we all know; but there was in them something else, namely, the exercise of their authority in power, and this was attached to their person. They, the apostles, commended themselves by the power of God. They knew that after their departing grievous wolves would enter in. What would have mattered their

departing if all their ministry still subsists? If wisdom in action, influence, promptitude, discernment of the machinations of the enemy, and the testimony borne to Christ, if all did really subsist as during their lifetime, the Church would be in a state far different from that in which it is found.

It is a sweet and precious thought that God is sufficient for the Church, in His grace, at all times; but to say that the ministry of the apostle always subsists, is to say that the revelation of certain rules constituted the whole of that ministry, and that there was in the apostle neither personal power nor personal authority: it is to disown the importance of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Wolff himself says that the effect of the gift of prophecy was such that unbelievers acknowledge that God was there, but that it is no longer so now. How then can he pretend that the ministry of the prophet still subsists? Perhaps he will say that when the prophet prophesied, he was not exercising a ministry, but his gift; but he cannot expect that men of good sense will attend to such absurdities.

Chapter 14 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 14, Concerning The Apostasy Of The Church.

I have already written enough on this subject to spare myself the trouble of saying much about it here, and to spare my readers the wearisomeness of a repetition of what I have said elsewhere.

I must state this, that I in nowise accept the picture as here given of my opinions. Mr. Wolff says that "in our days, an opinion such as would prosper amid ruins has a great chance of success." This is very extraordinary if there are no ruins and if everything is firmly established,

as is asserted. If we are in the midst of ruins, this can be understood; but how comes it that an opinion, such as would prosper amid ruins, has in our days a great chance of success? Alas! conscience, the heart, fear even, speak too loudly not to be heard at times, in spite, and in the midst, of cunningly devised systems.

I beg leave to say, that the writer is greatly mistaken in what he asserts on the doctrine of the Irvingites. They did not teach the existence of apostasy, but that the Holy Ghost had left the Church and had returned there. Ecclesiastical authority was their idol.

It is, I think, because it has not been recognized that the Church should be visible, that things go on so badly.

Mr. Wolff and others besides him strongly oppose the idea, that the Church should be visible. The Church was at the beginning, and ought always to have been, the manifestation of the glory of Christ by the Spirit; it has almost entirely ceased to be so, and those who have Christ’s glory at heart will feel it. The glory of Christ will be fully manifested in the glorified Church; but the Church ought to have manifested it here below.

Moreover, this is the universal order:

Man responsible, man according to the counsels of God; Israel responsible, and Israel according to the counsels of God; the Church responsible, and the Church according to the counsels of God. We might even add, Christ responsible, and Christ according to the counsels of God.

In every case, except that of Christ, man has failed in the the responsibility in which God had placed him; but this has only the more glorified the faithfulness of God in

the accomplishment of His counsels; this does not prevent God's being righteous in His government, where man has failed. (See Romans 3.)

I do not feel the need of following out the reasonings (p. 55) by which they have sought to make of the Church a counterpoise to the pastor, as if it were a constitution from carnal men. It is just this habit, merely carnal, of the age and of the country, which has done so much harm to souls and to flocks. To my mind, the flock which feels that its business is to be a counterpoise to its pastor, is in a sad state. I am not surprised at many things that have happened, if such principles are approved of. For the rest, all that is merely ad captandum, to catch flies; but alas! all that is based upon the rejection of the Holy Ghost. At the beginning, the Holy Ghost was leading on together all believers as being of one heart; but flesh needs a counterpoise.

I do not believe, as Mr. Wolff makes me say (p. 55), that bishops were functionaries specially destined to the outward service of the Church; besides, it is rather an obscure expression.

It is a fact, that it is not given to every congregation to have a pastor (this is counted among the practical changes which, it is pretended, we have provided for in our theory); it is a fact, I say, and a subject of prayer that it may please God to grant a remedy wherever it be needed.

In effect, I do think that bishops were established in a charge, whereas in the word of God ministry is connected with a gift. I think that the bishop was attached to a particular church, which was not necessarily the case with a pastor, because the latter,

according to the word, was placed as a joint of supply in the body. To say that, less the miracles, such a pastor was an apostle,66 only shews in the writer the ignorance of what an apostle was. An apostle founded the churches which the pastor only fed; he made ordinances for all the churches, with the authority of Christ; he chose bishops, he governed all the churches after they were formed. If one did not know how simple souls are confused through bold assertions, when the word seems to have been examined, there would be no need of replying to such accusations, except that I have always remarked the efforts of my adversaries to bring down the idea of the Church, of apostleship, and of everything to the level where they are themselves, in order to quiet their conscience at the expense of the glory of Christ and of the manifest proofs of the love of God towards us.

Mr. Wolff undertakes to prove four things:

First, That the word apostasy (2 Thess. 2:3) does not in any way refer either to the Church or to the dispensation (p. 57).

Secondly, That Romans 11, above all verse 22, only concerns the Christian individually; that it is quite a personal thing (P. 57).

Thirdly, that the present state of the Church proves quite the contrary of an apostasy (p. 58).

Fourthly, That the notion of a visible Church is “nothing else but that of the papists “(pp. 59, 60).

We shall, in a summary way, touch upon these four points, and shew, First, That the word ‘apostasy’ (2 Thess. 2:3) does refer to the dispensation.

Secondly, That the passage, Romans 11:22, does concern the dispensation, and not the Christian, the child of God individually.

Thirdly, That the present state of the Church, on Mr. Wolff's own avowal, does prove a state of ruin.

Fourthly, That the notion of a visible Church is perfectly scriptural.

1.—The word 'apostasy' does refer to the dispensation.

It is false that, as Mr. Wolff pretends in 2 Thessalonians 2, there is a reference to the son of perdition only.

We find mentioned there:

First, A system of iniquity which was already working in the days of the apostle. And if it was already working, I ask, Where? Was it in China, or in Africa, or in what was called the Church?

Secondly, An apostasy is mentioned; and

Thirdly, The manifestation of the lawless one.

The son of perdition, the man of sin, is presented as a different thing from the apostasy. It is written, "Except there come a falling away [apostasy] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." And, although the manifestation of the son of perdition follows the first event that breaks out, the verses we read afterwards shew a power of Satan, to the influence of which shall be given up all those who have not received the love of the truth. Is that a solitary word? Happily, in spite of the folly of some, the thing comes too strongly home, for all to listen to that which almost all, nevertheless, would like to say, "We are rich"; but this expression describes in a few words the pamphlet of Mr. Wolff.

I recommend those who distrust the “Plymouthians” to read in the “Essay on the Kingdom of God,” by Mr. F. Olivier, who cannot be suspected of Plymouthism, from page 12 to page 69; or, rather, I invite the admirers, of Mr. Wolff’s principles to be so kind as to read 2 Thessalonians 2 from one end to the other, and to decide afterwards if there is only one word on the point in question. For the rest, when it comes from God, one word often says a great deal at once; and if the word ‘ love ‘ in God’s mouth tells more than volumes could contain, the word ‘ apostasy ‘ speaks loud enough to those who feel for the beauty of the Bride of Christ and the glory of His name, from whatever quarter the apostasy may come in.

2.—Romans 11:22 does concern the dispensation. I have sufficiently, in other writings, examined Romans 11— a passage always applied by Christians to Gentiles, or, at least, to the Gentiles of the West, until the consequences of this were felt. The person who can believe that in this passage it is merely a question of an individual threatened with the same fall as that of Israel, and of the fall of someone who stands by faith (for then it is not a principle on which men are standing, but already a reality in the heart of the individual), the person, I say, who can believe that the fall of Israel as a dispensation is applied as a threat to an individual who is really standing by faith, I must leave under the effects of his views.

Where, says Mr. Wolff, is it spoken of the Church of the dispensation? Paul answers, “I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles.” Is not that the dispensation? He speaks of the reconciling of the world in contrast with Judaism: is this not a question of

the dispensation? He speaks of the lump being holy by means of the first-fruits; he speaks of a wild olive tree graffed in: is an individual the wild olive tree? And if he addresses himself to the individual conscience, it is to the Gentiles as enjoying the privilege of the dispensation, and not as to an individual he is speaking. Could he have spoken thus to a Jew? Clearly not. It is therefore perfectly certain that it is not here an entirely personal matter. Is the apostle speaking of an entirely personal matter when he concludes by saying, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery … that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”?

What the author says (p. 58, 20) about two apostasies is so thoroughly absurd that I do not know how to take it up. Does he to such a degree count upon the credulity of his readers, or is it that his ignorance of the word has betrayed him? “He speaks,” he says, of two apostasies; “and this would prove that there is no general apostasy, and then, that an apostasy does not destroy the Church for ever, since the first serves as a warning to avoid a second?” Is it possible? But, finally, there are two apostasies. Can one simply read Romans 11 without perceiving that it is the Jews who are fallen? I could not have supposed (I think I must say so) such blindness. What are the branches which have been the object of God’s severity? Well, according to Mr. Wolff, this passage speaks of a past apostasy of the Jews (that is the first), and then of a future apostasy of the Gentiles (and that is the second); and the first serves as a warning to the second. In this, Mr. Wolff, at least, sees clearly. He speaks of two apostasies, of a past apostasy, and of a future apostasy; and “the first serves as a

warning to avoid the second," that is all perfectly well. But then it is perfectly clear that the first, of which the apostle speaks, was of the Jews, as a dispensation cut off. Well, the second is of the Gentiles; and this also is very clear, for he says," I speak to you Gentiles." The Gentiles are threatened with the same thing, if they do not continue in the goodness of God; if that apostasy, even, takes place for the Gentiles only, Mr. Wolff cannot very rightly boast of it; there was no need of speaking of the Jews as a nation; the thing had already befallen them.

3.—The present state of the Church does prove a state of ruin.

As to what the writer says, page 59,1 only see in it the spirit of Laodicea. If Mr. Wolff takes the trouble to read Acts 2 or Acts 4, he will understand the difference between our position and the one which is depicted in those chapters, without dreaming of taking advantage of the state of the Church of Corinth, a state which hindered the apostle even from visiting that church. For the rest, he has been unfortunate in alluding to Sardis, which according to many enlightened Christians is a prefiguration of protestantism; for—O! that consciences would awake!—the Lord says to that church, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

Mr. Wolff may be content with such a state of things; but I do not think that the man who takes to heart the words of the Lord would seek an excuse in the face of such a threat from His mouth.

Moreover, it is not a question of the apostasy of a church, but of the state of the dispensation and of the Church. Faith ever identifies the glory of God and the people of God; it can present unto God His own people with unlimited confidence, resting on the ground of the faithfulness of God, and cannot bear with that which dishonours God in His people. Thus does Moses refuse to receive the glory of becoming the new stock of the people of God; he appeals to the" glory of Jehovah Himself" who had brought forth His people out of Egypt, praying even to be blotted out from the book, rather than the people; but when he was come down and when he saw the sin of his people, he said, "Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother." Then he took his tent "and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp." Those who "sought the Lord, went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation,67 which was without the camp."

4.—The notion of a visible Church is scriptural.

The word of God, it is said, does not intend any visible Church; that is to say that the word of God does not intend the manifestation of the glory of God and of His light in the Church (such is the doctrine opposed to us). It consents to this, that the Church should be one in glory, but not on earth. Here below, there are only churches.

One thing is certain, that, if this principle be true, all the National Churches, the Lutheran and the Presbyterian, are a public lie against the word of God; their unity is a human invention; they are not churches. The word of God, according to the pamphlet, only recognizes the

Church in glory, and local churches as at Corinth, or at Sardis.

The thing is most simple and very evident: all the conclusion one has to draw from such reasoning is that those who patronize and circulate this pamphlet are disposed to use every means to oppose the truth which condemns their want of faith.

What is most painful in all this is, that they are content to sacrifice the glory of God in the Church, as well as their own system, if only they can persuade souls not to receive the light. Their system is not of faith. The light of faith once set aside, they hope, yet with little confidence, to uphold it against the attacks of unbelief.

But it is sad to see a system, which gives itself the name of the Church of God, exposed, like the Jews, to the hatred and contempt of the Gentiles, on the one hand, and, on the other, having against it the testimony of Christ and of His apostles—a system which denies its own privileges—a system subject to Caesar, which will neither acknowledge its bondage, nor follow the testimony of faith, which is the only means of deliverance— a system which is ripening for judgment, because it denies the power and the rights of the Holy Ghost. I have discussed this subject elsewhere.

The heart and conscience must acknowledge that the Church ought to be one, so as to be able to glorify the Lord on earth; a spiritual man will own this without any need of reasoning. But one must produce testimony from God for those who will not have it so, and in order that those who desire nothing but the glory of Christ may be strengthened and be able to close the mouths of adversaries. I do not call adversaries all those who hold

contrary opinions. There are many children of God who are ignorant of the truth on this subject; there are also many who deceive themselves and who, dazzled by the pretension of those who oppose the truth, are carried away unwittingly. Mr. Rochat (who, with the Dissenters, opposed this truth) has acknowledged it publicly. He has acknowledged this sense of the word ‘ church,’ namely, the aggregate of the elect on earth at a given period. I am content with that definition. Only such an expression brings out the cause of the opposition to this truth—that if the word * church ‘ has such a sense, it is certain that, in that sense, the Church is in a state of ruin. And here I do entreat Christians to give serious attention to this, that when our adversaries accuse me of denying that there is a Church on earth, it is by denying themselves that there has ever been one: if there was, then it is certain that all is in a state of ruin. They admit that there were Churches, but they say that there never was a Church. They feel that, if once this were admitted, the truth respecting our state must necessarily be admitted also; but, satisfied with themselves, they deny the existence of a Church of Christ on earth, rather than confess their sin.

On some objections to the word ‘ruin’:—

These objections, so many times repeated, seem to me puerile and only betray a conscience which does not like to face the question. The word ‘ruin’ is used in a moral sense, as well as in a material sense: and it is evident that such is the case, when it is applied to the Church. If I say that a man is ruined, the man still exists; if I say his reputation is ruined, it is not that he has none, but that it is a bad one. If I say that a thing has been the ruin of such a man, it is clear that I speak of the moral effect of

such or such a thing, and that I do not mean that the man is no longer in existence. Moreover we have seen that Mr. Wolff himself uses the word.

Hence, when I say that the Church is ruined, or when I speak of the ruin of the Church, it is saying that the Church is not at all in its normal state; it is as if, for example, I said that the health of a man was ruined.

Those who oppose this, not being willing to acknowledge the state of misery in which we all are, yet feeling that if the Church in its unity was at the beginning the depositary of the glory of Christ it is so no longer, boldly deny that it ever was. Let us, then, go over a few passages on this important subject. Here is what Mr. Wolff himself says, “We will not stop to refute this notion of the visible Church, this notion being nothing else but that of papists,” etc. “As to us, it is enough for us to know that it is spoken in scripture of a Church (in the singular) which God has purchased with His own blood,” etc. “This Church has certainly never apostatized; it has never been either outward or visible. When it shall be complete, it will be visible in heaven. This Church is always called in Scripture —in the singular and absolutely—the Church. By its side, we find churches, such as the church of Jerusalem, the church of Laodicea, the church that is in the house of Philemon, or in that of Priscilla and Aquila, etc. Those churches are visible, outward, independent of each other; but there is no mention whatever of their unity in one body. We deny that in Scripture a third church is ever mentioned. The Church, and the churches: such is the only distinction it admits. I know that the idea of a visible Church, the body of Christ, is necessary to the invention of the apostasy, and that it serves as its basis.”

First, we again find here the entire overthrow of all ideas of nationalism. There is a Church which has never been either outward or visible. The churches are independent one of another. “In effect, wherever there is ever so little spiritual activity, the old systems must fall. But this is singular, that the great champion of the independent churches, Mr. Rochat, is compelled to own that there is a third sense of the word ‘church’; and that Mr. F. Olivier, who also opposes the views that Mr. Wolff combats, has been obliged to acknowledge the apostasy in his pamphlet, and that he has given on the subject the most striking and painful details: only he wants one to say “kingdom “and not “church”; but he is agreed as to the thing itself. For my part, I insist on this point, namely, that the kingdom cannot apostatize because of the king; but let us now pass on. The apostasy, according to Mr. Olivier, exists.68 I now come to quotations. The reader will think perhaps that Jerusalem, Laodicea, the house of Philemon, are just thrown out without design. Not at all; this book is full of art. It is said of the church at Jerusalem, “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” If the church at Jerusalem was not a particular church, as the writer would lead one to suppose by introducing it thus as if by chance, we should have here a most positive passage as to the Church, as one and visible here below. Laodicea is chosen, because it is said of that church, “I will spue thee out of my mouth”; and if this were anything more than the rejection of a particular church, it would be the Church rejected on earth. I have sought to be charitable: but this pamphlet is full of similar stratagems. The church in the house of Philemon, in order to be enabled to apply the church titles and functions to every small assembly. Translate: “the assembly in thy house,” and

these mysterious ideas of organization will soon disappear.

Let us now consider what concerns the church of Jerusalem. We must remember that the Church, which is one, according to Mr. Wolff will only be so in glory: “It has never been outward nor visible. When it shall be completed, it will be visible in heaven.”

The Church therefore does not exist; that is very clear. There is only the gathering in of the members one by one. It does not exist; one may lay it aside, save in the cases where the word speaks of it prophetically, or anticipatively, in hope, realized in spirit; but all action applied to a church on earth does not apply to it. For instance, it is clear that Hebrews 12:23 applies to it anticipatively; it is of the whole assembly, which will be visible in glory, that the word speaks anticipatively. And this assembly, according to me, was also manifested on earth, but I admit the application given by Mr. Wolff. That does not remove any difficulty, for here is what is said of the church at Jerusalem: “All that believed were together, and had all things common… And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” There is a Church which was one and a visible church; that is very clear; but it is not said that the Lord added to the church of Jerusalem such as should be saved (this is the expression used to designate the spared ones among the Jews, “the remnant according to the election of grace”); but He added them to the Church. We must recollect that there were persons “out of every nation under heaven”; but that Jerusalem was still the centre of the operation of the Holy Ghost. It was there God had begun to gather together the elect; they had been gathered together nowhere else. God, in His sovereign

providence, gathers together Jews from all sides, and by the power of the Spirit He forms, unto the name of Christ, an assembly where are found the twelve apostles. Can any one believe that, when the Holy Ghost calls this the Church, He is only speaking of a church which is independent of other churches? No, where else is it said, of any particular church: “the Lord added to the church … such as should be saved”? We can understand it when God, ready to judge the Jews and Jerusalem, transferred His elect, daily, into another system, into the Church. Some time after, this body sends out decrees everywhere: does that look like the independence of the churches, of which Jerusalem was only one? Finally, it is not said that God added to the church of Jerusalem, but “to the church,” to a church (in the singular), and in an absolute way to the Church according to the writer’s own expressions (p. 60).

The passage, Acts 20:28, which the writer quotes in favour of his opinion, can hardly bear the interpretation he puts upon it; for it would be difficult to say how the elders feed the Church, if the Church was not outward, nor visible, and if, indeed, as a Church, it had even no existence. If (as Mr. Wolff says here, p. 61) Acts 20:28 applies to what is composed of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, it was not therefore the flock at Ephesus; and he owns this: “It is a church,” he says, “in the singular,” a church which is not visible, but which will be visible in heaven. But, in that case, how can it be fed on earth, if it did not exist there? For that is the Church which has to be fed, which Christ has purchased— that Church, in the singular. Consequently it was on earth, and it was a flock of God with which the bishops could be occupied according to their position.

But there are passages which are too evident for it to be necessary to employ much reasoning. Paul gives directions to Timothy, “that thou mayest know,” he says, “how thou oughtest to behave thyself”—rather “how one ought to conduct oneself” — “in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,” 1 Tim. 3:15. This cannot be said of a particular church, unless it be as an opportunity, as it happened with regard to Ephesus; Acts 20:28. Certainly it is clear that it is not a question of Timothy’s conduct in the Church gathered on high in glory. Therefore, the Church in the singular, the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, was really something owned of God on earth.

In Ephesians 4:4 we have one Spirit and one body; Christians being “builded together,” Jews and Gentiles, to be “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Such is our calling. But, in that case, “the whole body fitly joined together and compacted” “maketh increase” by the working of the members, “according to the effectual working in the measure of every part … unto the edifying of itself in love.” Here then is, expressly, the unity of the body on earth.

1 Corinthians 12:13. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” In verses 27, 28: “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles … after that miracles, then gifts of healings.” Here is the Church in the singular in an absolute way. It is very certain that the apostles were not all in the church of Corinth, and not less certain that the gifts of healings were not in heaven. This is a passage which requires no reasoning. The unity of the body, of the Church, on earth—this is

what the passage affirms most expressly.69 John 17. The Lord asks that those who should believe through the words of the apostles might be one, “that the world might believe that the Father had sent him.” Then He adds, without praying: “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; … that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” Here we have the glory presented as a means of their being made perfect in one, and as a means of making known to the world that the Father has sent Jesus, and that He loves all those that Jesus has saved, as He loves Jesus Himself. And Jesus prays also that they may be one—those who believe through the word of the apostles, that the world may believe. This must evidently take place on earth, as the glory will take place in heaven.

The writer of the theses has felt all the importance of this question. If the unity of the Church on earth is a truth, he understands that he cannot deny the present state of things; but it is evident that to escape the effect of such a truth, and the judgment which such a truth pronounces on their position, those persons deny a truth which is positively proclaimed in the word—and one of the most important truths.

Mr. Wolff passes over 2 Timothy 3 and the epistle of Jude, without stopping to consider them, saying, that in those passages, it is so far from being a question of the apostasy of the Church, etc. (p. 60). It does not seem to me, that to say that perilous times should come, when men would have a form of godliness while denying the power thereof, is to say nothing of the fall or the ruin of the dispensation. The first of these passages is a description of the general state of things in

Christendom, a state which proves that those who profess Christianity are become corrupt, like the heathen of old; for what is said of Christendom (2 Tim. 3) is very similar to the picture which Romans 1 traces of the corruption of the heathen. As to the epistle of Jude, what it says of some persons who had already crept into the Church, and who were to be the objects of the judgments of Christ on the ungodly, seems to me rather an important circumstance. It is rather a serious revelation, which shews that it was in the bosom of the Church that the objects of the most terrible judgments of God were found. It appears that Mr. Wolff attaches little importance to this; but it is, alas! to attach little importance to the glory of God in His people. Such is the awful evil which these pamphlets disclose.

As to the progress of the evil, of the mystery of iniquity, this is what I have to say about it. One may, indeed, present the difficulty, that it is Christendom, and not the Church, that is in a state of ruin.

Here is my answer: The evil has begun in the Church; Christians have, in principle, fallen into Judaism. The door has been opened to false brethren; and this, by degrees, has formed Christendom! Thus the Church has lost its unity, its power, and its holiness, and has ceased to bear witness to God in the world; and what is called “the church “is now the centre and the power of evil and corruption in the world. After all this, there will be an open revolt, and the lawless one, the man of sin, will be manifested. Thus the fault has begun with the Church, with Christians. Moreover, although Christians may separate themselves from this evil (2 Tim. 3:5), this does not prevent the state of things, the dispensation, from being entirely marred, nor God’s putting an end to it by

His judgments to make room for Christ and His glory. Thus, although the elect are glorified with Him, it is none the less true that all will be cut off here below. It was thus that God put an end to the kingdom of Saul to make room for David; and to Judaism to make room for the Church, although, at all times, He has saved the elect. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against the Church; but it is the resurrection which will be the proof of it; for the Son of the living God is mightier than he who has the power of death. This does not prevent God from removing His elect to heaven, in order to send His judgments on the inhabitants of the earth—to destroy those who corrupt the earth.

The repentance of a particular church is not the restoring of a fallen dispensation, as Mr. Wolff pretends (pp. 63, 30, 64, 40), alleging even the example of the Jewish dispensation in its falls and restorations; for, after all, as we see, they are reduced to speak of the fall of a dispensation. The writer even goes so far as to say (p. 64, 40) that “every time there were men who feared God, they restored the whole dispensation, and partook of all its blessings.” This is inconceivably bold. Did the faithfulness of some men fearing God restore the unity of the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah? Did it throw down the golden calves? Did it identify the Israelites with the temple and altar of God? Never. Did the piety of Josiah turn away the wrath of God from Judah? No: after the account of what Josiah did, when he “turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might” (2 Kings 23:25), it is added (v. 26), “Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations

that Manasseh had provoked him withal." Was the whole dispensation restored? Or did the men who feared God partake of all the blessings of the dispensation, when they said, like Isaiah, "We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we" had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee," etc.? (Isa. 59:10-12). Did the men who feared God partake of all the blessings when Jeremiah said that he who should flee to the Chaldeans would save his life (Jer. 21:19)? Were all the blessings of the dispensation enjoyed when there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal? Was it so after the Babylonian captivity, when there was no longer the ark, no longer the Urim and the Thummim? For it was only later that God put an end to all hope, when they had rejected the testimony of the Messiah. Does any one dare to say that the Jews enjoyed all the blessings of the dispensation, when, according to Mr. Wolff, Jesus acknowledged it with all its institutions? Was that enjoying all the blessings of the dispensations —to be subject to the Gentiles, and to have been delivered by God into their hands? (See Neh. 9:36, 37.) Was that enjoying all the blessings of the dispensation— to buy the high priesthood for money?

I am not surprised that one who could speak of the Jews as enjoying all the blessings of the dispensation, finds the Church in as good a position as at the beginning. Mr. Wolff's parallel is correct enough.

As for me, I see but one thing—the faith of the godly woman who spoke of the coming of Jesus "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." It appears

that, on the one hand, these persons who looked for redemption in Israel knew one another, and that, on the other hand, they knew the ruin and judgment which had fallen upon Israel; because the Israelites also thought that they were enjoying all the blessings of the dispensation, and because they thought they were rich and had need of nothing. Thus it was that the light which had come in grace was found to be for judgment. In this sense, Christ overthrew the Jewish dispensation; but whose was the fault? Who was it, on the one hand, that said, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind”? And who was it, on the other, who judged that they might get rid of Jesus, in order to avert the consequences which their folly in acting thus has brought down on their head? When there is a conflict, in faith alone is there wisdom. But I admit that one who finds that Israel enjoyed all the blessings of the dispensation even unto the coming of Christ, and that the history of Israel is a proof that a dispensation cannot fail or be cut off—that one, I say, who can assert that Israel is a proof of this—Israel deprived of everything—Israel, on whose forehead God has written “Lo-ammi,” not my people—that such a one may very well believe the same thing also of himself and of the Church of God. But how can I depict my grief in insisting on these things! I feel that the more earnestly the light is presented to them, the more those whom I love (for whom I could say with Paul or Moses, Blot me out rather from Thy book; for I cannot refrain from seeing that what is now a fallen dispensation was once the beloved bride of Christ—that it is always such as to its responsibility and its duty)—I feel that the more earnestly the light is presented to them, the more it is

pressed upon them, the more deeply will they sink into darkness. But what is to be done? Can we leave those who love the light without a warning when the judgments are approaching? We cannot. May God grant us only to conduct ourselves by His Spirit in love, and with such patience as is never weary towards them, and to commit everything else to Himself!

The writer does not stop there; he adds (p. 64, 50), that to speak of the ruin of the dispensation, is to be guilty of an insult against God and other things besides; but it is quite unnecessary to answer such reproach.

God, having placed man under responsibility, will cause the lie of man to abound unto His glory—I have no doubt of it; but nevertheless He will not fail to judge man's wickedness on that account. There was only a very small number of the elect who enjoyed the first blessings of Israel, and, certainly among the ten tribes, they were not enjoyed. And what do we see in the Church? Already, in Paul's day, he said, "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's," Phil. 2. And he knew that evil would enter in after his departure; Acts 20.

According to Mr. Wolff himself, there remains not a single gift. It is at least very singular, if we enjoy all the blessings of the dispensation, that not one gift remains.

Finally, the writer goes still farther, and says (p. 65, 6°), that "if the dispensation is ruined, we are without any commands or any directions from God; we have no longer any right to the use of the sacraments, or to the common worship of the faithful. Nothing remains to us of the dispensation but its ruins. There is not in Scripture one single precept, not one single commandment of the Lord, which can be applied to us,

and that we are bound to obey. We can neither attain to the holiness to which the first Christians were exhorted, nor bear any responsibility," etc. It may be that the writer cannot find anything, if everything is not there. For my part, I believe that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." I believe that ministry subsists, and that, although there is nobody who can order or settle everything as an apostle would do, it is none the less true that "where two or three are gathered together "in the name of Jesus, He is "in the midst of them "; and that the word of God provides for the wants of His people in their present state, as in every other state. When, by His judgments, God had deprived Israel of the prophets and of the Urim and the Thummim, the writer might have expressed the same complaints and reproach; but this reproach I find very ill placed in the mouth of one who declares that not a single gift remains to the Church. This would lead one to suppose that, in the writer's opinion, gifts were not a means of sanctification. But there are precepts for the "perilous times" as there were for the times of blessing, when "great grace was upon them all," when none said "that aught of the things which he possessed was his own," Acts 4. God never forsakes His people.

Chapter 15 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 15, Where He Shews That Ministry Is Not The Exercise Of A Gift.

I have already replied to this chapter. I only need to recall the passage of Peter, "As every man hath received the gift [charisma], even so minister the same

[diakoneo] one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Mr. Wolff says, "Ministry is not the exercise of a gift." The word declares in as many words (i Pet. 4:10), that ministry is the exercise of a gift. Mr. Wolff quotes this passage as speaking of gifts properly so called, in order to shew that such a gift cannot exist now; but there must be a singular preoccupation of mind not to see that ministry and gift are absolutely identical in this passage.

Further, all the passages quoted by Mr. Wolff, as giving us classification of ministries, are, in the word, lists of gifts (domata) (Ephesians 4); charismata (1 Corinthians 12). The idea of a maximum of ministry, of gifts, is to me quite new. Indeed it was perhaps the principle of dissenters to choose the person who, in their eyes, had the most gifts. It may so happen that inferior gifts are not exercised, when there are superior gifts; and it may so happen for better or for worse. "The spirits of the prophets "were "subject to the prophets," however miraculous even the gift might be. To suppress an inferior gift is an evil; but if, in a given case, there be, according to the Spirit, on such or such an occasion, more edification in a superior gift, the rule of the word is "Let all things be done unto edifying." The fact that Paul spoke during the whole night does in no wise shew that there were no gifts at Troas; any more than his discourse at Miletus shews that the bishops of Ephesus had none. In the case of the bishops it was not a question of gifts, except in a practical way that of feeding: but this does not affect all other ministry.

The notion of a person returning from a place as bishop, because he had exercised his gift where it might be

profitable to brethren, is nothing more than the dream of the writer.70 The bishop is a charge, and, according to the writer himself, a charge and a gift are two distinct things. A church cannot limit the number of its ministers, because the ministers are not its ministers but those of Jesus Christ, exercising their gifts as service in the body. The word of God gives rules for the edification of assemblies, that all may speak, and all may be edified. As to this, it matters not if it be pastor or prophet, it is a question of abstract reasoning on the inconvenience which might result from several gifts.

To say that 1 Corinthians 12:4, 5, 28, distinguishes between gifts and ministry, is a sad specimen of interpretation. We shall speak of this when we discuss the cessation of gifts.

Chapter 16 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 16, Where This Writer Pretends To Prove, By Twenty-Five Reasons, That The Gifts Of The Holy Ghost Have All Ceased.

The writer begins his demonstration by rather a remarkable avowal. It is, that the existence of gifts by the side of ministry is impossible—at least by the side of such a ministry as Mr. Wolff will have. In order that his ministry may exist, it is necessary that gifts should have absolutely ceased. I believe it. It is on this point the popish system (that is, a ministry which has God's authority, having its vocation from Him, without dependence on the Holy Ghost, and without flowing from His energy, without partaking either of His gifts): and so true is this, that if there were gifts, it would no longer subsist. It is important well to understand this position. The basis of the whole pamphlet is the absolute

incompatibility of ministry (according to the system of Mr. Wolff and his party) with the existence of the active energy and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Yes, the writer says so (p. 69): “To pretend to the present existence of gifts is to establish by the side of ministry a rival power which hinders it, which enervates it, and which, by placing itself above it, ends either by killing it, or by forcing it to throw itself into clerical despotism in order to maintain its rank and its dignity.” What a confession! But at least we can bless God that He has been pleased to compel our adversaries thus to avow what is true as to their system. The Holy Ghost must be excluded! This is what decided me on that point many years ago; but I did not expect to find a public avowal of it.

The writer seeks to avoid setting everybody against him by admitting brotherly exhortation; but even this resource the word takes from him; for exhortation is a gift (charisma) according to the word (Rom. 12:6-8).

This subject is most important, and it is worth while examining it somewhat thoroughly.

According to Mr. Wolff, the source of error about gifts (p. 70, 1°) is in this, that the gift of the Holy Ghost has been confounded with the gifts or graces of the Holy Ghost.

I admit the difference which exists between the gift of the Holy Ghost and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but not in the least for the reasons given by Mr. Wolff; reasons which appear to me false and contradictory, and which overthrow the whole teaching of the word of God on the subject. When one speaks of the gift of the Holy Ghost, it is the Holy Ghost Himself who is given. The expression itself is only found once, in a direct way, in the word;

nevertheless it is alluded to elsewhere. When one speaks of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, one speaks of what the Holy Ghost has given. As, for instance, 1 Corinthians 12:8, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit,” etc. These are evidently gifts of the Holy Ghost, and not the gift of the Holy Ghost, that is, the Holy Ghost given. But Mr. Wolff confounds all that.

I admit that charisma is used for the gifts bestowed by the Holy Ghost; but this word is used in a much more general way. Hence Mr. Wolff contradicts himself by saying exclusively, as we shall see; but we shall speak of it farther on. Let it suffice for the present that I admit the use of the word charisma, not as the only word used for gifts, but when it is a question of gifts: these gifts are the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Let us see now what is absolutely lacking to us according to Mr. Wolff’s system, who will have it that gifts no longer exist. With this object let us examine the things to which the expression applies in the word.

In Romans 12 we find the following enumeration: prophecy, ministry or service, teaching, exhortation, ruling, shewing mercy. I stop there, because in what follows practical grace takes the place of gifts by a kind of imperceptible transition. “Let love be without dissimulation,” is what follows; but all the things I have quoted are charismata. These things no longer exist in the Church according to Mr. Wolff.

In 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 we read that it is by the Spirit that are given the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, the

interpretation of tongues: it is the Spirit who worketh all these things. Lower down (v. 28), apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, tongues—all these things are gifts. Consequently, according to Mr. Wolff, all these things are wanting to the Church.

We read (1 Pet. 4:10, 11), “If any man speak… if any man minister,” or exercise ministry. These things also, speaking, exercising ministry, are gifts (charismata). Consequently these things are wanting, according to Mr. Wolff.

Let it not be supposed that I am forcing anything. The writer (p. 71) quotes these passages, save 1 Peter 4:11, as speaking of the gifts which no longer exist. He adds (p. 74) that “whoever may speak in the church has certainly not a gift, because of this.” Not only then there does not exist, and cannot exist, either miracles or tongues; but further, there cannot exist either teaching or ministry (or service), or exhortation, or ruling, or faith, or governments, or word of wisdom, or word of knowledge, any more than apostles or prophets; one cannot speak nor serve either, for if any one speaks, he is bound to do it as having a gift (charisma). In spite of all that, we are told that where there are a few faithful men, one enjoys all the blessings of the dispensation!!

Such is, if we take the words and the passages according to Mr. Wolff’s interpretation, the effect of his principles.

But further, there is a passage where it is a question of gifts, a passage which Mr. Wolff has omitted—it is Ephesians 4. It is true that the word charisma is not found there, but it is equally gifts, and gifts presented in

the same character as in 1 Corinthians 12, presented under a very important aspect, as being members of the body (Eph. 4). There is one Spirit and one body, and Christ having ascended up on high, gave gifts unto men (domata): apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors. Perhaps Mr. Wolff wishes these to be ministries, but the word calls them gifts (domata), and not ministries. And it is a question of the one body which answers to the one Spirit (v. 4), as well as in the passage, 1 Corinthians 12; the Church being the habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). Thus—always according to Mr. Wolff—there are neither pastors nor evangelists either, if gifts no longer exist. It is of no use saying they are admitted as ministries; the word of God only presents them to us as gifts; we are here not to invent a system, but to receive what the word reveals and declares. That is what Mr. Wolff pretends he is doing. In that case, I ask him in what passage these things are presented as ministries and not as gifts (except, that what is true, and what he denies, the word of God, in the most positive manner, presents ministry as the exercise of a gift). Let a person read Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4:10, 11; and then let him tell us if these things are presented as gifts or not; if they are gifts, we must no longer, according to Mr. Wolff, seek them at the present day in the Church, gifts having ceased.

But there is something to point out as to the use of the words. First, the word charisma is used very generally in the word for a free gift, as in Romans 5:15, 16, where it is used indiscriminately with dorea and charts and dorema. The difference is this, that charisma and dorema signify rather the thing given: dorea and charis,

the former the free character of the gift, as with an intention to express that it is a gift; the latter, charis, expresses the grace, the principle by virtue of which one gives freely.

There is something more. Mr. Wolff distinguishes (p. 70, 1°) between “the gift of the Holy Ghost, which every Christian receives when he believes, and the supernatural gifts which are produced by the same Spirit.”

Although a person now may receive the Holy Ghost at the very moment he believes, it is nevertheless evident that the disciples, who had believed, had not received the Holy Ghost during the life of Christ here below. We read in John 7:39, “This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive”; and Peter says to the Jews, “Repent, and be baptized… and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” I suppose that this is to receive the Holy Ghost when one believes. Now this is dorea, the gift of the Holy Ghost; but this word is used to designate the gift of the Holy Ghost which Cornelius received (Acts 10:45), of which gift Peter says that it was the same thing which they had themselves received at Pentecost (Acts 10:47). It is certain that when the Lord (John 7:39) speaks “of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet,” He does not speak of grace to believe, but of what came to pass on the day of Pentecost, of what happened to Cornelius, to those of Samaria, of the gift concerning which Peter said, “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” But, in all these cases, it was receiving the Holy Ghost after having believed. (See Acts 2:31; ch. 10:46; ch. 11:17; ch. 8:20.)

But all that, according to Mr. Wolff, was only miraculous gifts, gifts that were independent of the gift of the Holy Ghost. It matters not that the Lord spoke “of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.” It matters not that Peter said, “Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” It matters not that in Acts 8 it is said, “For as yet he was fallen upon none of them”; and that Simon saw that “they received the Holy Ghost” thus, that “the Holy Ghost was given “thus. It matters not that Peter called it “the gift of God,” dorean. It matters not that this gift was “the promise of the Father “(Acts 1:4; ch. 2:33), even the Comforter, of whom He had spoken who was now ascended to the Father. (Compare Ephesians 4; Acts 2:33; John 16; Luke 24:49.) It matters not that this Comforter was to abide for ever with the Church, and that the promise was for as many as the Lord should call; Acts 2. All that was only miraculous gifts, independent of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and consequently all has completely and equally ceased. Those are the only passages which speak of the gift of the Holy Ghost, of receiving the Holy Ghost. Page 73, 150, Mr. Wolff disposes of the passages in Acts 10:45; ch.. 11:17; ch. 2:4, 33, 38. Page 71, 6°, he disposes of Acts 8: all that, according to him, was independent of the gift of the Holy Ghost, it was miraculous gifts. But the fact is, that we must in the same way dispose of the seal of the Holy Ghost (Eph. 4:30; ch. 1:13): for it is the Holy Spirit of promise. See Acts 2:33, 38; ch. 1:4; Luke 24:49.

Let us remember that, although Air. Wolff disposes of these passages as referring to miraculous gifts, they are the passages which speak of the gift of the Holy Ghost, dorean, which he distinguishes (p. 70, 70) from gifts,

charismata, and which also, at the same time, are not the gift of the Holy Ghost, but the gifts which have ceased. That is, the whole system is false from one end to the other, and is nothing but confusion. It was the Holy Ghost who was received, whatever might be the manifestations of His presence.

I admit the difference between the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gifts which the Holy Ghost gave; but I affirm that what was given at Pentecost, at Samaria, at Joppa, was the gift of the Holy Ghost who was promised: I affirm it, because the word of God says so in the passages quoted.

Having proved the falsehood and the contradictions of Mr. Wolff's system, I will shew what the word of God says on the subject—a subject of great importance.

First, although the Holy Ghost has acted from the beginning in creation, although He has from that time acted in the soul, acted in the prophets and others as a divine Being, as God, using them as His instruments, He had not descended to take His place and dwell on earth, as He has done in the Church. The glorification of Christ, of the Son of man, was necessary for that. This is what is said in John 7:39; chaps 14, 15, 16; Luke 24:49, and in the beginning of Acts, as, for instance, Acts 2:33, a passage already quoted: Christ glorified, ascended on high, sends from the Father, and the Father sends, in His name, that other Comforter who was to abide for ever, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost. This Comforter, witness of the glory of Christ, was the seal of faith in that glory, and the revealer of all the truth. Himself, the God of love, and fruit of that love for the soul, shed it abroad in the heart; it was the Holy Ghost Himself who

was given, the Holy Ghost who had been promised, and who was the seal of faith, the seal of him who believed (John 7; Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22.) That it was the Holy Ghost Himself who was thus given, is what is proved by the passages quoted from John and Luke, and by their accomplishment in the beginning of Acts.

We have seen that this gift was to abide for ever, and that it was for as many as the Lord should call. We may add that we are builded together to be the "habitation of God through the Spirit," and that the Spirit dwells not only in the individual, but in the body;71 a truth Mr. Wolff has entirely lost sight of, except to deny the unity which results from it. See Ephesians 2:21, 22; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16; Ephesians 4:4.

Let us now see what are the effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost, of that glorious gift of God. Let us remember that the word of God only speaks of the gift of the Holy Ghost, in speaking of the Comforter, of what came to pass on the day of Pentecost, and of that which corresponds to that day.

First, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The little children in Christ have the unction of the Holy Ghost, and know all things; 1 John 2. I suppose it will not be denied that this is the Holy Ghost. We are anointed, sealed, and we have the earnest of the Holy Ghost in the heart; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22. We possess Him—that Comforter —as the earnest of the inheritance; we are sealed—we are "sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. 1:13; ch. 4:30. He is a Spirit of adoption in our hearts, so that we enjoy our relationship with the Father; Gal. 4:6.

He gives us the certainty that we are in Christ; 1 John 3:24. He lusts in us against the flesh, and produces fruits; Gal. 5:17, 22. He sets free, quickens, puts to death the deeds of the body, leads, cries Abba, Father; He bears witness Himself that we are children, and sympathizes with our infirmities; (Rom. 8). He leads us into all the truth, communicates unto us that which is of Christ; He is the same who was to shew the things to come (John 16), the Comforter.

He it is—and the same He is—by whom the apostles received spiritual things, were able to communicate them, and by whom, thereupon, others were able to discern them; 1 Cor. 2:12, 15. And here observe, that it is the same Spirit whom the apostles received in order to know the things of God, and by whom others have discerned them; that is, the apostolic gift of revelation and of communication, and the gift of spiritual understanding in the simple believer.

He is the same Spirit who unites the body (1 Cor. 12:13); we have all been baptized in the power of one Spirit, to be one body.

This is what must be given up, if one has to give up the gift of the Holy Ghost (dorea), the gift Mr. Wolff calls “miraculous gifts.”

No, it will be told us—no: the miraculous gifts alone are denied. But I reply that the Holy Ghost whom we have received, the dorea, is what Mr. Wolff calls “miraculous gifts “; that is what was given to the hundred and twenty at Pentecost, what was given to Cornelius, etc. It is He who gave to the apostles to know the truth, and who gave to others to discern the truth—He who was in all the believers the earnest of the inheritance—who was

the Holy Ghost of promise, that is, the gift (dorea) given at Pentecost.

He who led into all truth was the same as He who shewed the things to come. The fact is, that it is the Holy Spirit Himself, the third Person of the Trinity, who came down from heaven, as the second did at the time of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. What He does is another thing, which follows after the fact of His presence. If He sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, or if He causes some to speak divers tongues, it is always the same Spirit; or if His presence proves the sin of the world and the righteousness of God, it is always the Holy Ghost Himself who is there—who produces spiritual fruits, or who acts in whatever way it may be; who gives liberty and causes to abound in hope. Jesus Christ Himself was brought again from among the dead by the same Spirit, who was the Spirit of holiness in Him; our dead bodies will be raised on account of His Spirit who dwells in us; Rom. 1:4; ch. 8:9-11.

The epistle to the Galatians presents to us in a very distinct way this gift of the Holy Ghost, which marks the present dispensation in all its forms, its moral and miraculous effects. He who is led by the Spirit is not under law. The fruits of the Spirit are love, faith, peace, etc. If one walk in the Spirit, one does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The Spirit lusts against the flesh; Gal. 5:18, 22, 26. At the same time, we are told that we have received the Spirit, not by works of law, but by the hearing of faith; Gal. 3:2. He who ministered to them the Spirit, and worked miracles among them, did it, not by works of law, but by the hearing of faith. Christ had borne the curse, in order that “the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles,” and they “might receive

the promise of the Spirit through faith," Gal. 3:14. Here we clearly see what Spirit was received through faith. There was only that Spirit received through faith, who was followed with miracles and who was thus recognized. Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, and thus fitted for the service to which he was called, bears an irresistible testimony, on account of "the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." Was it another Spirit who rendered him fit for the service of tables (Acts 6:3), and by whom he confounded his adversaries (Acts 6:8, 10)? or is it not true that those who have served well "purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. 3:13? And if Timothy had received a gift by the putting on of hands, a charisma (2 Tim. 1:6), he must stir it up, because "God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Are we to give up also power, love, and a sound mind? Compare Romans 8:15. This is what Mr. Wolff (p. 72,90) puts in direct contrast with the Spirit who sanctifies. When Timothy is exhorted to "keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," that good thing which was committed to him, was it a question of something different from the Holy Ghost given—the Comforter? If we wait "through the Spirit "(Gal. 5:5), it is by this same Comforter who is given.

If we examine the epistle to the Ephesians, we find one and the same Spirit presented also as working in every way, among the rest in that which Mr. Wolff (p. 72, 10°) declares to be merely miraculous, and this, moreover, I do not deny. He is (Eph. 1:13, 14) the earnest of the inheritance, the seal of those who have believed, the Holy Spirit of promise. He is the Spirit of wisdom and

revelation in the knowledge of Christ (v. 17). They had, Jew and Gentile, “access by one Spirit unto the Father” (chap. 2:18); they were, Jews and Gentiles, “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (v. 22); that is to say, God dwelt there, through the Spirit, as in a tabernacle. It was the same Spirit who revealed to men the mystery by the holy apostles and prophets. It is this same Spirit who strengthens in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in him by faith (chap. 3:5, 16). There is “one body, and one Spirit” of unity (chap. 4:3, 1); but “unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (doreas) —the word used for the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. It is the same Spirit whom we must not grieve (v. 30). We ought (chap. 5:18) to be “filled with the Spirit… singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” But here we have, very probably at least, an act which is accompanied with that which was miraculous—“psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”; yet, are we forbidden to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and to sing in our hearts, because the miraculous act has ceased? for one must go as far as this. The word is “the sword of the Spirit”: we must pray “in the Spirit” (chap. 6:17, 18). Here then we see one and the same Spirit acting and manifesting Himself in every way —a Spirit whose presence answered to the presence of God in the tabernacle, and who acted in knowledge, in prayer, by the word, in unity, giving sometimes a psalm or a spiritual song; but it is always the same Spirit, the Person of the Holy Ghost as present, and revealing the presence of God in the Church. I have said enough to shew how the word of God speaks on this subject; I can now briefly state what the word of God presents.

The Holy Ghost has come, in person, on earth in the Church; He is present in Person; He is some one who can be grieved. He is present in two ways—in the individual and in the Church: “Ye are the temple of God, and … the Spirit of God dwelleth in you,” 1 Cor. 3:16. “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,” 1 Cor. 6:19. He is, Himself, the gift (dorea) of God, sent by the Son, sent by the Father. Therefore, while He is God, we do not find that prayer is addressed to Him: not that all praise be not due to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but because He is always looked upon as on earth, as the Son was there; and He does not glorify Himself, but He glorifies the Father and the Son, and He is the source of all prayer and praise to the Father who gave Him, and to the Son who is glorified.

But, just as the Holy Ghost is the gift, so also, as the sovereign Spirit, as God, He gives, He “divides to every man severally as he will”; and there we find the gifts, the charismata. These may vary ad infinitum, may be more definitely marked, or modified, or lost. In this sense, practically, the Spirit may be quenched in the manifestation of His gifts, or the exercise of these same gifts may be despised. But the Holy Ghost Himself is there unto the end, not only as the sanctifying Spirit, as if it were something different, or, so to speak, another Spirit: it is the Holy Ghost Himself who maintains the rights of Christ, who represents Him, who is the other Comforter sent by the Father and by the Son (and it is not only in individuals, but in the Church) who acts in the Church in righteousness, but as sovereign also.

The manifestation of the Spirit may take place in such or such a way; but it is the Holy Ghost who is there, who manifests Himself. And this presence of the Holy Ghost

was so really the presence of God in the Church, His tabernacle, that when Ananias and Sapphira sought to deceive the disciples, the apostle said, “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God.” And God, as we know, exercised judgment as in His own house, and both the man and the wife, who had agreed together for that, fell down dead.

Was this a question of gifts only, or of the presence of God in the Church by the Holy Ghost? In effect, one of the functions of Jesus Christ, announced by John the Baptist, was, to baptize with the Holy Ghost; this came to pass on the day of Pentecost; Acts 1:5. Has the Church then entirely lost the baptism of the Holy Ghost? It was, according to Mr. Wolff, the communication of gifts. It is then that the Church was endued with power from on high. Is that power entirely lost? It is very clear that it is not only a question of gifts, if all this be lost, but of the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself in the Church. And mark here that, in speaking of gifts, it is said (1 Cor. 12:13), “By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews,” etc. We see clearly by this expression in what way gifts were connected with Him who, by His presence, constituted the unity of the whole body, and the existence of the Church as established here below, and in fact for ever.

The Holy Ghost having come from God, at the same time being God, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Being sent by the Father, He is a Spirit of adoption. Being the Spirit of Christ, He forms our affections and our walk according to the pattern of Christ. Sent, because the Son of man, rejected on earth, was received at the right hand of God, He is especially the witness of

the glory of the Son of man, and of the grace that can flow out to the world as following after His glorification. Hence He comes on all flesh, and not only on the Jews; so that here grace and gifts are identified, for instance, in the tongues. The Holy Ghost overflows the narrow limits of Judaism, and, extending to the judgment of Babel, He reveals to all nations, to each in its own tongue, “the wonderful works of God.” It was a gift, but it was also a remarkable testimony to grace. Miracles bear the same testimony; they shew that God in goodness had come into the midst of the evil, and both overruled and cast out the power of the prince of this world; for such was the effect of the presence of the Holy Ghost. It was God who in grace had come into the midst of the world, having the Church as the vessel of His power, and thus acting in man, and acting there in testimony to the glory and victory of Christ as man. We see in Acts 2 and 4 the union of all this, and that in the normal state the presence of the Holy Ghost produced grace, unity, power, and joy. God was there, and the evil hid itself, as vanquished before His presence—a presence which, identifying itself with the new man, with the Christian, occupied with the state of things in which sin had plunged the old man; and the effect of this was, as in Samaria, quite natural (although the malice of the heart opposed it): “there was great joy in that city.” But the object was not only to bear testimony (that the world might believe) to the grace of God and to the victory of the Son of man over the power of Satan—a testimony borne in the aggregated Church by sovereign grace, to the glory of the Son Himself, who was not ashamed to call His brethren those who were sanctified. The Church itself was also the object. God had given His beloved ones to Christ. Christ had undertaken their

salvation. He “loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Thus He nourisheth and cherisheth it as His own flesh. It is not a question of manifesting His rights and His glory to the world, although His glory be found there, and will at a future time be found there in a far more evident way (to wit, when the whole Church will have come unto perfection); neither is it a question of the operation of God properly speaking, in testimony, in the midst of evil. It is a question of the affections of Christ for the Church, and the care He takes of it in His faithfulness. It is a question of cleansing it by the word, in order to present it to Himself in glory, and cause it to grow up into Him in all things while it is down here.

Hence (although it is painful for me to be so didactic and methodical on a subject so precious and so full of strength and joy; but it is in order to be understood by those who are occupied with it) it follows that the Holy Ghost acts in three ways.

First, He is God present and working in power.

Secondly, He manifests, by His operations, the glory of the Son of man, and thus the relation of God in grace with the world.

Thirdly, Christ Himself nourishes and leads by His Spirit the Church, His body, for the edifying of it in love.

The first two of these three things are found in 1 Corinthians 12. God, by the Spirit, is there, in contrast with the demons who, as instruments, governed and seduced the world; but then it is a question, first of all, of acknowledging Jesus (and Jesus as man) to be the

Lord, faithful to God, the conqueror of Satan. It is for this that God is acting in the world; as it is what makes an essential distinction between the Holy Ghost and demons. No one, speaking in the power of the Spirit, can say, Anathema Jesus; nor say, through a demon, Lord Jesus. Besides that, “there are diversities of gifts”; but not many spirits, as was the case with the demons, of whom there were many. There is one Spirit. There are diversities of services, but one Lord, He to whom the Holy Ghost bore witness. “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” That which was an operation of God was, at the same time, a gift of the Holy Ghost, and a service done to the Lord whom that Spirit glorified and whom the God “who worketh all” had made “both Lord and Christ,” and placed at His own right hand in glory; Acts 2:30-36. The identity of the operation of God and of the Holy Ghost is seen by comparing verses 6 and 11. If the Holy Ghost works and speaks in us, He works and speaks to render testimony to Christ, the Lord; and thus He causes him who speaks to act and to speak as servant or minister of Christ (not to be independent, because he has the Spirit). Therefore, the apostle says, Many members “are one body, so also is Christ.” The members are directed by the head; the head uses the members. Therefore is it said (2 Cor. 3:8) “the ministration of the Spirit.” The Holy Ghost gives the gift, and the individual thus made competent exercises his ministry, according to the passage of Peter, which we have already quoted, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same”—or exercise ministry therein “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

Therefore, uniting the three things, as in the passage we are considering, the apostle says (2 Cor. 3:5, 6), “Our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament [covenant]; not of the letter, but of the Spirit,” etc.; and (verse 3) “Ye are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.”

Was not the apostle acting in his own gift of apostle when he did this? If not, do pray tell me what he did with his gift? No: it is evident that the object of the Holy Ghost was to give the link of these three things: the Spirit acting in gift, the operation of God therein, and the service or ministry to the Lord.

Further, it is not as concerning the Persons in the Trinity that all this is presented to us, but it is the order of the acting of God, of the Lord, and of the Spirit, looked upon as acting on earth. If the Lord and the Spirit had been spoken of, one might have supposed something inferior to God; for the heathen were accustomed to spirits of Python, etc., and to lords in great number. Therefore does the apostle insist upon there being but one Spirit who gives divers gifts, and not many spirits; one Lord who governed all that and was Head in all that—the Lord whom the Spirit glorified; lastly, he insists on this, that it was God Himself, the one true God, who worked in all that.

And mark that the writer himself calls our attention to the use of the word spiritual gifts (pneumatika) in 1 Corinthians 12:1: “A name,” he says (p. 70), “which is assigned to them exclusively.” He mistakes in saying “exclusively,” for the word is often used for the things of the Spirit in general. See Romans 15:27, 1 Corinthians

9:11; ch. 2:13, in which last passage I would translate “communicating spiritual [things] by spiritual [means]”; or “[the things] of the Spirit by [words] of the Spirit.” But here the things of the Spirit are gifts. Now, treating of these things of the Spirit, he speaks of the ministries of the one Lord. How then can one say that these ministries were not among those things of the Spirit?

And here I recall what I have already pointed out in part, namely, that in 1 Corinthians 12:4, 9 it is a question, according to Mr. Wolff, of gifts properly so called (p. 70); the repetition of the same subject in verse 28 is a classification of ministry (p. 50); and (p. 71) 1 Corinthians 12:28 is a catalogue of gifts, and gives us five. In this chapter, therefore, as on the other hand it is God who works, all the beauty and ornament of Christ in His body on earth was connected with the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost. The operation of God, the lordship of Jesus, the service of the believer, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, were identified in the unity of the body, in the service of each member, in the diversity of gifts which were the manifestation of the Holy Ghost. We have in all that a dissertation on the things of the Spirit, the pneumatika. But it must not be thought that the action of the Holy Ghost consisted solely in fresh revelations; the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom were gifts of the Holy Ghost as well as a prophecy properly so called. As Paul says also in chapter 14, “If I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? “It is sometimes supposed that there must be a fresh revelation if the Holy Ghost is working in the one who speaks; it is not so at all. “He that prophesieth

speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."

We saw that there is another object, to wit, the nurture and increase of the Church. Here then, it is no longer the beauty and ornament of the Church before the world, even by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, nor the operation of God in testimony, but the care Christ takes of His own body, of His flesh; Eph. 4. "He ascended up on high … and gave gifts [domata] unto men." Here the act of giving and the gifts are specially connected with Christ, who, as Head, nourishes the body. It is not a question of adorning the aggregate, or of acting in virtue of the rights of Christ, but of the relationship between the body and the Head. It is gathering and nourishing the Church, and not acting by the members of the Church, by particular acts of power.

The epistle of the Ephesians presents two great subjects as to the Church: First, the coming glory of the Church, a thing which is secured; it will enjoy the glory in the heavenly places with its Head. In spirit, it is seated there in Him. Secondly, Besides that, it is the "habitation of God through the Spirit "here below.

Two things flow from that: unity in humility and the Spirit of peace; grace given to every one according to the measure of the gift of Christ. But the gifts here given, the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor, and teacher, have all for object the formation, establishment, and edification of the body. And we must here observe that it is functions or permanent gifts that are given; it is a pastor, it is an evangelist. It is not a gift of such a character given to an individual thus gifted by Christ ascended on high. The pastor himself, the apostle

himself, is the gift. Christ received the gift having ascended up on high, and He manifests it in the function of the individual; and the gift is here connected with continual service, and is not merely a manifestation of power. In 1 Corinthians 12 it is rather power given for service, power which might be used through vanity, as it really happened. Here the member serves by the gift, which only acts in the blessing of the body.

I have spoke on this more fully elsewhere, and I only recall the great principle for the aggregate.

In Romans 12 the Spirit of God presents the gifts (charismata), that those who possess them may use them humbly, confining themselves to what they possess, and may be occupied with that. 1 Peter 4 speaks of them, that each one may use them in giving all the glory to God, acknowledging that all came from Him. As to this passage (1 Pet. 4), I am agreed with Mr. Wolff that it is a question of a gift; and the translation, “according to the oracles” is not the word of God, but a sense people chose to give it. “If any man speak [let him speak] as [announcing] God’s oracles.” But it is of no use saying, as Mr. Wolff does, that this only applies to gifts, and not to that which one now says in the Church. The answer is easy. This passage forbids speaking in any other way, and forbids it with this object, “that God in all things may be glorified.” The apostle does not allow that anyone should speak without ascribing the thing to God; and without speaking as announcing the words of God. If any one speak, let him speak thus.

It would be a singular commentary on this passage, to say, This means that, if any one speak by the Spirit, then he must speak by the Spirit: otherwise he may speak as

much as he likes, without troubling himself about it; inasmuch as a man is a minister, he may speak without thus ascribing all to God.

In 1 Corinthians 12 we have therefore the presence of the Holy Ghost as one in the Church, then the operation of God, then the gifts as manifestation of the Spirit. In Ephesians 4 we have the gifts which Christ received, which are being exercised in the edification of the body. In Romans 12 we have all that is done for good in Christians service treated as gift. Lastly, 1 Peter 4 we have the obligation of thus ascribing all to God.

Now God may withdraw as He pleases gifts which He distributes as He pleases (that is, some of those which are only a testimony rendered to the Church before the world); but Christ nourishes the Church according to His faithfulness, and this rests on another basis. This also may be weakened if the Holy Ghost is grieved. Nevertheless, the Holy Ghost Himself remains in the Church for ever.

And this calls forth an important remark as to this question, whether the evil is without remedy. All the strength and energy of the Church being derived from the presence of the Holy Ghost, the comparison of what the manifestation of the Holy Ghost was at the beginning, and the forgetting of His presence now, will lead us to feel all that is humbling in our state, and to understand the sentence of God unto cutting off, and not unto restoration. But the thought that the Holy Ghost abides for ever with the Church gives us an unlimited source of hope— that God will do all that is necessary for the blessing of the Church in the state where it is. And as it is the presence of God Himself, one can put no

limit to what He could do. But what He will do will be according to our need and our state, and not as though He Himself ignored the state which the presence of His Spirit leads to feel, as though nothing had happened. Hence I fully believe in the cutting off of the dispensation, because of the failure of the Church; but I put no limit to what God, meanwhile, may do in grace towards believers. Only, it will be according to the truth, as to their state, and according to the faith which recognizes that.

I shall follow briefly Mr. Wolff's remarks. Page 70, 1°. It is Mr. Wolff who mistakes; charismata and pneumatika are not used exclusively for spiritual gifts, as we have shewn in quoting the passages where those words are found. The versions are not mistaken. The expression "the gift of the Holy Ghost" is only found once in the Bible, and it simply means the Holy Ghost given. The expression, "the Holy Ghost which is given "is found elsewhere; but it equally refers to the idea of the presence of the Holy Ghost. For instance, "He therefore that despiseth [his brother], despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." And, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God," 1 John 3 and 4. We see evidently that it is a question here of the Holy Ghost as present, from whom one ought to distinguish the evil spirits which acted in the false prophets.

If I consult Mr. Wolff, he applies the thing referred to in the passage (namely, what was given at Pentecost) to miraculous gifts. All this paragraph therefore is false; it is Mr. Wolff who confounds the gift and the gifts.

Page 70, 20. Be it so: three quarters of the gifts are lost; but then how can it be said that all the blessing remains to the dispensation?

Page 70, 30. I do not say that some gifts are miraculous and others not; but the word distinguishes between gifts which were the signs of power to the world, and the gifts which were for the edification of the Church; and also, between the gifts that laid the foundation and those that built upon it. Mr. Wolff admits it. That is the reason why some may subsist, and others not. For the rest, the word calls gift (charisma) all that in which the Holy Ghost acts in blessing in the Church. This is what Mr. Wolff has not observed at all.

Page 71, 40. I again repeat, if that beauty, that diversity, that harmony, as members of a body, are entirely lost, how is it that we are not in a state of failure and ruin? How can one conceive this?

Page 71, 50. I find a variety of gifts now very evident, although it is not a variety such as existed at the beginning. The result of Mr. Wolff's system having prevailed practically in the Church is, that all the gifts are confounded and their distinction lost; but it is very easy for a spiritual man to distinguish between a man who has a gift for teaching, and another who has a gift for exhortation, or another who has a gift of evangelist. For the rest, the system in vogue hinders the development of gifts. This is not surprising, when men, "having studied, all preach without gift" (p. 94).

Page 71, 6°. It is not said that the disciples in Samaria received gifts besides the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is said that they had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but as yet the Holy Ghost "was fallen upon none

of them.” Nothing more positive or clearer. That the Holy Ghost acted in their heart to produce faith there by the revelation of Jesus, I do not deny; but in the word of God this is never called the gift of the Holy Ghost. Not a word is said about receiving the Holy Ghost till after having believed; the contrary is expressly stated.

Page 72, 70. That the gifts were the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, of this gift of the Holy Ghost, is perfectly true. This being acknowledged, the word of God calls gifts of the Holy Ghost, not only signs of power, but according to the godliness and truth which grace produces, every instrumentality of blessing which was found in the Church: exhortation, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge; 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12. What has given rise to all the difficulties on the subject is, the want of godliness, which does not own the only source of all these graces.

Page 72, 8° and page 73, 140. I repudiate the neological tinge of Neander. On the other hand, Mr. Wolff mistakes if he thinks there is no connection between the gifts conferred and the vessel which contains them. The tone of his fourteenth paragraph is far from proper. When the man who left his house gave gifts to his servants (Matt. 25), he gave gifts to every man according to his several ability. God prepares the vessel as well as places the gift in it; Acts 9:15; Gal. 1. Paul was “a chosen vessel”; he was set apart from his mother’s womb; but he had not yet received the gift.

Page 72, 90. This requires no remark; the confusion which is found there having been already pointed out, namely, that Mr. Wolff speaks as if there were two gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Page 72, 10°. Faith indicates a special gift, that special energy of faith which is not found in all. I see nothing that limits it to the first ages. There are persons endowed with much more faith than others; 1 Cor. 14:15, 16. He speaks of foreign tongues which served as signs to unbelievers (v. 22), signs which are distinguished from that which was for the edification of believers.

Page 73, 11°. What do these words mean: “The Holy Ghost was miraculous enough?” Can one say that God is miraculous—that a Person of the Trinity is miraculous? That the Spirit whom they had received did act in a miraculous way, and that this was distinct in many respects from His sanctifying action, I do not deny; but it was the same Spirit who acted, though in a different way. Only one must distinguish between the new nature, and the Holy Ghost who produces it and acts in it. The union is intimate; but they can be spoken of separately, for the Spirit is God. I can say, “He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.” I can say, “The Spirit … beareth witness with our spirit.” I can say, “He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,” and add, “because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God.”

The new nature is not God; it worships God. But God has intimately united Himself to it by the Holy Ghost: it abides in God, and God in it. But the most miraculous gifts, when God Himself was speaking, as in the case of prophecy, were subject to the order of God in the Church, because they were entrusted to the responsibility of man, and acted in man as servant of Christ.

Page 73, 120. I think that this effect has often been reproduced more or less perceptibly.

Page 73, 130. I am perfectly agreed that if a man speaks, he ought to speak as announcing the oracles of God; I Peter 4. Hence, I am very much blamed for having asserted the truth as to that passage. But the thing being thus, it is absolutely necessary that Mr. Wolff's ministers without gifts should be silent, because the apostle says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God … that God in all things may be glorified." Not the least idea that one might be allowed to speak otherwise, for then God would not be glorified. The ministry Mr. Wolff proposes to us is precisely the thing condemned by this passage.

Page 73, 150. True, the centurion and his friends received the Holy Ghost as the apostles did at Pentecost, but it is the only gift of the Holy Ghost which they received. They did not receive another sanctifying Spirit; the Holy Ghost had produced faith. I believe it; but they did not receive, either before or after, the Holy Ghost in another way.

Page 73, 160 and page 74, 170. In general, I agree with these two paragraphs; but the Holy Ghost who was given has not left the Church—I mean the Holy Ghost given on the day of Pentecost. Here Mr. Wolff confounds the gifts and the gift. That the extraordinary administration of these things by the hands of the apostles has ceased, I do not deny. That the order, the testimony, the power of the Church in the world, are weakened by it, and have by degrees become as it were destroyed, I confess with humiliation. But the Holy Ghost who was given on the day of Pentecost, of which

these things were only an extension—the Holy Ghost abides. He is sovereign, He is mighty; and the gifts for edification have not ceased. If the gifts which were signs have disappeared with the apostolic age, the testimony of the Church to the world, in its power and its unity, has also by degrees disappeared with these manifestations of the Holy Ghost.

Page 74, 18°. Mr. Wolff, as we have already remarked, is completely mistaken; the discerning of spirits was not regulating. “Let the other judge,” it is said (1 Cor. 14:29), when gifts were exercised. The rules for the exercise of gifts are given in this passage; and there is no question of the gift of discerning of spirits: a responsibility moreover which is attached to every Christian (1 John 4), although there are no doubt persons specially gifted for that.

Page 74, 19°. This is an extraordinary confusion. First, women had gifts as men had; certain gifts, according to the express promise of God by the mouth of Joel; but the exercise of gifts was regulated, for men and for women, by the Holy Ghost, who had given them, and who had the right to regulate the use of that which He had entrusted; this He has done through the authority of Paul.

Page 74, 200. The bishop was only a charge; but, as a quality of a bishop, a gift (charisma) is required—that of being “apt to teach”; perhaps one might add that of pastor. But the qualities of bishops do not in any way affect the question of gifts, which were found, according to the writer himself, by the side of ministry.

Page 75, 210 and 220. Mr. Wolff here arranges things in a very convenient way, provided one considers the

power of the Holy Ghost as being of no importance in the Church—that power which, for instance, made men to fall down on their faces, and confess that God was there—a power which, according to Mr. Wolff, has entirely ceased. Prophecy which was “to edification and exhortation and comfort “is lost, according to Mr. Wolff; this, according to him, explains everything else.

The loss of all that matters nothing; tongues even—so remarkable a sign by which God acted on those outside, for their conversion, and for the establishment of Christianity in the world, all that is lost. No matter, according to Mr. Wolff. What a distressing and heartless system!—this system which explains everything, and feels nothing! One half of Christendom invaded by Islamism, the other by popery! no matter. Protestantism declining, and in most infidel; the gifts all lost: it is all one. For, according to Mr. Wolff, if there are a few believers, as in the Jewish dispensation, all the blessing remains to the Church. That the sovereign goodness of God has given to us in His written word a sure and complete revelation of His thoughts is precious beyond all that man could say or be able to say. And in the failure and ruin of everything as to power manifested in the Church, this has a value and a wisdom to which an adoring sense of that goodness is the only true response. This is the chain which, by the truth, links us to Him; this is beyond all price—God has revealed Himself therein. That this word is the only guide, as a written rule; this is a thing to which we cannot too firmly cleave; this it is that has the authority of God. Nothing can be added to it, nor taken from it. But does this touch the effects of the power of the Holy Ghost? Far from it; we need the Holy Ghost to understand even, and to use,

that word. It is the sword of the Spirit to reach the heart. If gifts only consisted in revelation, and in signs to prove it, there would be something to say; but it is not so. All that was done in the Church, was, as we have seen, by the Holy Ghost: and the presence of the Holy Ghost had in nowise for its only object the confirmation of revelation. He was to abide for ever, and, by the gifts of teaching, of exhortation, of wisdom, of knowledge, to edify and comfort the Church. For the rest, in the word it is never said that the gifts confirmed the canon of Scripture; they confirmed the word spoken by the mouth of those whom Christ had sent. Miracles are not attached to Luke, to Mark, to the Acts, nor declared to be the means of recognizing the inspiration of any book whatever. The books of the holy Scriptures have not had this outward confirmation. If it be otherwise, let it be shewn. That the doctrine which is found there was confirmed, when it was preached viva voce, this I acknowledge. The warrant for the inspiration of Scripture does not therefore rest on gifts, whether in apostolic times, or now. That the authors were inspired, I fully acknowledge. That the Holy Ghost is the author of it every Christian believes; but I do not know where that infinitely precious work of the Spirit is called the exercise of a gift. The epistles may, in part, be considered as the exercise of the apostolic gift perhaps: but in general the inspiration of the written word, that work of the Holy Ghost which guards the pen and the thought of the writer, is a special work. Hence we must not confound revelation with the action of the Holy Ghost in the gifts. Sometimes the Holy Ghost spoke in the way of revelation; but His action for the most part was a different thing from that; it consisted in exhortation, teaching, wisdom, knowledge—things which

did not require fresh revelations. Besides, the Holy Ghost never contends with Himself. To those who have received the holy Scriptures as inspired, a spirit which would refuse to submit itself to the written word, would by that very thing be proved to be an evil spirit; and all that it would seek to add would, by the help of the Holy Ghost, be proved by the word to be false, because the word is perfect. This was even true of Christianity in the face of the Old Testament: it rested upon the written word, and presented what had come to pass as the fulfilment of what was foretold, teaching none other things than those which Moses, the law, and the prophets had said, and approving those who (if it was an apostle who preached) “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” And the Lord Jesus Himself preferred the authority of the written word, as an instrument, to His own words: “But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” But the exercise of gifts, making use of the word, explains it, applies it to the soul, exhorts, speaks with wisdom, and only recognizes the revelation by resting upon it: but they are equally real gifts of the Holy Ghost.

If, as Mr. Wolff leads one to suppose, the New Testament becomes useless through the gifts which explain and use it, how much more would the Old become so through the apostolic gifts.

Page 76, 230. It is no question of being on the level of, or above, the word. The same Holy Ghost, who gave the word as the whole truth to the Church, uses and applies it by means of gifts which He gives Himself.

Page 76, 230. Agreed. The minister must declare his mind, and say that all his hope for his ministry is in the

absence of all gifts. If the Holy Ghost acts, he must abdicate his charge. But what an avowal! Does this ministerial system banish shame, as it banishes the Holy Ghost? At least let us take account of the avowal, that the system of a clergy, which hides itself under the name of ministry, that what the party calls the ministry, can only subsist by denying absolutely every gift of the Holy Ghost.

That the pastor has received no authority for regulating or for restricting the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is only confusion, supposing the gifts to exist; and if they do not exist, there is no need of regulating them. Supposing they exist, they are all regulated beforehand in the word: witness 1 Corinthians 14 for instance. When Mr. Wolff says, speaking of the pastor, that “if he reserves to himself a worship where he alone speaks, he is a usurper,” it is merely throwing dust in people’s eyes. I understand quite well that Mr. Wolff wishes that—denying gifts—the pastor who has none should reserve to himself all that he is pleased to attribute to himself. What is merely from man, man can regulate; but it is very simple, that in the exercise of his gift everyone is free save the discipline according to the word. In the case of all being assembled, the word has regulated the course to be followed: if anyone has received a gift, he is responsible to Christ for the exercise of that gift; and responsibility is always individual. If, as an evangelist, I go out to preach by myself, or if two go together, they do not encroach on the rights of anybody. If I gather people who come for that purpose, and teach them in the exercise of my gift, I encroach on the rights of no one: every one is free to do the same. If any one does it in a spirit of schism, outside the unity of the Church, it is an

evil which changes nothing as to the principle. If when brethren are assembled—all for the common service, I arrogate everything to myself, then indeed I do encroach on the rights of the Holy Ghost; but in the case of the individual exercise of my gift, I am only trading with the talent I have received, and that is what each should do on his own account, and he owes it to Christ.

I admit that teaching is a gift. I admit also that ruling, or presiding, as some versions translate, is a gift; but in the word this is never applied to an assembly, as would appear to be the case, if we kept to the French version generally used. They are the gifts (charismata) according to Romans 12. That the administration of the sacraments is a gift, this is a reverie of Mr. Wolff's. I have already remarked that Mr. Wolff is entirely ignorant of the principles of the Quakers. They have their elders who are in charge, and besides that a ministry. There are also some among them who exercise a gift before being yet recognized as ministers.

Chapter 17 On Mr. wolff's chapter 17, where he asserts that "to take away from the ministry the right to administer the sacraments, is to infringe upon the charge itself and to compromise its existence."

It is remarkable enough that the writer has been unable to quote a single passage of the word of God to establish that the administration of the sacraments must be performed by the ministry. Taking away from it gifts, and attributing to it the right of taking possession of the outward forms—these do very well together: but it is very singular that it never entered the mind of the apostle to propose, as a remedy, the system of the

writer. Very far from this, in an epistle which formally treats the subject of the Lord's Supper, the Holy Ghost does not give the slightest hint that the ministry presides; but quite the contrary. The state of things which is described there excludes all idea of such order; and never, in applying a remedy for it, does the idea present itself of making the minister preside: for it is singular that, in the epistle to the Corinthians, where the interior of the administration of a church is given to us, no mention is ever made of the elders. There were some, perhaps; but if there were, the Holy Ghost passes over it, authorizing us to act even when there are none. I exhort those brethren who are occupied with this to weigh such a fact taken from the epistle to the Corinthians.

As to the quotation given by Mr. Wolff of Acts 6:1-4, it is so much outside the subject that I need not dwell upon it. The man who can mistake the daily administration of help to widows for the Lord's Supper may very well suppose all he likes; and in Mr. Wolff's interpretation, Acts 6:1-4, supposes that the apostles had abandoned the administration of the table of the Lord as being of slight importance, and that the deacons, and not the elders, are to preside there. What is said in paragraph 40 of page 81, is therefore unworthy of an answer. To say that the word of God which accompanies the outward act is more important than the Supper itself is to exalt a discourse without gifts above the remembrance of Jesus instituted by Himself. Moreover, where did the writer find this—"the word of God which accompanies the sacrament"? Besides, it is very certain that in the primitive Church there was nobody established to speak a word; for the prophets spoke as

God led them, according to the rules given in 1 Corinthians 14. For an apostle to break the bread, when he was present (Acts 20:11), was a very natural thing, and appears to me very suitable; but I do not see that this proves that the ministry had the exclusive right so to do.

As to baptism, the apostle expressly says that the Lord had not sent him to baptize. It is very certain that Acts 10:48 is very badly rendered by “He took measures,” etc., and that Acts 17:26, where it is said that God had determined certain things, proves the inaccuracy of such a way of translating. The reader who does not know Greek may consult Matthew 1:24; ch. 21:6; Luke 5:14—“Moses commanded”; Matthew 8:4; Mark 1:44; Acts 10:33—passages which, with the two quoted here, are the only passages where this word (which signifies “to command”) is found in the New Testament.

In result, Mr. Wolff, who does not produce a single passage to prove that the ministry did administer the sacraments, admits that simple believers may do it in cases of necessity. We see that what existed at Corinth excludes the idea of such a custom; and when there was a state of disorder, when the opportunity presented itself of reminding them in what order did consist, or of establishing order if it had not yet been done; and if such order as this would have been the remedy according to God, not a syllable about it is said by the apostle—by the word, but means altogether different are used to remove the scandal. We find that, to support his system he is obliged to confound with the Lord’s Supper the administration of help intended for the widows. A cause which is thus maintained is not worth much. That in a large assembly the Supper be administered by

brethren who enjoy the consideration of all, by an apostle when there was one, is just what suits order; and I have no fault to find with such an ordinance. There is not one expression in the word of God to lead one to suppose that there was any need of a minister for the Supper or for baptism—we even see the contrary—and now I use the word ‘ministry’ in the sense of the pamphlet, and in whatever sense people may like to use it.

Chapter 18 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 18, Where He Maintains That “No One Is Pastor Who Is Not Competent To Teach And Preach.”

If Mr. Wolff is overthrowing the system which Calvin and others find in the word, that is a question which concerns those who build upon it; but—I must say so—I find a thorough difference in the way in which Calvin and Mr. Wolff respect the word. As to the translation of 1 Timothy 5:17, which he pretends is false, I am bold to say it is not false at all. I have examined twenty-two passages of the word of God where the Greek word kopiao is found, and the result of this examination is, that the translation, in my eyes, is very good. The word is used in two ways: to suffer from the effects of labour, and simply to labour. Wahl’s Lexicon (the most accurate I know for the word of God) does not even present the sense chosen by Mr. Wolff.

In Galatians 6:6 Mr. Wolff sees an elder who receives payment! But there is not a word in it about elders or a payment properly so called. I cannot conceive the desire of debasing ministry which is constantly found in this pamphlet. A minister who is paid without gift—such is

the idea Mr. Wolff forms to himself of ministry. It appears to me very sad.

The apostle asks for liberality “in all good things “towards those who teach: this is a precious thing. But why seek to attach an idea of payment, and to destroy that of love, and of honour, of attachment, and of affection? Mr. Wolff has not been bold enough to translate the Greek word by “salary”; he has translated it by “honour”; and I think, with Calvin, Luther, and the English translators, that he is right.

This is incontestable—that the apostle meant that when it was a question of choosing a bishop, one should be chosen who was “apt to teach.” To say that there were no other bishops, is that which 1 Timothy 5:17 leads us to doubt.

It is singular that Mr. Wolff dares to say that the administrative functions are not mentioned; for the apostle speaks of the government of the family by the bishop as a sign of certain suitable qualities.

Chapter 19 On Mr. Wolff’s Chapter 19, Where He Will Have It That Missionaries Are To Be Sent By Men.

We have seen that, in the passage, Acts 13:1-3, it is a question of the apostles and of the one who said of his apostle-ship “not of men, neither by man,” and who had already laboured for a long time before this. We have also seen that they preached and evangelized without any mission from man; so that Mr. Wolff’s assertions are absolutely false. It is rather too strong to quote Acts 13 in order to shew what an evangelist was, and what an apostle was not.

The quotation from 2 Corinthians 8:23 is inconceivable. Paul speaks of Titus, but not at all as a messenger of the churches, and it was only a question of a collection. The apostle refused to take the money without having with him some brethren from the churches, that the ministry of the word might not be suspected even in this respect. (See chapters 9:5; 8:19-21.)

Barnabas indeed was sent to Antioch by the church in Jerusalem—the special position of which we have seen, all the apostles being there. But he was not sent there as an evangelist; it was to visit on the part of that church—mother-church and metropolitan (for it was such), the believers who had already been brought to the knowledge of the Lord by the means of those who had preached without having been sent by anything except persecution. When he came, and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and exhorted them to remain firm; and other persons were added. Thus, the first church of the Gentiles and the church in Jerusalem—preeminently the church where everything had begun—were identified. Barnabas acted according to his gift; and, using his liberty, he brings Paul there. There was not that jealousy which speaks of its field. The church in Jerusalem sends Barnabas where others had laboured, and Barnabas feels himself most happy to find Paul. They had all but one object: Christ and the good of souls. But as to the mission of Barnabas, it is clear he was not sent as an evangelist, for he was sent to Christians.

As to schoolmasters, they are most useful in their place; but everything in this pamphlet has its source in the things which are done, and with the desire of upholding them whatever they may be. Except this, it is very

evident that the schoolmasters have no connection with the subject we are treating. I suppose that Mr. Wolff will not prevent a schoolmaster from opening a school on his own account: in doing so, I do not think he would place himself on a level with apostleship, although he was not sent by men.

Chapter 20 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 20; Where He Seeks To Justify Clerical Usurpation.

As to that clerical usurpation of which Mr. Wolff speaks, I have not much to say about it. When one man will be minister, and demands that every other labourer should be subject to him; when he has been named according to a system which is not of God, when he demands from the other labourers, in the same field, a subjection which the apostles did not demand, and when he does this because an authority which God does not own as regards the affairs of His Church, has appointed and established him, then there is clerical usurpation. Besides, I deny that the minister is called in Scripture, elder, bishop, pastor, leader; and I ask for a passage which shews the contrary. Mr. Wolff produces none.

It is not honest to quote Ignatius; because, if Mr. Wolff has read him, he must know that Ignatius uses the word 'bishop' in quite a different sense, and says that one ought to obey the bishop as if it were obeying God; the elders, as if it were Christ; and the deacons, as if it were the college of apostles.

I acknowledge, that in general, things ought to be done under the direction of those who lead, in order that everything may go on in unity and for the good of all.

Chapter 21 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 21, Where He Says It Is "Important And Necessary To Study For Ministry."

I do not feel the need of answering the chapter on studies; the man who denies gifts, and sees nothing but man in ministry, must naturally cling to this.

God can use learned men or ignorant men. He uses learning as he uses money—the man who seeks it will find his soul dried up, just like the man who seeks to get rich. God, moreover, chooses the foolish and weak things of this world to bring to nought the wise and mighty things. I do not think that the pursuit of learning by a man already called to the ministry will help him in his career. He that is not called, cannot study for the ministry; but all these reasonings flow from this: taking no account of the presence and of the importance of the operation of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, a student, a candidate, evidently bears no resemblance to the bishop described to us by the apostle. The emulation of a young man who studies Greek and theology has hardly the imprint of those qualities required by the Spirit of God for elders. In fine, according to this system, one must at all events have a ministry, and if one cannot find competent men, incompetent men must be appointed—for a ministry is needed.

Chapter 22 On Mr. Wolff's Chapter 22, Entitled, "History Of The Sects Which Have Altered Ministry."

I am not anxious to take up the history of sects. The Papists might add to the list, and prove that protestants,

with a ministry, are fallen into socinianism, neology, and all kinds of divisions and errors.

But it those who had no ministry—which moreover was not the case in some of the examples presented by Mr. Wolff— have disappeared, those who have one, on the other hand, have remained, and remain to this day; and for centuries the established ministers have taught the mass of the people errors, heresies, superstitions, blasphemies, unbelief, self-righteousness, and with all their might have kept the mass of the people far from God. Blessed indeed if any one, armed for martyrdom, dared to go out, though unsent by man, and seek to deliver those souls from under the ministry which ruined them! I do not think that the supporters of ministry without gifts gain much by comparing the evil done by those who reject a ministry from man, with the evil done by those who will have it and who adopt it. Where the Spirit of God acts, there will be good; where He does not act, all possible ecclesiastical arrangement will not prevent the invasion of the evil.

Mr. Wolff admits that the Montanists, who received a ministry, introduced clerical despotism and several errors of doctrine. The brethren of Rhynsburgh separated because of a point of doctrine.

I have already remarked that Mr. Wolff is completely mistaken about Quakers. Gurney himself is an innovator among Quakers, and judged as such by the “Conservatives”— an epithet which indicates the old Quakers. Here is the doctrine of the Quakers:—

The Holy Ghost is in every man without exception. If they listen to His voice, they are justified by degrees. The Quakers reject justification by faith; a great number

even reject the resurrection of the body. They reject the sacraments. They have a recognized ministry, and elders. They prefer their inward light to the written word: they hold absolutely that the Scriptures are not to be called the word of God, and only receive, as coming from God, that portion which may have been applied to them. There has lately been a revival among them, and several have sounder views; several even have left the society. The elders are appointed and established; they have an elevated seat, facing all the others; and nowhere else is a more complete authority exercised. The members of the flocks have an extraordinary fear of them. In many respects there is not more authority among the Roman Catholics themselves. As to practical customs, the Quakers have several things which are very estimable. I do not think I have represented their system falsely; for I have known, loved, and respected very sincerely, several from among them.

It would be difficult to find between two bodies a more complete contrast than between the Quakers and those called “Plymouth Brethren,” if one except the fact that they believe that ministry is of the Holy Ghost; but even in this they act altogether differently.

When Mr. Wolff takes on him to say that the brethren have introduced modifications in the sacraments, he would have done better to say what they are: this he has not dared to do. The accusation of having done so, without even pointing out in what they have done it, simply proves ill will towards them.

Conclusion

We are come to the conclusion—deeply grieved, for my own part, to see such a production issuing from the

hands of a young man I love. The skill I do not deny; but the spirit which reigns in it, the way in which the word is used there to serve a system, have produced an exceedingly painful effect. Neither have I any doubt that a serious contest is engaged on the subject of ministry. As to the fact of having for avowed enemies those who hold those opinions—full of unbelief and of contempt for the word—which this pamphlet fully brings to light, it has quite another effect from frightening or deterring me. It is a contest, on one side, between respect for the word, faith that owns the Holy Ghost, and the desire that ministry be free and powerful for God, while freely serving men; and, on the other, the making ministry to depend upon men, and of attaching to it (without there being gifts) an authority as from God, an authority such as to give the right of excluding all possibility of the action of the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Wolff avows it, and declares that, if there is a single gift, his ministry can no longer subsist. My desire is that each soul would reflect as to the position in which such a doctrine places the Church and Christendom.

44 The following is a specimen. “This system has great natural attractions. An aristocratic atmosphere exists in it; a sort of Madeira climate, which suits the delicate lungs of good society—of gentlemen, ladies, etc.”

45 The thing is evident. The democratic principle is this, that men have a right to choose their own magistrates, the people being the source of power, though choosing them according to certain qualities of which they are the judges. That is the principle of ministry among Presbyterians and Dissenters. They add, in one form or another, some kind of investiture for the exercise of

functions. Whoever insists upon the gifts of God is evidently upon totally different ground; there is no question of politics in gifts which come from heaven.

46 The apostleship was a gift and a ministry, and this, it must be said, according to Mr. Wolff himself (for his contradictions are rather humiliating). Mr. Wolff gives the passage in 1 Corinthians 12 as a list of gifts which excludes ministry, and the apostle and the prophet are found in this list; he gives Ephesians 4 as a list of ministries, and the apostle and the prophet are found there also. (Mr. Wolff's pamphlet, pp. n, 58, 71. No. 5.)

47 I say in a general sense, because the only application in this sense refers to the Jews; and it is quite false to say that vocation (klesis) signifies the effective calling. This word signifies, as in French, a calling, vocation. Undoubtedly, God calls the elect; (Romans 8); but so little is it true that this word signifies the effective calling which God addresses to all His elect, that it is only once found used in this sense, and nine times in a more general sense. As in French, the ordinary sense of this word in Greek expresses the character or condition which one is called to maintain or embrace (that is, the vocation). The elect have a heavenly vocation; Christians ought to abide in the vocation wherein they were called. And to shew with what levity the word is used here, the only time when the word is used in the sense of calling according to the immutable purposes of God, it applies to the Jewish nation; namely, in the passage, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." It is a general principle as to the calling of God; but, in Scripture, this word is never applied to an inward and effectual call in the heart. In general, as regards Christianity, this expression is, as a verb, contrasted

with election. Thus in the passage, “Many are called, but few are chosen,” the chosen or elect are called. Moreover, here are the passages in which this word is found: Romans 11:29; 1 Corinthians 7:20; Ephesians 1:18; ch. 4:1:4; Philippians 3:14; Hebrews 3:1; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Peter 1:10.

48 And one must remember that ministry is “essentially different” from them (i.e. from gifts) “by its nature, its origin, and its object” (Wolff, p. 66).

49 In a word, according to Mr. Wolff, the prophet exercises a ministry which he has immediately received from God (pp. 14, 50); prophecy is a gift (p. 71); but ministry is not the exercise of a gift.

50 It is an invention of Mr. Wolff to support his system, and slyly slipped in here, that one may receive it and get accustomed to it without heeding it.

51 In effect, I do not believe that the ministry of the bishop is confined to the ministry of the word.

52 The list of Ephesians 4 is treated as a mere classification of ministry (p. 50).

53 I am well aware that the word translated “gifts” in Ephesians 4 differs from the one translated “gifts “in 1 Corinthians 12. In the tract, “On Ministry,” I have shewn the true difference. Farther on, I will speak of it in this one; but it matters not as to the change introduced here by Mr. Wolff.

54 There is still further confusion with regard to this list: Mr. Wolff says, page 47, No. 5 and 6, that the name of teacher does not designate a particular charge, but a function of evangelists and bishops, and that (No. 5) the

term “teacher” includes the two charges of evangelist and bishop. Thus, according to Mr. Wolff’s system, the list which God gave us in Ephesians 4 is altogether erroneous; bishop takes the place of pastor, this latter word, according to Mr. Wolff, p. 15, being merely the ideal expression of what a good bishop should be, and the word teacher embracing the two, both evangelist and bishop, p. 47, No. 6. It is shameful thus to treat the word of God!

55 Mr. Wolff calls the “ministries “the functions which are found in Ephesians 4:11, among others, prophecy; and he says that ministry is exercised without gifts. He affirms (p. 70) that prophecy is a gift, and that it no longer exists because it is a gift. We have seen that this contradiction is very cleverly hid by the warning that, apostles and prophets being acknowledged as coming from God alone, he will say nothing about them.

56 We say, this doctrine of Calvin (namely, that there must be gifts), because, in the system of Calvin, there are gifts recognised; but Mr. Wolff, without naming Calvin, judges the system of that servant of God in these words: “To pretend to establish gifts, without miracle, is to parody them” (p. 69).

57 This passage does not prove that the Church recognised those who had laboured, but quite the contrary; for there would have been no need to take cognisance of those who laboured, if they had been publicly and officially recognised by the Church. It would have been an exhortation altogether out of place.

58 See “Remarks on the State of the Church, in Answer to the Pamphlet of Mr. Rochat” (Ecclesiastical, I, 405-413.

59 “To each is given,” 1 Corinthians 12:7; “to each was given,” Ephesians 4:7.

60 It may be applied to deacons as well as to elders. The rules for the choice of deacons are nearer to the passage than the rules given for the choice of elders; but, as I say in the test, it is a general rule for the conduct of Timothy, and may apply to every possible case of imposition of hands.

61 The expression in 1 Timothy 3:1 is sufficient in itself alone to shew the difference that exists between the gift of pastor and the charge of bishop. If God gave a pastor, he who was such by the grace of God had not to desire that gift, that function j he had it. Neither was it a question of judging of the qualities of the individual, in order to know if he was fit for that place. Christ had already judged that, when He had bestowed on him the grace to be pastor. But as to the episcopate, a person desired a charge, a certain position in a church; and the person to whom that care was entrusted was to begin by examining if the one who desired it had the requisite qualities. Could this be applied to what is said in Ephesians 4? When Christ ascended, He gave pastors and teachers. If anyone desired a gift, he had to apply to the One who gave; and if anyone aspired to a charge, he was to subject himself to an examination, that it might be known if he possessed certain qualities required for that charge.

62 “Is it not scandalous,” says Mr. Wolff, “to see in the midst of Christians some would-be strong minds resisting, freeing themselves from, duties recognised by the Church at all times, and rebelling against an

institution to which the Holy Ghost Himself consented to subject Himself?”

63 “When the divine vocation in ministry is lost sight of,” says Mr. Wolff, “then one sees, as in some churches in our day, the imposition of hands conferred upon those who have no intention of devoting themselves to the service of the Church, or sought after by candidates without any certainty of ever having a charge to fill. To confer such an imposition of hands, or even to seek after it, is a monstrosity. It is to disown the inward vocation and the rights of God; it is making light of the most holy institutions; it is to debase ministry, so as only to see in it an altogether human state of things.”

64 But, then, it must not be said that there is a charge of pastor; for these two things are found in the same category, and connected with the same demonstrative pronoun, Tous de.

65 That is, for a writer who says that ministry is never the exercise of a gifts, and that ministry cannot even exist now, if there are gifts, a list of gifts is the proper classification of ministry.

66 It is singular enough that Calvin says, “Yet the pastors have a charge quite similar to that of the apostles, save that each pastor has to govern a church.” In that which is similar, in what I have said, I think I had the same thought as Calvin; but as to revelation and the power of making ordinances, the difference was absolutely complete.

67 This name was a rather remarkable anticipation of the tabernacle which was to be pitched by God’s command.

68 We might add, and also according to Mr. Gaussen; for in his pamphlet, “The Sovereign Pontiff and the Church of Rome, pillars of the truth,” etc., he applies 2 Thessalonians 2 to the papal system, as does also the French Reformed Church. Thus according to him, the apostasy is come; and we must pay attention to this, that it is not a question of the apostasy of a particular church, but of the apostasy which is to bring down judgments which will be executed at the coming of the Saviour. One may consult also “Abridged History of the Church of Jesus Christ,” etc., Geneva, 1832, vol. 1, pp. 51-133, where it will be seen how the writer speaks of the Church, both in the text and in notes L.M., pp. 100, 101.

69 The reader may further consult Matthew 16:18; Galatians 1:13; Ephesians 3:10; 21; ch. 24, 29, 32; Philippians 3:6; Colossians 1:24.

70 It is a dream he would wish us to realise (p. 44).

71 [The reader will find in the author’s later papers a correction of the phrase. Church here would be more exact than “body.” This dwelling of the Spirit is in relation to the assembly viewed as God’s habitation, house, or temple, rather than as the body of Christ.—Ed.]

Remarks On The Presence Of The Holy Ghost In The Christian

I desire to make a few remarks72 of a practical tendency and of deep interest, on the effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian.

The Spirit of God, as dwelling in us, may be considered in two aspects: for He unites us to the Lord Jesus, so that His presence is intimately connected with life, that life which is in Jesus; John 14:19, 20; Gal. 2:20. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit”; and further, His presence is that of God in the soul. The scripture, speaking of Him in the first of these characters (which is sometimes linked to the second), says (Rom. 8:2, 9, 10), that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin; so that the Spirit is life because of righteousness. It is, however, also said (v. 9), “if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you”; and then His in-dwelling and action are blended, since (inasmuch as both are manifested by the formation of the character of Christ in the soul) “the Spirit of God” becomes “the Spirit of Christ.” The “Christ in you” of verse 10 expresses the idea more clearly, especially as the apostle adds, “if Christ be in you, the Spirit is life” But in verse 16 the Holy Ghost is carefully distinguished from the Christian, for “He beareth witness with our spirit.” In verses 26 and 27 the two characters of the presence of the Spirit are there remarkably shewn out in their mutual connections:73 for “the mind of the Spirit,” known to God, who searches the heart, is the life of the Spirit in the saint. But, on the other hand, “the Spirit helpeth our infirmities,” and “maketh intercession for

the saints, according to the will of God." The reason of all this is simple. On the one hand, the Spirit is there and acts with power according to the mind of Christ; on the other hand, and in consequence of this operation, the affections, thoughts, and works, are produced, which are those of the Spirit; but yet they are also ours, because we are partakers of them with Christ, "our life" (Col. 3:2, 3), for "God hath given us eternal life, and this Hfe is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life."

But the effect of the second aspect of the presence of the Holy Ghost is yet more important. The Spirit is the Spirit of God; He is God, and is, therefore, the revelation of the presence and power of God in the soul—a revelation known through and in a new nature which is of Him. Consequently, that which is in the nature and character of God is developed where God dwells, i.e., in the soul of the saint; not only is it produced in the new man, the creation of God, but it fills the soul, because God is there, and there is communion with Him. For instance, the new nature loves, and this love is a proof that one is "born of God," and knows God. But this is not all; there is, moreover, the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost —that is to say, the presence of the God who communicates this new nature to us. Therefore we read (Rom. 5:5) "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." We are loved —we know it, and have the proof of it in the gift of the precious Saviour, and in His death for us (v. 6-8). But there is something more; the perfect and infinite love shed abroad in our hearts (poor vessels as they are), and the Holy Spirit, who is God, is there (and is free to be there, because we are purified by the blood of Christ)— He is there to fill these vessels with that which is divine

—the love of God. It is also added (v. 11), that we joy in God. Therefore, looking at the presence of the Spirit as demonstration of power in the soul, the apostle John affirms that “hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us,” 1 John 3:24. But, as this might be applied merely to the varied energy of the Spirit in the soul, it is stated, farther on, that “love is made perfect in us,” namely, the love of God to us. Here it is no longer a question of us, of our affections, of our thoughts; but the soul is filled with the fulness of God, which leaves no room for anything else; there is no discord in the heart, to spoil the essential character of divine love. God, complete in Himself, excludes all that is contrary to Himself; otherwise He would be no longer Himself.

To avoid mysticism (the enemy’s corruption of these truths) the Holy Ghost adds by the same pen, “herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us” (1 John 4:10); and the proof of this is based on that which is above all human thought and knowledge, namely, on the acts of God Himself in Christ. On the other hand, the presence of the Spirit is not given him as the proof of God’s dwelling in us, two things which are identical, but it is written, “hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” This presence of God in love not only fills our narrow souls, but places us in Him who is infinite in love. United to Christ by the Holy Ghost, one in life with Him, and the Spirit acting in us, “we dwell in God, and God in us.” Therefore it is said that “God has given us of his Spirit”; that is to say, God, in virtue of His presence and of His power, makes us morally partakers of His nature and character, by the Holy Ghost in us, whilst giving us the

enjoyment of communion with Himself, and at the same time introducing us into His fulness.

I would here just point out the distinctive characters of the epistles of Paul, Peter, and John. Paul was raised up in an extraordinary manner for the especial purpose of communicating to the Church the order, method, and sovereignty of the divine operations; and to reveal the place which the Church holds in the midst of all this, inasmuch as she is united to Christ, and is the marvellous object of the counsels of God in grace; as the apostle says (Eph. 2:7), “that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus,” or by His dealings with regard to the Church: the wisdom of God, the righteousness of His ways, and the counsels of His grace on this subject, are largely and (as all revelation) perfectly set forth in the writings of Paul. John takes up another point, that of the communication of the divine nature, what that nature is, and, consequently, what God is, whether in His living manifestations in Christ, or in the life which He communicates to others. Without this community of nature communion were impossible; for darkness can have no fellowship with light. But, as we have already seen, the apostle goes still farther: we dwell in God, and God in us, by the Holy Ghost; and thus, as far as we are capable of it, we enjoy what God is in Himself, and become the manifestation of Him (the limit to this manifestation being only in the vessel in which God has taken up His abode). How great are the varied riches of the goodness of God! This communion with Him, which raises us as far as possible towards the fulness of Him who reveals Himself in us, is certainly something very sweet and precious; but the tenderness

of God toward us, poor pilgrims on the earth, and His faithful love, so needed in our weakness to carry us onward to the goal, are not less so.

The testimony of Peter, in his first epistle, treats of that which God is for the pilgrim, and of what the latter should be for God. The resurrection of the Messiah has set the pilgrim on his road; and thereon are presented the faithfulness of God, and the encouragement which His power gives to our hope by this resurrection of Christ the Son of the living God, though rejected of men; and lastly, the apostle speaks of the walk, the worship, and the service which flow from it.

John presents to us that which is most exalted in communion, or rather in the nature of communion; consequently, he does not touch on the subject of the Church, as an object of divine counsels, but of the divine nature.

Paul treats of that which is perfect, not in respect of communion, but of counsel. In his writings God is glorified more especially as the object of faith, though he speaks of communion too (Romans 5:5). Where, in the same chapter (v. 11), he speaks of God as the one in whom the Christian is to glory, he places Him before and not as in us—as the object for faith to lay hold of and not as dwelling in the heart.

This divine and infinite blessing—this love perfected in us, communicated by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and realized by our dwelling in God and He in us—has led some to think that, when this point is attained, the flesh can exist in us no longer j but this is to confound the vessel with the treasure placed in it, and of which it has the enjoyment. We are in the body which still awaits

its redemption: only God can dwell in it, because of the sprinkling of the blood by faith. This sprinkling does not correct the flesh, but only renders testimony both to the perfection of the expected redemption and to the love to which we owe it.

When in real enjoyment of God, we may for a moment lose sight of the existence of the flesh, because then the soul (which is finite) is filled with that which is infinite. But even in these moments of blessedness one cannot doubt but that the flesh is an obstacle to the larger and more intelligent action of love. Paul, caught up into the third heaven (a privilege which the flesh would have used to puff him up with, and which made a thorn needful), is a proof to us that grace does not change the flesh. Alas! even the joy of which we are speaking, without watchful dependence upon Christ, gives dangerous occasions of action to the flesh, because there is so much littleness in us, that, forgetting who gives the joy, we lean on the feeling of the joy, instead of dwelling in Christ, the Fountain-head of it. Nevertheless, it is certain that the love of God, made perfect in us, is a reality, and the Christian is called to know God, and to enjoy Him as dwelling in Him.

I have but one more remark to make.

When we are full of the love of God, we enjoy it with a power that hinders our seeing anything, especially the objects of the goodness of God, save with the eye of divine love. But where there is a real knowledge of the existence and nature of this love of God, the walk will also be characterized by faith in that love, even though the heart may not realize the whole power of it; and, thus, we shall dwell in God and He in us. But since this

fulness of joy can only be realized by the action of the Spirit, it is easy to understand that, if grieved, He will become a Spirit of reproof, judging the ingratitude with which such love, as the love of God is requited, instead of filling the heart with that love; though it is impossible for Him to cast a doubt upon it. It is evident that the love made perfect in us is the work of God; and this it is which forms the joy—the whole of the state. That which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts is the love of God; and this love, powerful in our hearts, cannot but shew itself externally.

That which I have said does not, properly speaking, belong to the operations of the Holy Spirit, but the subject is of the greatest importance. And this importance, which is that of the fruits and grand results of the presence of the Holy Ghost (for by it the love of God and of Christ is glorified, as far as it is possible here below), seemed to render a few remarks upon this subject desirable.

May God bless them to the reader! May it please Him to realize in us the things of which I speak on the subject of revelation, and may He so bless as that the truth may have its full weight on the soul; so that we may know, with all the beloved Church of Christ, what it is to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us according to the power of the love of God!

72 This paper forms a sort of Appendix to the Edition in French of “The Operations of the Spirit.”

73 This is largely unfolded in the Second Part of “The Operations of the Spirit.”

A Few Remarks Connected With The Presence And Operation Of The Spirit Of God In The Body, The Church

My dear Brother,

I have read the unpublished tract you sent, and I proceed to give you my judgment upon it.

I cannot help seeing in it some expression of the same restlessness of the flesh which it professes to condemn, and (as it seems to me) of quite as evil a character, because, whilst on the other side this restlessness is against certain individual qualifications, on this side it has a more unbelieving tendency, inasmuch as, however unconsciously, it is directed against the presence, power, and acting of the Holy Ghost in the Church.

And here I begin by admitting that what is called open ministry has given occasion to the flesh. But I do not think the remedy for it is to deny the presence and operation of the Spirit of God: which, as far as it goes, is the principle of the tract. And I will add further that, while I admit that the flesh has taken occasion from spiritual liberty to take licence to itself (as God has warned us it would), and while I think that flesh acting thus ought, as in every other case, to be judged by the Church if the individual does not judge it for himself, I have no hesitation in saying that I have found spiritual devotedness and spiritual intelligence and brotherly joy unequivocally inferior, and a very carnal following of particular ways of thinking taking their place, wherever teachers (with a comfortable opinion of themselves, because able by natural qualifications to be acceptable

to many, without denying that they might have gift) have absorbed into their own hands the ministry of the word. It is, and has been in all ages, one of the first symptoms of spiritual decline in the Church. Another consequence is, that sisters lose a most blessed place which God has given to them in the Church, and take one which He has not given, and which is really only a dishonour to them before God. Moreover (while I would press upon every heart, and especially upon those who would act upon the deplorable and unchristian principle of "having a right to speak," that grace is swift to hear and slow to speak, and that, while faithful in the exercise of what God has given, one must ever be ready to esteem another better than oneself), I believe that the love of power is as much to be dreaded in those who can gratify the ears and minds of many (and that is not edification), as the love of doing in those who can please but few; and this especially where spiritual power is on the decline, and teaching looked to to stimulate, instead of the Lord enjoyed in grace. The consequence is, you will find more or less the teacher take the place of the Lord. Seemly flesh is not more pleasant to God than rude flesh, though it pave the way more easily for the Church's contentedly leaving God and forgetting His presence. Teaching, precious as it is, is not His presence. I dread much when I hear people say "dear Mr. Such-an-one." It may be accompanied with grace in other ways; but I do not think they would have so spoken of Paul or Apollos, when the grace and holy power which puts the conscience in the presence of Christ was in its energy, though they would have esteemed them very highly in love for their work's sake. You may perhaps think I am blaming others—I am not. I have seen the same spirit working as regards myself; and I think I may say I have

struggled against it, though this (in the feebleness of the Church as to labourers) is not easy; but in trusting God for this, I have found that blessing has followed, whatever the danger seemed. I believe that the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church. This will never make man careless in watching over the saints for their good—quite the contrary; but the belief of it will hinder his taking the Spirit's place. God will be respected in the Church, and His Spirit in the whole body and in the least of its members. And those that honour Him, He will honour.

The pamphlet you have sent me is just the setting aside of all this, and the expression of the decline, in the writer's case—I might almost say, the ceasing to believe in the presence and operation of God in the Church. I do not suppose that you can force, so as to be profitable, the speaking of those who have little gift or but few words to say. The forcing a member to act may not restore the tone of the body, want of which has disabled the member from acting; but to take this state as the healthful one, because the acting of the members made the body in its sickly state ill at ease, is a sad mistake. This is the progress of the thing: when real and fresh joy in the Lord is there, and the saints think much of the Lord, a few words spoken about Him recall Him, and they are full of joy and happy. If another can speak largely of His grace (though in fellowship this would be to me exceptional), they feed; Christ is still thought of, His glory present, and the soul perhaps carries away meditation for another moment. The speaker and the hearers together think of Christ. Where the Lord is much less thought of, the few very same words would not recall Christ scarcely at all to the heart, because He

is not there in the same way, and they are wearisome, they do not stimulate; and he who once was wont so to speak thinks himself and his gift despised. Perhaps, too, some defect of education or the like has accompanied these few words; it was quite or almost overlooked when Christ was very present, but now it is very evident and displeasing. If sometimes he went beyond what the Spirit gave him, this, though perceived and (if there was faithfulness) mentioned in grace, with the recognition of Christ in all the rest—now that Christ is not the source of the same blessing, has not the same place in the hearer—becomes remarked and offensive, because what man is is now much more prominent. Hence the more accomplished teacher who does not offend the ear and the taste becomes necessary—a dreadful snare to himself and to the whole assembly. But when this comes to be insisted on as the right thing and those who have educational qualifications come to insist on this state of things as the right state, it is very sad. Failure, and building on failure to sanction the position which the flesh would assume for its ease because of failure, are two very different things. The first man has to confess; the last is assuming his ease in it and setting aside God and his own responsibility at once. And I do avow I have a little distrust of this, coming always from those who take the whole matter to themselves on this ground.

I think, if the history of the Church be examined, it will be found that the decline of any revival always took this road.

One word more of general remark. I do not at all say that in any gathering where such is the state of things, those who can edify very little or not at all are to force themselves on the gathering, or to be encouraged in that

state of things to speak. If it does not edify, it can be of no use. The point is, that all should feel what the state of things is, and above all not sanction as right what is the proof of failure and decay. I have no hesitation in saying that worse spiritual decline is always the consequence.

I turn to the pamphlet to shew as briefly as I can (and it will not require many words) that its reasoning is without foundation, its statements unscriptural, and its principle the denial of the operation of the Spirit of God in the Church.

First, let us remember this, that the presence of gift did not in the smallest degree hinder the working of the flesh in speaking: it was at full work, to the marring of edification, and that in the grossest shape (for men were speaking what nobody understood at all), when the gifts were undeniable. It is not the presence of real gifts that is any check to this fleshly confusion. It was the most undeniable utterance-gifts, tongues for example, when there could be no mistake as to the Spirit's power, which were the occasion of carnal confusion.

This is of the last importance, because the assertion is, that persons speaking without gift, on the assumption that they have it, produce confusion, and the remedy is that they should recognize that there is no gift now; and thus the ministry be left to persons, gracious persons no doubt, who, by their human attainments, are capable of satisfying in general the demands of the flock for instruction. Now the answer at once is that all this is without foundation. The edification of the flock had to be watched over against the licence of the flesh where there were gifts, as much as on the assumption that there are none. The question does not he there at all.

The ground of the argument is all a mistake. It lies much more in the spiritual grace which can maintain the edification of the body.

And just see where this reasoning places me. It destroys absolutely the applicability of scriptural directions to the assemblies of the saints; so that I have no scriptural rule nor guidance in ordering that edification. I admit that there is a great difference in fact as to gifts. The Church is shorn of well nigh if not all her glory and ornament, and well has she deserved it. Hence there is a necessary modification in the application. I cannot regulate the speaking with tongues when there are none; but if the principle of ministerial edification be different, if the thing regulated by the scripture does not exist at all in any shape, then the rules for order and edification of the assembly are gone with them. I have a teaching without the operation of the Spirit and without the regulation of the Spirit. It is not “edification by gift” that is in question, but it is the existence of any assembly on this principle. It is a new sort of assembly which is proposed, to which the scriptural directions do not apply, such as have been already formed in the Establishment and among the Dissenters, and which I have left because they are not scriptural. Now I am told that it is all a mistake to take these scriptures and apply them at all; they are based upon that which exists no more. It is in vain to say we meet as brethren, and the ministry is a distinct question. I admit we meet as brethren, but at the same time we meet in the unity of the body, where God acts by the members; and it is the Holy Ghost acting in the unity of the body by its members which is called in question; for these members are what are called gifts in Corinthians, and in the use of another

word in Ephesians too. It is this that makes the question serious. That the flesh has used liberty for licence I do not doubt: the gifts did not hinder that. It may be, too, that in a given gathering there may not be a teacher at all; this is very possible, because the gifts are in the unity of the whole body, not in a single gathering. The state of the Church may make our weakness very apparent in this respect; but if we are humbled, we shall accept this position and be blessed. The attempt to restore gift by, or rather to substitute for it, the quietness which decent human attainment may give, is just to avoid the holy, humble, God-owning confession of the state we have brought the Church to. It is building again (and worse) the things which we have destroyed.

It is, after being awakened, refusing to acknowledge and bow our heads on account of the sorrowful state of the Church; and this I see fast growing in many a mind because of the blessing which God in His sovereign goodness deigned to bestow on those who did so own and humbled themselves on account of that state. The Lord keep us lowly, and keeping the word of His patience.

And now as to the arguments of the writer. They are based on his explanation of the word charisma.

If I might be allowed to suppose a case so very simple that all might understand it (yet in the plainest seriousness), I would say:—

I mean by boots coverings for the feet and ankles, drawn on, without strings and being tied; and I affirm then that there are no boots made at Stafford at all. It is replied to me, “Why the town lives by making boots, and sends them all over the world.” No, I say, there are none made

there that is what a boot really means, at any rate, what I mean by a boot.

Would it not be evident that my statement was good for nothing at all, because it was founded upon a meaning which I had attached to the word which did not exist in reality, though some boots might be so made? The reasoning was based on a false ground, and therefore was all invalid. The question is, Are there gifts according to Scripture? I attach a meaning to the word ‘ gift’ which is not scriptural, and then use it to prove, as to the present fact and time, that there are no scriptural gifts. The total fallacy of such a proceeding is evident.

But I shall at once be stopped short by the remark, But you must prove that it is not scriptural. It is just what I proceed to do, and from the only possible source of reasoning on it—an examination of Scripture itself.

This is the writer’s statement of what gift is: “Charisma” or gift, I look upon as quite distinct from everything of man’s doing—distinct from the natural ability or talent he may possess of God, distinct from the improvement and sanctification of that talent, and alike distinct from any attainment he might make by the diligent use of means. It is the Holy Spirit giving, in distinctness to anything we see in man. It is that giving when the power of the Spirit is manifestly seen using the creature indeed, and yet clearly to be distinguished from the creature; as, for instance, we see in the gift of tongues, etc. … So I believe it was of all gifts of the Spirit, etc, … Such I believe to be of (?) the true nature and meaning of gift; and I am not aware that there is any passage in the New Testament in which charisma, or gift, can be shewn to be something different from this.”

This statement is constantly referred to and in substance repeated. We shall find that the writer's statement involves the whole question of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the body, the Church; because He must act in some way if He be there to act in the body. I say the presence of the Holy Ghost in the body, not His merely acting in grace in individual minds. This question is entirely overlooked in the writer's statements.

But as to the word gift itself. Charisma, or gift, is the Holy Spirit's giving, etc. Now I should not have made any difficulty as to the expression "gifts of the Spirit," as general human expression, sufficiently exact to convey his orically what was meant; but when this is insisted on as a definition, it is important to notice that there is no such term in Scripture; and the Holy Ghost is never spoken of as giving. Nor do I apprehend that this distinction is without intention on the part of the divine Spirit. At any rate, on a very important and delicate subject it is well, when we are defining, not to speak otherwise than the word speaks.

Next, that charisma is a free gift, or a something freely given, and not attained by man's labour, is evident. The word means it. But then it is quite beside the mark to speak of the word meaning "the Spirit's giving." First, it is used independently of all question of the Spirit's giving in several passages. In Romans 5:15, 16; chap. 6:23, it is the free gift of God unto justification and eternal life; in chapter 11:29, it is used in the most general way possible, and applied to God's purpose as to the Jews. This the writer recognizes in the latter passage. It is very doubtful whether the statement made there as to charismata Theou could be applied to what are called spiritual gifts. At any rate, the word by these

passages is proved not to have any particular application to the Spirit's giving in its meaning. It means free gift; and whatever is free gift may be called charisma. Now here there was nothing of the Spirit being seen, manifestly seen, using the creature, and yet clearly to be distinguished from the creature. This life was "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." So that free gift was not necessarily (in the case to which the writer compares it and which is called effectively charisma) what he affirms in the same place it must be, as the only true meaning of the word; so much the contrary, that in the case alluded to a man could say, "I, yet not I, and the life which I live." That is, precisely the contrary was the case to that asserted by the writer. Charisma, or gift, is not what the writer asserts.

Further, in cases of spiritual74 gift, properly speaking, I suppose when the apostle preached at Athens, when in the synagogues he spoke as a Jew to Jews, he did so in the exercise of his apostolic gift; and yet there is no appearance of such a distinction before the heathen, and the Jews, "of the creature and the gift." That there was great power in what he said, and thus demonstration of the Spirit, I doubt not; but it has no appearance at all of an utterance, as it is called, which attracted supernaturally the attention of the hearers—"the Spirit seen using the creature, and yet clearly to be distinguished from the creature." Again, I suppose the epistle to the Hebrews (if it be allowed to be what Peter alludes to as Paul's epistle to the Jews; and at any rate it is the inspired production of the Holy Ghost, as every other epistle) is really by the gift of the Holy Ghost: it is according to the wisdom given unto him a gift, the

writer insists, indistinctly. Yet there is nothing but a spiritual mind developing certain great truths from the word— by inspiration, by gift, I have no doubt; but how in a way clearly distinguished from the creature (i.e., distinguished evidently from spiritual attainment, however sanctified on the face of it, as “tongues, working of miracles, healings,” etc.)? That it is real gift and real inspiration, I have not the smallest doubt—that is just what I insist upon; but I do not see anything of this miraculous form of utterance or power so distinct from any improvement or sanctification of talent he possesses of God, or attainment he might make by the diligent use of means. I do not see that this distinction was so strong in the apostle’s mind when he says, “when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you,” etc.

I know not whether the writer would allow the holy Scriptures to be written in virtue, or in exercise, of a gift: if not, all his statements are of little importance, for in that case it is evident that the most important communications from God (and that, inspired ones too) are not gifts. But if we are allowed to consider them as such (and for this I refer to 2 Peter 1:20, 21, for the principle), then I beg the reader to consider the beginning of Luke (1:1-4), and say how far, in this case, gifts are distinguished sensibly from what man is capable of by spiritual attainment. So Paul in the Corinthians. I suppose it will hardly be denied that these were the fruits of apostolic gift, “though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent.” Is there anything in this so clearly distinguished from the creature? For my own part, that which to me so exquisitely distinguishes the general character of the

New Testament inspiration and gift is, that the Holy Ghost—instead of, as in the old prophets (with the exception of, perhaps, a few passages in Jeremiah, which, by the way, is a very interesting point as to this prophet), giving oracularly certain revelations with "thus saith the Lord" —enters (as come down in the unity of the body, as dwelling in the creature, and associating Himself with all its affections, sorrows, and feelings, helping its infirmities) into all the sympathies, and acts in all the affections which redemption has created and left room for and which become the unity of one body, and binds it all together. "He who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God." I cite this not as a gift, but as the expression of the way in which the Holy Ghost introduces Himself into the sorrows and sufferings of the body, as being still connected with the creature. What a marvellous sympathy of God in and with the creature! He who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God. And were the gifts not of this sympathy and unity? Let any man read the epistles of Paul and say. Let him read Philippians, Philemon, 2 Timothy, Corinthians, or indeed any: and yet surely apostolic gift, prophetic gift, and doctoral gift were in exercise here. I do not deny that there is sometimes a distinct enunciation of positive fresh revelations. The book of Revelation is a clear case of this; and so in many passages of Paul's epistles. "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord," and so on. But will the writer of the tract be bold enough to say that when the apostle spoke thus he was exercising his gift; and that all that is found with it in the same epistles is not the exercise of gift, but

spiritual attainment merely, though addressed as from an apostle? But if not, his view of gift is surely completely falsified; and it is manifest he has confounded gift with another immediate action of the Holy Ghost, with new revelations. It is not pretended that God keeps infallibly now as He did in forming the written word; but that is not the point: it is to know whether He works now, so as to give competency, and to guide in speaking, and lead to speak, or to be silent. We have seen that when the apostle was not at the same height of spiritual apprehension and power, he repented having written a letter which we possess as an inspired epistle.

Nor can I see that the fact that certain gifts were evidently supernatural, as miracles and signs (which are by the apostle declared to be inferior to others, and as tongues said to be signs to unbelievers, as indeed miracles were also to confirm the word), should exalt such form of gift above that which edified the Church, or converted souls, but which had not necessarily any such form, and whose power was seen only in the conviction of a sinner's conscience, or the edifying of a believer's soul.

In the passage in Peter we have a very important principle indeed on this subject, which seems to me to preclude altogether the reasonings of the writer of the tract. As every man has received the gift, let him so minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Thus, whatever manifold grace may be, it is to be ministered as a charisma; for the simple fact it, whatever charts (grace) gives is a charisma, no matter what. If any man speak, let him speak as oracles of God; if any man minister (i.e., serve in any way) let him do so

as of the strength God supplies. That is, he sums up the whole matter into general parts which embraced the general good of the Church as in ordinary exercise, speaking and serving; if any man speak, he must do it from God—as expressing what God gave him; if he served, as of the ability which God gave him: that God in all things may be glorified. All was to be presented as coming directly from God, “that God might be glorified.” Now this is the very thing the tract sets aside. It is perfectly clear that the reasoning of the apostle is null, if it be translated “according to the oracles.” Besides, that is not what is said; it is as oracles, not even as the oracles. What the apostle is speaking of is the source to which it is to be attributed, in order that this source may have the glory, and not man’s attainment. That is, charisma is the source of speaking (charisma being simply the expression for all that the manifold grace gives) and it is forbidden to speak in any other way: it is to be ascribed to the gift of God. And I apprehend that if saints, one and all, were honestly thus to wait upon God, there would be a great deal more real gift, and gifts of less human attainment would be better appreciated; while many a person would be kept in healthful silence, because he could not say that he spoke as of God: and if this were demanded, the flesh would be more easily detected, if he pretended to do so. At any rate, such is, I have no hesitation in affirming, the only true meaning of the apostle.

Further, I proceed to shew that as regards the distinction of gift from diligence in the use of means, though the gift be not thus acquired, the writer is wrong: and further, that while gift is really gift,

inasmuch as God give it, yet that God prepares the vessel, so that suitability is God's way of acting in this.

First, as to diligence in the use of means; the statements of Scripture shew the writer's notion of using the creature independently of such diligence to be entirely false. In I Timothy 4 the apostle thus addresses his beloved son in the faith: "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon (or occupy thyself with) these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all men; take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Is the possession of gift so contrasted here with the use of means, so that profiting should appear? Again, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. The whole of these directions prove that the possession of charisma was to be accompanied by the use, the diligent use of means, so that profiting should appear; and that the writer's confined use of it is entirely a false one.

Further, as to being distinct from natural endowment. The writer instances tongues. I really cannot say as to this, it may have been so; but the general rule in gifts for edification is otherwise. The principle of scripture, of the Lord, is natural endowment, gift, and diligence through confidence in His love. The last two we have

seen in Timothy, while in Peter we have been guarded from the abuse of it, into which the writer has fallen. In Matthew 25 we have the express statement of the Lord, that when He went away, He called His servants, and gave to each of them according to his several ability; and they then traded with the talents as His given money. So Paul was a chosen vessel, as well as the receiver of a gift; and I think no one can doubt the remarkable qualities which preceded his call. Nor in reading the history of Peter and James and John, "who seemed to be pillars," can any one doubt that the Cephas and Boanerges of the Lord had qualities before the day of" Pentecost, which the Lord had, in divine wisdom, prepared and chosen for the purpose for which He employed them by His gift. And, while equally apostles, it is clear that all were not alike in this respect. Is it unnatural with God to do thus? or, when He chooses before He gives the gift (as we know He did both with Paul and the others), are we to suppose that He chooses without display of wisdom or without a fitness which He Himself has prepared in His instrument? That it is not what would have appeared in man's eyes may be very true, for "God seeth not as man seeth"; still He seeth, and in some fair and ruddy youth who is taken from following the ewes great with young, or in some poor fisherman of Galilee, He may have prepared and chosen a vessel which will put man to shame, but glorify the profound wisdom of God in His poor creatures; while in the learned and freeborn Jew of Tarsus He may shew, in an energy which God alone could have sustained, what it was to count those things which were gain loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the Lord, whose very name he had once sought to destroy. The Lord chooses the vessel, and He chooses it in the wisdom which has

prepared it for His use. And it is not the substitution of mere spiritual attainment for the creative wisdom which has prepared it, and for the divine grace which has filled the vessel with His own gift, which will put either God or man in his place.

Let us turn to Romans 12. The apostle, after exhorting every man to think soberly of himself, according as God had dealt to every man the measure of faith, for that we are all members of the same body (a point we will, d.v., touch on presently) adds, “having then gifts differing according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith, or ministry on ministering, or he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” Now I ask, is it possible (if the apostle had the idea of gift which the writer has) that such a passage would have been found? Could he have spoken of ministry—not of the word properly, but of any service to the saints—teaching, exhortation, giving, and ruling, and then pass on to what are fruits and the walk of grace, heading all with the word ‘gift’ (charisma), “Having therefore received gifts,” if such a thought had been in his mind as the writer insists on?

It is quite evident that, while some gifts bore externally the stamp of supernatural power, or, if believed, having the character of new revelation, were necessarily assumed to be such, the piety (and I apprehend the enlightened and scriptural piety of the saints, whose record is in the word) recognized everything as a gift (charisma); and, as the Holy Ghost and He only did everything in the Church that was good, it was

attributed to Him, not as His gift, but as His working. To say otherwise would be to confine His working to signs or revelations, which is clearly false. And hence the lists of gifts are altogether diverse, according to the subject of the writer, and none of them complete as if it were a regular enunciation of certain known things, because all that was done for God, God was the doer of it; and that doing was gift to the Church in him in whom it was accomplished, and Peter forbids its being done in any other way. The service or ministry which we have (I have no doubt in Peter, but certainly in Romans 12) as gift, being by Peter contrasted with speaking, and indeed in Romans 12 too. It is clear that exhortation and evangelizing were neither signs nor fresh revelations, yet they were gifts. Indeed, receiving the word (not on the ground of signs, but) by faith in the conscience, is the only true receiving of it; and the fact of signs accompanying it is just the proof that it was not a sign itself. And now see what we have lost as coming from God—we may have it, it seems, as man's sanctified qualities and attainments, but not as a gift from God.75 Further, either there were in the primitive Church two sorts of ministry, one which came as a gift from God, and one which did not (which I leave anybody to believe that will, and which I have no doubt Peter forbids expressly), or else the ministry which is now sought to be set up is altogether different, and is not recognized in Scripture at all; and this is a very serious point, the proper operation of the Spirit being hereby absolutely excluded, His will in sovereignty in distributing, but above all, His operation. The individual, it seems, may be sanctified in this as in everything, but the Holy Ghost never operates in the Church. He may work in a soul for its good, but He never works in the Church. And this is very

important, because it goes a great deal farther than a personal question of gifts, even to the living existence and functions of the body—which I beg may be carefully remarked. These gifts are always treated by Paul as membership of the body, the Holy Ghost animating the whole and acting in the parts. There must be no body then, or at any rate no members of the body. I admit freely that this is a figure; and I do not pretend to say, such a member is such a gift; but the figure means something. It means that the Holy Ghost is dwelling in and making one the body of Christ, and acting by every one of the members in one way or another, His actings being called charismata in the members. It is quite true that some of these may be ostensibly and evidently the power of God; still all that is done must come from the same source, according to what is given to each: if not, it comes from the mind and flesh of the individual, and is good for nothing. And, though certain gifts were before the body, and operated for the gathering of it, yet, being of it by the then union of it all together, they are all treated by the apostle as members of the body. And it is important to remark here, that gifts are never treated as separated isolated things, though in responsible individuals, as complete in the individual, as a separate acting of the Holy Ghost in him; but as the consequence of the Holy Ghost acting in the body of which they were members, and they acting merely as members of the body.

And the apostle is so far from presenting that which is adorned with the outward ostensible sign, as being the most valuable and important gifts, that he states exactly the contrary, distinguishing the two kinds. Comeliness, says he, is put upon what is less comely; for our comely

parts have no need: but God has thus tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.

Let us, passing over for the present the passage of Peter which forbids speaking save as oracles of God, consider now the passages of Paul's epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Ephesians.

I add Ephesians, though the word be not charisma. There may be a shade of idea: substantially they are the same thing. Doma is not more human attainment than charisma; there is no difference in this respect. That is, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, were gifts properly speaking (spoken of in a different point of view, I admit, but not the less gifts) in the fullest and highest sense of the word, the consequence of Christ's exaltation; and, with the exception of pastor, which is here identified as the same person, not gift, with doctor, declared elsewhere to be distributions of the Holy Ghost, who is not, as we shall see, left out here. The Church had been declared to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. And they are engaged to walk worthy of this calling. There was one body, they are told, and one Spirit; but to every one of us is given grace (charis) according to the measure of the gift (doreas) of Christ. Christ had ascended up on high, He had given gifts to men, and He gave some apostles, etc.

The principle stated is that there is a unity of the body in one Spirit; but that to every one of us grace (charis) is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The charismata in Peter are said to be received according to the manifold charis; that it is Christ who fills all things, who being ascended up, and so Head of the Church (and

this is the doctrine of the whole epistle), has given in particular these gifts. Every one has received as a member of the body; but these notable gifts are particularly marked out, which especially minister of the fulness of Christ for the gathering or nourishment of the body, that we might grow up to Him in all things, who is the Head. They come from the Head (to the Church over all things), that we may grow up to the Head; of whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every one part maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.

Is all this to be given up? For surely (call them domata or charismata) these were no sanctified human attainments— they are gifts which Christ ascended has given according to the power of the one Spirit in the body, so that each member should work severally in his place to the edifying of the body in love. Is all unity and membership gone? or are the members dead? or are they now to work on some other principle than the living power of the one Spirit in the body which animates each member in its place while it makes it a member in the unity of the whole body? Or will it be said, that at that time, besides the perfect corporate system of working by joints and bands, through the power flowing from the Holy Ghost as a centre, there was another system, another sort of teachers, another sort of pastors besides, who were not of this perfect system of divine workmanship? If not, and there is another sort now, then not only are gifts gone, but membership and unity and the body are gone. Not only we have failed as to them, but they are gone as on God’s part, so that my faith

cannot look to them; for if they exist, then (if it be not a dead body) does the Holy Ghost work in the several living members for the good of the body, and gift in the true scriptural sense of it subsists; and blessed be God that it does! And this is the question—the existence and unity of the body in its living members.

And here a word on what is called impulse in passing. I have no love for the word, but rather the contrary; but I am not frightened by a word either. If by impulse be meant the real present acting of the Holy Ghost leading saints to speak and guiding them in speaking, it is surely the only thing of any value or power. If they are not so led by the Holy Ghost, they must be led by something else, which will not be, to say the least, the present acting of the Holy Ghost: and therefore if even very good things may be said, it will not be power; for in every sense power belongs unto God. We have already seen that organic utterance (if there be any gift, which is simply such, i.e., the use of the creature without his mind) is the lowest kind, and the Corinthians are treated as children in understanding for thinking much of it. We have seen real, proper gift, or charisma, identified in the case of Timothy with the diligent use of means; and I add here that the mind using truth, and the Holy Ghost using the mind, are two very different things, for God is in one of them; but the Holy Ghost's using the mind is gift, properly and truly gift, and stated by the apostle to be the superior kind of gift. Having already spoken of this, I cannot be charged with any wild idea of impulse; but I do say that the acting of the Holy Ghost in and by man, in a member of the body (which is what the apostle calls gift), is what we are to look for by faith, and is the only thing of any real value or power. I admit that the

Holy Ghost can, in another's mind, use what is not such. The testimony of Christ printed on a playbill for an oratorio may be used by the Holy Ghost in the reader's mind for conversion; and the mind's statement of truth may be used in another soul by the Holy Ghost for blessing; but it is not what we are to look for; it is not power in service.

Take another point, "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." I suppose, when filled with the Spirit, the Holy Ghost was acting, and acting immediately, I may say sensibly. Is all this to be laid aside too? Is it wrong to be filled with the Holy Ghost, or wrong to hope that there may be more of it? And this "be not drunk with wine" is wonderfully like "these men are not drunken as ye suppose," when tongues were spoken. I am not adducing this to shew that we are not to look for tongues, but that the notion of denying gift goes much farther than is supposed—that it goes to denying the present acting of the Spirit of God, the being filled with the Spirit, as well as the unity of the membership of the Church of God, which are either dead, or active by virtue of the Spirit in what is called in Scripture gifts, and that eni ekusto, to each one, and called charisma too.

For let us turn to Corinthians: we have the same principles as in Ephesians. Only (the subject not being the exaltation of Christ over all things, as the one head of the body), the subject is approached from a different side to suit the pneumatiko, and the contrast of the one Holy Ghost with the many demons. But while thus taking it up on a different ground, it comes to the same statements: the same doctrine is found in it. First, that

which distinguishes the Holy Ghost is that He says, in the saint, “Lord Jesus “: a demon would not, But this shews that it acted in the mind, person, and faith of the individual; as indeed the demons often did, when really such, as in an oracle. See the case of Legion: “what have I to do with thee? I pray thee torment me not”; only it was by blinding the mind, and not by light. Nor do I doubt that this often happens now.

Then there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. Here I would remark by the way, that this is not calling them gifts of, or given by, the Spirit, but merely that it was not as with demons, many, each acting by himself; but that though the gifts were many the Spirit was one. It was clearly the operation of the Spirit in these gifts; but He is never said to be the Giver of most of them, I doubt not of all: Christ is said to be the Giver, as in Ephesians 4, and so in Acts 2, “being by the right hand of God exalted, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” But in the economy of God, the Spirit is rather said to operate or distribute than to give: something like Eliezer (Gen. 24), who had all the goods of his master in his hand, and distributed them, disposed of them, but they came from another. I say something like, because the word ‘ master’ is irrelevant here, and the Holy Ghost being God, the operations are the operations of God—a truth carefully preserved in this chapter. To explain further this distinction, I could notice the words employed—it is given through (did) the means of the Spirit; according to (kata) the Spirit; in (the power of) (en) the same Spirit.

But to pursue—one more point. Whatever were the manifestations of the Spirit, it was for profit, not for display; but, whatever they were, the point insisted on

is, it was “one and the same Spirit.” “For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body; so also is Christ.” And here I would ask, Is Christ so now? That man has marred and maimed this body, as regards its condition on earth, is admitted—yea, earnestly urged; but in the principle of its existence, can it be said now, “so also is Christ “? This evidently is a most serious question.

Haggai could say to Israel, on whom Lo-ammi was already written, “As in the days when ye came up out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not.” What a blessed and important consolation this! and ground on which faith could rest in its hopes, its confidence, or its labour.

For, continues the apostle, by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews, etc., and have all drank into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many, etc. But now the members are many but the body one; and, after a passage above quoted, it is said, “that there may be no schism in the body, but that the members may have the same care one for another.”

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular: and God hath set in the Church, first, apostles … and seek earnestly the better gifts.”

Now what I would remark here is, the way in which the gifts (charismata) are indissolubly knit up with the unity and membership of the body. And this is no casual idea: we have found the same connected with the headship of Christ as domata in the Ephesians. Here we see the basis is stated, “by one Spirit we have been baptized

into one body," and this baptism with the Holy Ghost is what distinguishes the Church, and the ministry of Christ Himself as exalted on high in respect of it—"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Having stated the principle in chapter 12, and the excellency of charity in chapter 13, in chapter 14 he applies it to the state of the Corinthian church, and we have connected with this subject singing, blessing, and giving thanks; and he prefers doing it with his mind. That is, the whole action of the Holy Ghost in the body is brought out in connection with this subject, whatever pre-eminent gifts might be found among them.

And, further, this universality of action is assumed as a possibility in the whole body, in respect of the most public and evident gifts. "When ye are gathered together in one place, if all speak with tongues, will they not say, you are mad? but if all prophesy, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and the secrets of his heart being revealed, he falls down and confesses that God is in you of a truth" (i.e., that God is in the assembly, in the saints). Is all this gone too? He does not fall down and confess that God is in such or such a gifted person; much less does he admire or look up to the spiritual attainments of an individual: he confesses that God is in the assembly, among the Christians. And is this to be lost, and not even sought, and individual attainment substituted for the presence of God in the assembly? For this is the real question: not merely whether such individual acts on such or such a principle, but whether I am to look to God or to man—to God's presence in the assembly, or to man's competency by acquired attainments. Can I be satisfied with the latter without some very clear proof that the former is not to be sought

— that God has abandoned the assembly of His saints? For if there, is He not to make His presence known? If He do, it is a manifestation of the Spirit in the individual who acts; it is a gift, and, if you please, an impulse. It is God acting: that is the great point.

And here I remark that the application of “the rest” (“let the rest judge”) to a certain number of recognized teachers, is entirely against the sense and spirit of the passage. That an unspiritual man, in whom the Holy Ghost’s power is not, is incapable of so judging is quite true, though “the spiritual man judgeth all things.” But what the apostle is considering is the power of the Spirit of God in the gathered assembly; so that God is confessed to be in them; so that all might speak with tongues, all prophesy, the person entering be convinced of all, judged of all; and the Holy Ghost so acting that they might all prophesy one by one, that all may learn (a very good position for everyone to be in sometimes), and all may be comforted.

Let us turn to Romans. Here again the same principle meets us. “For I say,” says the apostle, “through the grace given unto me, to every one among you, not to think highly of himself, above what he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Here again we have a very important principle: no false pretension, sober thoughts of self and gift. Charisma (as we may see in what the apostle goes on to say) is spoken of as God’s dealing to every man the measure of faith—this is to be the ground for every man to act upon; if he goes beyond it much or little, he is in the flesh and in folly, let his attainments or acceptance be what they may. We want God in order to be profited, and that is according to the measure of

faith, and that in every man. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, but each members one of another, but having different gifts (charismata), according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith.

It is, then, in the unity of the body, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. This is the principle of gifts (charismata); happy are we that it is so simple. That there were gifts which had a sensibly miraculous character I do not deny, and such as we have lost; but I deny that this was the necessary character or real meaning of charisma (but the effect or produce of charis3grace, here applied to the action of a member of the body in service.) These gifts, however, were by no means the most important ones, and their absence does not touch the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the body, acting (as He is still sovereign in doing) in the unity of the body in its several members, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. I add here, I have no doubt that the object of the apostle in this passage is to confine each to this measure of faith, to think soberly of himself, and to confine himself to what God has dealt to him; first, as to the nature, and secondly as to the measure, of the gift; and I add, that I do doubt that many a brother's gift would be recognized, if he did not go beyond his measure in it. If he prophesy, let him prophesy according to the proportion of faith—all beyond that is flesh, and putting himself forward; and this is felt, and his whole gift rejected: and it is his own fault, because he has not known how to confine himself to it, and therefore his

flesh was acting; and his speaking is attributed to this, and no wonder. It is also true as to the nature of a gift; if a man sets about to teach, instead of confining himself—to exhorting, if he exhorts, he will and cannot edify. I humbly think—but in this I fully confess I may be mistaken, and desire that he may be blessed with every gift—that this is our brother's mistake. This tract is teaching: I believe his gift to be much more exhorting, and that it is out of the measure, if not out of the nature, of his gift—a gift in which I know he has been blessed. I do not think his estimate of Charisma is scriptural, or according to any sober measure of teaching from God. I trust he will bear with me in saying this: we owe such a remark to each other—that I say not to the Church. I will add, to shew that I do not despise anything that comes from him where I can trace divine teaching, and that I think his suggestion on sophia is of importance for the understanding of that point; and though I have not examined it fully in the word, several passages connect themselves with his remark, in my mind, which make it of interest and importance to me.

I add yet further, that I recognize fully certain gifts which we may call permanent, or perhaps more accurately attached to the person; He gave some apostles, etc. I have spoken of i% elsewhere. I repeat it now, that the putting forth of another part of the subject, which is of equal (I apprehend indeed of much greater) importance, namely the presence of the Holy Ghost acting in the body, should not be exclusive. The main point is the Holy Ghost's acting in the unity of the whole body and in each several member; but in so doing, Christ constitutes certain persons as vessels of certain gifts, and gives them for the service to which He is

pleased to call them. I do not believe either will be kept in their place of blessing unless graciously owning the other. But it is equally clear that the unity of the body, and the presence of God in it, is of more consequence than that which ministers to the maintenance of that unity. Yet these do help to maintain the saints in that unity. But if they despise that unity manifested in the positive action of the Holy Spirit in all the members, then they become a positive and crying evil. It is the principle of popery; which, as a practical fact, places the operation of the Spirit in the teachers, not in the body.

Along with this, unity may be much insisted on, as we know from popery; but it is the unity of slavery and death.

There is no such evil in the Church as the claim of spiritual power in the Church, where it is not fully owned as really and practically acting in the members of the body. These cannot on the other hand by the Spirit deny His operations in special service. But it is service—a service to Christ and the saints. Christ gave Himself for the one; He acts by the others, by whom He will, by the Holy Ghost.

I add one word as to the translation of 1 Peter 4:11.

Is it not evident here that the question is (not of a rule according to which things should be done, but) of the source of power and capacity; so that it should be attributed to that source, even God Himself, and thus He receives all the glory? It is not the scriptural accuracy of what is said, but the divine source to which all is to be attributed, that the apostle is insisting on. It is quite true that if it is not according to Scripture it does not come from God. But this is a means of proving the thing. The

literal translation of the passage is this, “If any man speak, as oracles of God: if any man serve (or minister—the word means any service, not properly of a slave), as of the ability which God supplies: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”

“As oracles of God,” it seems to me, cannot, by any possibility, be translated “according to the scriptures.”

I do not in the least pretend here to have treated the subject in full; but merely to have said what I believe a sufficient reply to the ground our brother has taken, and to afford light to the saints on it.

Affectionately yours.

74 Though, indeed, this is not a scriptural expression: we have pneumatika, a much wider meaning than spiritual gifts, and includes, in the way of explanation, what the demons did—every thing that related to spiritual manifestations.

75 Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, tongues, interpretation, helps, governments, speaking, ministry, exhortation, presiding or ruling, shewing mercy, discerning spirits, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge. These are all named as charismata to which we may add evangelists and pastors (domata) from Ephesians 4.

A Letter To The Saints In London As To The Presence Of The Holy Ghost In The Church

Preface

In correcting this tract for a third edition, I have not entered on the distinction to be made between the body of Christ and the habitation of the Spirit—in that one is composed of members livingly united to the Head, the other built (see 1 Cor. 3) by the instrumentality of responsible men on earth: I have treated it elsewhere. It is an important practical point in connection with the present state of the Church of God, but does not affect the great fundamental principles which govern the whole enquiry, as here pursued. I have corrected the passages in which there may have been so far confusion between the two as to lead to any practical obscurity of the mind on the subject.

The importance of the question of the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church on earth, will render some inquiry into it profitable to us.

It is a great question of principle regarding the position and walk of the saints which has arisen wherever that testimony of God specially committed, as I believe, to those commonly called the brethren, has existed. It is a question of vast importance—a principle resisted abroad as well as in England; and the resistance to which is always connected with the establishment, in one shape or other, of a clergy under the title of ministry. All I shall attempt here is to set the principle clear. There is, I fully believe, as real a question of God's truth as in Luther's

days: I do not say as important a one; because in Luther's time the question was one of the ground of individual salvation—of the basis of our standing with God. Whereas the question now at issue is the position and standing of the Church, of the saints gathered when they are saved. But no one will think this a trifling question. It is closely connected with Christ's glory and the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. The question in Luther's time was the value and efficacy of Christ's work; or, in other words, justification by faith. What existed he assumed to be the Church. The question now is the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as forming and embodying the Church in unity. This evidently is important. It has been accompanied among the brethren with the revival, as I judge, of the clear doctrine of justification by faith, which was much buried under collateral doctrines, as regeneration and its proofs, which had really taken the place of justification by faith; so that, in general, assurance of salvation was rare, and considered to be a matter of spiritual attainment. Besides, there are truths to which God recalls the saints as being important at such or such a time, as leading to peculiar and needed blessings, or as bearing on peculiar evils or dangers, and against which therefore the malice of the enemy will be particularly directed, to oppose or undermine them. Such I believe the doctrine of the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church to be at this time. The unity of the body as Christ's spouse, separate from evil, is closely connected, yea, identified with, this great doctrine, which is founded on the exaltation of Christ as Son of man to the right hand of God, in testimony of the full completeness of His work, and His infinite favour with God. And hence its connection with the full, free assurance of salvation in the soul, and the joy of

adoption by the Holy Ghost. No one taught of God could knowingly undervalue such a doctrine; and I do especially believe that no one specially taught of God now, “men having understanding of the times,” but will on the contrary feel its peculiar vital importance, as ministered of God in the Church for saving souls, and the Church itself from the current delusions of the day. This is the question before us.

There are three great points connected with the doctrine of Christ, or positions in which He may be viewed: a crucified Christ, accomplishing the work of redemption, in virtue of which, as testified of in resurrection, justification is the portion of the believer; an exalted Christ, in whose name, and by whose sending, the Holy Ghost the Comforter is come down on earth, and dwells in the Church; and Christ coming again in Person. Now the first of these, namely, justification by faith, was preached by Luther, and souls were delivered, and many peoples set free from the burden of popery. But the Holy Ghost sent down here, though taught in a measure as a truth, formed no part of that which characterized the Church; and therefore it fell under the power of the magistrate, when delivered from the Pope. The doctrine of the Lord’s second coming fell into the hands of real fanatics, who would have set up what they called the fifth monarchy by the sword; and in Germany did attempt it, and held a city they called their Zion for some time under Munzer.

That which characterized the ministry and testimony of those called the brethren, however feeble, and feeble they were, was (with the accompanying revival of assurance by faith in the simple testimony of redemption) the bringing out and walking in the faith of

the two latter doctrines: namely, the Holy Ghost in the Church, and the coming again in Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this ministry was blessed both in gathering many into a simple position by it, and extending the happy influence of these truths among many who were not so gathered. With this connected itself the unity of the Church as the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and that, separate from the world, as bride of the Lamb. A comparison of what the Church was at first when filled with the Spirit led them to the sense of our present ruined state, and to seek in earnest devotedness more conformity to its early path, and that nothing should be owned which was not of the Holy Ghost. And they waited for God's Son from heaven. If the presence of the Spirit gave them the consciousness of being the bride, He made them also earnestly desire the coming of the Bridegroom, and the joy of that day when Christ should come and receive them to Himself, and take the kingdom and the glory.

They entered in spirit, in their little measure, into that word, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come"; and they were happy and blessed. And where, beloved brethren, let me ask you with the apostle, is that blessedness ye spake of? Did you suffer so many things in vain, or for an error, if it be yet in vain? Did you begin in the Spirit, or was it all a delusion of your imagination which wiser minds have discovered, and that you are glad to give decently up, and to end in the flesh?

Now the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church was (with the waiting for Christ's coming), the grand doctrine on which the whole testimony of those so-called brethren was founded. And this it is which it is sought to deprive you of. Let us not deceive ourselves; this is what

is in question. It will soon be seen everywhere, save as this truth itself is forgotten anywhere. It may be clothed in terms which may seem not to deny it, because that would alarm—in terms suited, alas! to the failure of spiritual power, and therefore of discernment, which may be found among us. It may begin in practice in one place, and be avowed in doctrine in another. It may change its shape where it is detected, and testified against. But the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, and His presence as the power of the unity of the body of Christ, is what is in question.

I dare say it may not be admitted: but if one comes to rob me of my treasure, his not telling me he is, nor admitting he is, cannot satisfy me. But this, perhaps, it will be said, they do not mean to do. I will admit they may be ignorant of the truth itself, and therefore of the loss of it, and therefore not be aware of the mischief they are doing. But, if one is urging the vessel on the shoals, and he is mentally innocent, because he does not know them, that will not content me as a passenger if I know, nay, not even if I suspect them. But is it denied? Is it not admitted? It has been distinctly taught that the acting of the Holy Ghost in the body being in the members, the presence of the Holy Ghost practically was by the teachers. Now, because there is truth in this, and that the Holy Ghost does act by the teachers, the denying such a doctrine is treated as if it were denying the Holy Ghost’s acting in the teacher, and, in a word, denying ministry. But it is no such thing. What is affirmed is the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church itself on earth. No doubt when there, He acts, among other things, by teachers, etc.; but He is present in the Church. And anyone can see that, assuming His acting

in the teachers, and denying His dwelling in the whole assembly or Church as such; or denying His acting properly in the way of gift in any, but that grace just sanctifies natural talent and education; and that there is no dwelling in the whole body, as distinct from the members (these teachers being the members who are to act), is throwing the whole matter into the hands of certain persons who have more natural talent to the exclusion of the body. It is the reconstituting a clergy who form the Church, and who are to judge of the qualifications of others whom they admit into their ranks: for this is demanded also. It is just the clergy over again. I recognize that God forms the vessel individually for service as well as puts a gift into it, when I look at the individual. I have no doubt that the blessed apostle Paul was a man of most extraordinary natural character. But this truth, which I find in Scripture, does not make me deny that the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church.

But I will first bring out the idea before the minds of brethren, that by it they may be able, through grace, to judge of the statements by which it is pared down and destroyed, and what they are losing for their souls if these statements are listened to. Let us remember the question: the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church as such. That I may not misrepresent the doctrine I combat, take ——'s account of it:

"A dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church, apart and distinct from the members, is what I confess my inability to receive." Again, "But from the way in which I have heard some speak of the Person of the Holy Ghost in the individual, and distinct from this the Person of the Holy Ghost in the Church, the thought has arisen in my mind, which one almost fears to express, Do they believe in

two Holy Ghosts? “Again,” I see these precious promises of the Spirit’s abiding and presence during our Lord’s absence, in John 14, 15 and 16, but surely no dwelling here, nor through the Acts of the Apostles, distinct from the individual believer.” We have then distinctly before us the question. It is denied that these two things are distinctively true—the Holy Ghost in the individual, and the Holy Ghost in the Church. I have found this view fully confirmed by the statement, that the blessing of the body is the aggregate of the blessing of the individual members. My view, which is commented on, is, “The Holy Ghost dwelling in and making one the body of Christ, and acting by every one of the members in one way or another”; and, “the Holy Ghost working in the several living members for the good of the body.”

I now turn to the main point—God’s dwelling with man. This I believe to be the peculiar and special blessing of man, and the highest honour that could be conferred on him, unless it be his actually in glory with the Lord, when something more is added, viz., being like the Lord and with Him. God came to walk in the garden, but Adam, a sinner, was not there to meet Him. But this deeply important truth is much more distinctly stated in Scripture. Redemption is the true ground of God’s dwelling with man. He did not dwell with Adam; He did not dwell even with Abraham; but as soon as Israel was brought out of Egypt, and the Spirit inspired the song of triumph, what was the leading thought? “He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation.” So in God’s own preparation of it: “In the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.” This leading thought of what distinguished Israel is clearly a distinct one from

dwelling or acting in an individual. Further, this is a constant thought as distinguishing the people of God. So in Exodus 29:45,746, “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them; I am the Lord their God.” So, 2 Chronicles 6:1, 2, “The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness, but I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.” So Exodus 25:8; 1 Kings 6:13; Ezekiel 43:7. So indeed to the same purpose, Deuteronomy 23:14. But it is needless to multiply passages.76 We may take notice in all this that it has nothing whatever to do with the dwelling in an individual. It was a distinct thought altogether. The serious question is, are we worse off now as to this? There were then also operations of the Holy Ghost in the way of prophecy and testimony, but it was a distinct thing. We may expect this to be modified in many ways when the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven; because in Christ, where our proper acceptance is, we are characterized rather as dwelling with God—in His house. Still the other is true by the Holy Ghost sent down. What we have to inquire is, whether this presence of God in the midst of His people is spoken of in the New Testament, and that distinct from His gracious presence in the individual. If there be any material modification of it, this may also claim our attention. It would be difficult to suppose that there was less real presence of God in the midst of His people now than under the Old Testament. It is true we look for His presence in glory; but surely meanwhile the main doctrine, as to the actual condition and existence of the Church, is the presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, as truly and

really the presence of God in the midst of His people as the Shechinah of glory. If God was in His holy temple then, God is in His holy temple now—most truly, though after another manner: not merely in individuals, the aggregate of whose individual blessing is the blessing of the whole, but in His spiritual temple, the Church of the living God. And here I would remark further, that His personal presence as acting in any power in the Church is wholly denied. It may not be in words (this I should think much less of; the faith of simple saints might at once meet it); but it is undermined and taken from us without our being aware of it. It is vain to cry out about its not being fair to impute to a person what he denies. Are the saints to be robbed of their heritage and blessing, because he who does so denies he is doing it? It may be through ignorance, but it is much fairer to detect than to deny it, if the thing be so. Man may speak by the Spirit,77 may use Him, may act under His gracious influence, but He, the Holy Ghost, does not act. That would be impulse. No one pretends to inspiration in the sense of new revelation, but simply that the Holy Ghost acts in leading, guiding, filling and using the vessel. That is, He acts by us. The distinction, however, is wholly unscriptural. The Holy Ghost speaking by a man, and a man speaking by the Holy Ghost, are used as equivalent terms; as Acts i:16; ch. 6:10; ch. 20:24; ch. 21:4,11; compare chapter 11:28, ch. 28:25; Mark 12:36; compare Matthew 22:43. The difference of the expression most clearly amounts to the lowest Arminianism78 as to the Holy Ghost. That is, man acts by it, but the Holy Ghost does not act by man. And I beg the attention of brethren to this—it is just simply not believing in the personal presence and actings of the

Holy Ghost. I am satisfied that it is simple unbelief in the presence and actings of the Holy Spirit.

And now to the statements of the New Testament on the subject. That the presence of the Comforter is the distinguishing truth of this dispensation, founded on the work of Christ, I ought not to be obliged to insist on. Suffice it to say, that it is on the fact of this presence that the Lord grounds the advantage of His going away. “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you.” And all the blessing, communion, and testimony (save the personal testimony of the disciples as living with Him, and that was by His bringing all to their remembrance), is founded on the presence, personal presence, of this other Comforter. This is evidently of the last importance. Here it is well to remark on the force of this word ‘Comforter.’ He was One who, by being down here, was to take the place of Jesus when He went away; and was to take up and carry on the cause of the disciples as Christ had done, only more powerfully in a certain way because of Christ’s work and exaltation. It is the same word as is said of Christ, “we have an advocate with the Father” —one who is charged with and maintains our cause. This the Holy Ghost was to do, and to guide, comfort, sustain, direct the disciples as Jesus had done, with the difference noted. And further, He was not to leave them as Christ had; He was to abide with them for ever. This name of One come down to take Christ’s place, and abiding for ever, is of all moment in this case; for the Holy Ghost, come as the Paraclete in place of Christ, was to be amongst them as Christ was. Christ had acted among, and for, and by, them too—not they merely by Him; though, no doubt, what they did when

sent out was by His power, as in His name. Now, they were to have another Paraclete, who was to be among them in His stead (though glorifying Him), and to act among and for, and by them; and lead, and guide, and correct, and direct, and sustain them, and to be with them for ever. This was not merely natural qualities sanctified by grace, and man acting by the Spirit; it was a living divine Person acting for them, and by them. That, He being grieved (and withal in the sovereign counsels of God), much of that in which He shewed His power is lost, is true; but to say, because man has abused this grace, and feebleness has followed, because God has not honoured those who did not honour Him, or because the flesh has abused the doctrine, that He does not dwell amongst us, is merely that kind of unbelief hateful to God, which is called in Scripture "tempting God." The place was called Massah and Meribah, "because there they tempted God, saying, Is the Lord amongst us or no? "And here I will remark on the "with us," and "in us." The distinction is perfectly scriptural. The Lord said (John 14:25), "These things I have said unto you, being yet present with you"—the exact phrase in Greek which is used concerning the Holy Ghost, translated, "He dwelleth with you." Christ was yet dwelling with them, but another Comforter was to come whom they would know (though the world would not, because it did not see Him) because He dwelt with them; and then He adds, as to the manner (which was not so of Jesus come in the flesh) a new thing, and therefore put in the future tense, "He shall be in you." This new Paraclete was to be thus their Counsellor, Guide, Orderer (as Jesus had been), manage their cause and affairs as dwelling with them. Hence we see the importance of distinguishing this living presence and

acting of a Comforter from a man's using his talents in a sanctified way by grace.

But, further, this is fully brought out in Scripture as a distinct thing from being in individual members. Both are spoken of; but they are spoken of to different purposes in Scripture. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own?" etc. (1 Cor. 6:19). Here accordingly it is applied to personal sanctification. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are," 1 Cor. 3:16, 17. Here it is clearly the Church of God, the building of God which some might corrupt by false doctrine. They were God's building. The Spirit of God does then clearly distinguish the dwelling in the individual and the dwelling in the body. And this is so much the same thought and connected with the idea of the presence of God in Israel, that in 2 Corinthians 6:16 it is distinctly introduced. "For ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." And now I would ask, What is there debasing in the blessed doctrine that God dwells in His holy temple? We might perhaps say (were it not for that precious blood of Christ which has cleansed us) that it was a debasing idea that the Holy Ghost should dwell in our poor wretched bodies as His temple. But His testimony is to the value of that precious blood as cleansing us, so that His presence in the believer is a glorious testimony to the infinite precious-ness of Christ's work, and His presence at the right hand of God

the Father. But His presence in the Church as His temple, though no doubt founded on the same great truth, is at least more easily apprehended. Because, when I think of the Church, I do not think of the flesh, but only of the redeemed people of God on earth. Here, my soul says easily, the Holy Ghost can dwell. It belongs to Christ, whom the Spirit glorifies. Both, we have seen, are true, and distinctly true; but when I think of a man, I think readily of what he is in his infirmity; and (though it would be wrong) might be easily led to say, Can the Holy Ghost dwell in such poor vile creatures? But when I think of the Church, I do not think of the first Adam state. I think of the fruit of Christ's redemption. Here, my heart says, the Holy Ghost ought to be.

But having seen that the scripture does speak of both distinctly (that is, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that the Church is so too), I would quote some passages which speak of both one and the other, that we may see that both are fully taught in the word. We read (John 4), "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 7, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." These are evidently personal and individual. And this presence of the Holy Ghost is connected with life, joy, the sealing of our persons, and the certainty of salvation (and that, known in our own hearts), and strength to resist temptation, and fruits against which there is no law. "He that stablisheth us together with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." So that we know that "all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him

amen, to the glory of God by us." We are "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith." Here He is acting in, and on, and in testimony with, the individual as himself livingly united to Christ. But there is another truth besides. God is to be in His temple. What is a temple without God? There was Israel where God dwelt; and a temple built with hands, where God vouchsafed in a certain manner to dwell. Then Christ was the true temple, as we know, when He was here; as He took the place of Israel as the true vine. Is there none now? Or is it only the individual poor weak saint that is so? No. God has broken down the middle wall of partition, and through the glorious though seemingly debasing work of Christ has made both one, making peace, and reconciling both Jew and Gentile in one body to God by the cross, and has built them up together to be His habitation through the Spirit (Eph. 2). In a word, the Church of God (not looked at as individuals, but, on the contrary, as brought together into one by this glorious work of Christ), is God's habitation through the Spirit. So, as the apostle draws the consequence, there is one body and one Spirit. And it is against this blessed truth that all the effort of the enemy is now directed—a body formed into one, by the cross of Christ breaking down the middle wall of partition, and the presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth consequent upon the exaltation of the Head, so that there should be one body and one Spirit, and a habitation of God on the earth: God having exalted Christ above all principality and power, and given Him to be Head over all things to the Church. The same doctrine is taught in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 as in Ephesians. Now, that the Holy Ghost acts in the members of the body is fully admitted. Moreover this

acting of the Holy Ghost in the members is proper gift, as anyone reading 1 Corinthians 12 may easily see: but, though He acts in the members, His dwelling is in the Church or whole assembly. We might as well say, as to my soul, because it acts livingly and sets my members in motion, that it was only as dwelling in the members that it did so, as hold that the Holy Ghost's dwelling in the Church was only individually in the members: for "so is Christ." For surely the Holy Ghost is much more, as the other Comforter, an independent living Person and agent distributing severally to every one as He will, than my feeble soul is in my body; and in which of the members was He acting when the place shook where they were assembled? And hence, I am persuaded, it is that one can be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, as in Hebrews 6, and yet lost. Looked at as the individual seal and earnest, by which, after believing, we are sealed to the day of redemption, that cannot be: but as dwelling in power, according to the principle of this dispensation in the Church, it is supposed we may partake of it, not as the power and seal of living union (in that case it would bring forth fruit meet for Him by whom it was dressed), but acting in divine ministry and energy in the midst of the Church as a Person dwelling there: God making it His habitation by the Spirit, so that one could lie to Him; for in lying to the Holy Ghost they had lied to God. So the stranger fell down and confessed that God was in them of a truth: not merely in the individual who spoke, but in the assembly, as He was lied to not in any working in a member: He was there. There might be persons, we know there were, who were false brethren, in whom He did not dwell as a seal or earnest at all; but He was in the Church. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost, as sent, which constitutes and is the power of the unity of the

body. Grace acting in the members may aid to maintain this in the bond of peace; but the great and blessed doctrinal truth we have in Ephesians, and I Corinthians, and elsewhere, is that the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter sent down from heaven, is the constituent power of unity to the body. No grace in the members, nor sanctifying natural talents save as practically maintaining it, has anything to do with this. They are in this individuals as before. The other character of its presence is making the outward assembly on earth the habitation of God. (Compare the end of Ephesians 1 and 2.)

And now, suppose man has grieved this Holy Spirit, that the Church has lost many of His manifestations; supposing its practical unity is gone and scattered—that the wolf, because there were hirelings, has caught the sheep (though not out of Christ's hand) and scattered them, and the ruin is felt. Am I to confess the sin of man, and say, "Let God be true and every man a liar," and therefore recur in faith to the promise that the Comforter should abide for ever with us? or to say that unity is gone; that opening for the Holy Ghost to act in the members is a "bygone mode of God's dealing in His house," because the Holy Ghost acts "neither in mode nor in measure, as in New Testament times"; and therefore that we, not having New Testament directions, must make arrangements for ourselves as to ministry? It may be said the Holy Ghost remains. But His acting is denied altogether, it is impulse.

That is, because man has perhaps abused a principle, instead of correcting the abuse, the blessing is denied altogether. It is just simple unbelief in the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost. For my own part, I desire

through grace to correct the flesh whenever it appears; but I am not going to retrace my steps: I “fear” to do so, because I know God led me on the road. I have found the blessing. Were we happiest when this was believed or since it has been denied? And if we have failed in maintaining or in using the blessing, are we to humble ourselves, or to deny the blessing? We found it when there was no such unbelief or teaching amongst us. There was blessing enough to cheer and help us on in spite of much weakness and infirmity. And I shall not deny God in His truth and blessing because man knows not how to use it, if it even be so; but I do not believe it. We may be humbled; but God will help and meet us according to our faith. I own a ministry, have always owned it; but I cannot deny the blessed truth of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Church, and acting as so present in the various members of the body as He pleases. And here I will add, I do not say among the gathered brethren. The only difference as to those is, they have acted together on this truth.

The Holy Ghost in the whole Church may own a brother’s gift elsewhere, in a chapel where he is minister; only he denies a blessed doctrine which God has taught, and, I fully trust, will maintain among us. And let it be here remembered, that stated ministry has never been denied, but always in exercise amongst us—always owned in principle. In half or more of the services, one who has gift has exercised his gift on his responsibility to Christ. This is known to every one. And for my own part I recognize it fully, be it one or two, if they agree together to do it. The teachers have waited on their teaching. It is an utter untruth or sheer prejudice to deny or lose sight of this. It is only in the

meetings for worship, when the saints assembled as such, that this has not been the case. The profit of a stated ministry, all that is true in a one-man ministry, has been in the fullest exercise among those called brethren. In their worship they have not sought sermons, but the presence of God—the accomplishment of that promise, that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be in the midst of them. I avow I do not go there to hear a sermon; nor do I like to hear one. I go to worship, to find the Lord, and worship Him. And I judge that if brethren are become incapable of enjoying this, it is a very bad sign. I do not go with my ears there to hear man, however gifted, but to worship God; and I beg to press this on brethren. I feel thankful if any one be led of God (I trust we may be forgiven for still thinking this possible, in spite of the efforts to rob us of it), to give a word of exhortation or comfort. I know that the flesh has abused this, forgetting the word "swift to hear, slow to speak"— "my brethren, be not many teachers." But I add, most decidedly that, though I have seen liberty used for licence (and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"), I have found where God was owned incomparably more of His presence and blessing than where man's arrangements have taken the place of God. There might be evils to deplore and to correct; but there was God to enjoy, because God was owned. Elsewhere I have found decent things of man, a fair show in the flesh, but a sepulchre. The God I found my delight in was not there. For even God's grace or gift in teaching is a wholly different thing from God's presence in the way of worship. But I add that, where in worship this latter is slighted, I never found even the former. It is written, "Cursed is the man who putteth his trust in man." Correct the evils, brethren; but let us not disown God

nor His goodness. If you cannot know His presence in worship, nor what the blessing of this is, humble yourselves. You have suffered great loss, you have spiritually declined. Forgive me! But if (which I cannot believe, for I at any rate have found it among you) you have forgotten this joy—pardon me here also— I, poor as I am, and I feel this unfeignedly, I have not forgotten it. I shall, with His grace, continue to trust Him. I will, if need be, begin afresh, and am not afraid of not finding His faithfulness and love, and of enjoying with a despised remnant that sweet and blessed fellowship with Him which He has granted us in times past. And, if I am to take my place among you, I shall freely exercise, when the just occasion offers, the ministry with which I believe God has entrusted me in my weakness, the gift of His grace; and, when we meet as saints, I shall be glad often to wait, not merely to compose my spirit, to gather up my strength from the Lord, before I enter on His work, or open my mouth to speak in His name, but to wait in the hope to gather up strength through the blessing conferred upon some other beloved one of God, or by our joining together, whoever may be used as our mouthpiece, in thanksgiving, and prayer, and praise. For the joy of the Lord is our strength. I do not expect to be edified if the flesh act amongst us, and we shall do well to own where it has been so. But I do expect the Lord’s presence, and His acting amongst us, if we wait upon Him, to guide, to use, and to bless us. And to Him, and to that hope I cleave.

I would add, in this second edition, some notice of the unity of the Church by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, as intercourse with saints seems to shew that this truth has been little laid hold of. The epistle to the

Ephesians offers at once the testimony of the word on the subject. I would first notice that the body the apostle speaks of is of those actually quickened, subjects of the power which raised up Christ, not merely objects of purpose and counsel, though that of course was true of them. They had been dead in trespasses and sins. They were quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. They were united to their Head in heaven by living union by the Holy Spirit. Secondly, they were, if afar off, brought nigh by the blood of Christ, having been aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. But they were not introduced into anything of which Israel was in possession.79 Peace was preached to them afar off, and to them who were nigh—to Gentiles and to Israel. The latter were to be introduced as well as the former. That which distinguished them was broken down, “the middle wall of partition,” and of both one new man was made, both being reconciled in one body by the cross. That is, on the foundation of the actual accomplishment of the atonement on the cross, those then actually existing in two distinct conditions, namely, Jews and Gentiles, were reconciled and made one new man of—reconciled to God in one body (the actual accomplished work of the cross, setting aside the Jewish order of things, being the ground of it).

Next, the work itself is spoken of under the figure of a building. They were built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. These prophets are the prophets of the New Testament. This can scarcely be doubted by those acquainted with Greek, because the two words are united by a single article, which, as every scholar knows, proves them to be the same persons, or identified as one

set of people by a common condition. But the English reader can easily see that it is so by looking at chapter 3:5, “as they are now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.” This passage clearly and definitely shews who the prophets are who are referred to, namely, the prophets of the New Testament. We have then persons brought out from among Jews and Gentiles reconciled to God in one body, and builded on the foundation of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. This grew up to a holy temple. Hence they were builded together for a habitation of God. They were God’s dwelling-place, just as the temple had been of old, only that it was by the Spirit. God was in His holy temple; but it was by the presence of the Holy Ghost there.

The Ephesians, to whom he addressed himself, were builded into this one habitation of God. In this chapter, then, we have in the most distinct way possible, the saints, Jew or Gentile, losing their own proper natural place, and united together, consequent on the death of Christ, into one new man, formed into one body, and so, by the unity of the whole, forming a temple and builded together to be a place where God dwelt by the Holy Ghost. Hence, passing over the development of the mystery in chapter 3 (in which the apostle shews that it had not in other ages been made known to the sons of men, as it was now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, so that by the Church the manifold wisdom of God should be known on high), in chapter 4 he comments practically on the walk suited to this calling to be a temple of God in the Spirit. They are to keep its unity in the bond of peace. There was one body and one Spirit—this one body, of which we have

been learning in chapter 2 as reconciled to God, the power of which unity is the one Spirit sent down from the ascended, exalted Head. The Holy Ghost could not thus come down indeed at all till the Head was glorified on high. The subject of His testimony was not yet there. The ground of His presence in sinners in the effectual righteousness of the exalted Head was not yet established in the presence of God on high. The body could not be formed before the Head was there on high. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Being so given, He was the power of unity in that body so formed into one, by His coming down; and being thus in it, wrought by joints and bands for the edifying of the body of Christ. That is this unity of the body, the new man formed on the exaltation of the Head, by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, and formed on earth, the Holy Ghost having come down to earth, though its title and place and head were in heaven. And while He dwelt in and united it (so that it was the habitation of God), it made increase of the body, each part working in its measure—the body grew. As then before we had the building in which God dwelt, so here we have the body in which He acted vitally in blessing; both designating the saints united in one, and on earth, consequent on the death and exaltation of the Lord Jesus—the glorious Head to which they were united. To this testimony on this all-important subject much might be added from 1 Corinthians 12, where the "so also is Christ," so clearly marks the present state consequent on the exaltation of the Head, for it was not so before; and the gifts there spoken of had their place of exercise and service beyond all controversy on the earth. But the reader, if he gives himself the trouble of reading the chapter in connection with what has been

said, cannot fail to apprehend the evidence it affords of the truth treated of. That the body is one, and one on earth, though belonging to heaven, consequent on the exaltation of Christ as its Head, and acted in by one Spirit operating in members set every one of them in the body, that is, in the whole assembly of saints, and that on earth.

76 It is the final testimony of triumph and blessing; “The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

77 In every shape and way the acting of the Holy Ghost Himself is denied. Suppose a person believes he is led of the Spirit of God to exhort his brethren (I say nothing now of gift), this is denounced as “impulse.” Man may act by the Spirit, but this would be the Spirit acting by man, and this cannot be. The Holy Ghost could not lead any one to speak, for it is quite clear this would be impulse. And who is to speak? Persons of proved competency. And how are they to be proved, if there is not to be an opening for their action? But the answer is ready—sent by the leaders of principal meetings to try their hand in the country, and these leaders are exclusively “the other” who are to judge; 1 Cor. 14:29. This is the avowed plan in some places. It would be much more honest to fall openly into the old dissenting plan, for it is nothing whatever but setting it up again, and I do not doubt there are men of God there. But my answer is, I believe in the Holy Ghost, not merely as sanctifying competent persons, but as acting as a living Person in the Church of God, and God present in the Church through the Spirit. It may be well to add here, what may perhaps seem incredible, that the

authoritative explanation at Plymouth of this matter, in commenting on Mr. ——'s tract and the expression "meeting the Holy Ghost," is that they go to meet God and not the Holy Ghost, and we go to meet the Holy Ghost and not God. This charge against brethren, untrue as it is, is sufficient, as well as the statement they make as to themselves, to shew their view on the subject, if view it can be called. Any comment on it here would carry me too far.

78 See pp. 20-23 of "Some Thoughts."

79 This introduction into the place of promise on earth is the subject of Romans 11.