The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 19 (Expository 1)

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A Brief Outline Of The Books Of The Bible

Preface.

The notes, from which this little book is printed, were completed and corrected by him from whose discourses they were taken at Birmingham.

Asked for by several, they are now published, in the consciousness of worthlessness as to all that is merely of man; but in the full assurance, through faith, of the power to bless of Him who has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness,” 2 Cor. 12:9.

Genesis

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In this book we have all the great principles of God’s relationship with man, without bringing in redemption which makes a people for God and a dwelling-place for God in man. You never, save in chapter 2:3, get the word “holiness” in Genesis; and you never have God dwelling with men.

Creation is first treated of; then innocence, lordship, and marriage, the figure of union with Christ. Next we have the fall, man’s sin against God, and then in Cain man’s sin against his brother. There is, at the same time, a witness of certain righteous persons, Abel in sacrifice, Enoch in life, and Noah in testimony of approaching j udgment. You then get the complete corruption of the whole system, and the deluge.

Having had in Enoch a figure of the church, we get in Noah deliverance through judgment, and then the new world begins, God entering into covenant with it, and government introduced to prevent violence; but the governor fails, and God's plans as to the races of men are brought out. We find God making nations, in consequence of man's attempt to remain united so as to be independent. In the midst of these nations we have, in Nimrod, imperial power, individual and despotic, connected with Babel, the place of man's wickedness. In point of fact, the division of mankind into nations comes by judgment.

Shem's family having been owned on the earth—the Lord God of Shem, national existence is recognized as the principle of the constitution of the earth, God's arrangement. He now begins an entirely new thing. He calls out from that which He has constituted an individual to be the head of a blest race, whether fleshly or spiritual. Whatever individual saints there had thus far been, there had been no counterpart of Adam as the head of a race. This Abraham was. Election, calling, and promise are connected with this; consequently you have Abraham, a stranger and pilgrim, with nothing but his tent and his altar. He fails, like everybody, but God judges the world—Pharaoh's house—for him. We then get the distinction between a heavenly-minded and an earthly-minded man; the world having power over the earthly-minded (Lot), and the heavenly one (Abraham) having power over the world. In connection with this we have in Melchizedek the future priest upon his throne, and that as linked with God's supremacy over heaven and earth. Abraham's separation from the world having been evinced, Jehovah presents Himself to Abraham as

his shield and reward. We then first get the earthly inheritance and people, that is, in promise. Abraham looks for the promise in a fleshly way, and that is all rejected. We have then the promise to Abraham of being the father of many nations, God revealing Himself as God Almighty. We have also His covenant, as thus revealed, with Abraham, and the principle of separation to God by circumcision. Chapter 18 gives the promise of the heir, and the judgment of the world (Sodom), and the connection with God, about it, of the heavenly people (Abraham) by intercession; while in chapter 19 we have the connection with the judgment of the earthly people (Lot), saved as by fire through the tribulation. What follows this, chapter 20, is the absolute appropriation of the wife, whether Jerusalem or the heavenly bride, as the spouse of the Lord. The old covenant (Hagar) is cast out, and, the heir (Isaac) being come, he takes the land (chap. 21). Chapter 22 begins another series of things. The promised heir being offered up, and the promise confirmed to the seed, Sarah dies (chap. 23). This is the passing away of the old association with God on the earth; and in chapter 24 Eliezer (in figure the Holy Ghost, or His work on earth) is sent to take a wife for Isaac (Christ), who is Heir of all things, and Isaac can in nowise return to Mesopotamia. Christ, in taking the church, cannot come down to earth; whereas, the moment we get Jacob, we get the head of the twelve tribes, who goes to Mesopotamia for Rachel and Leah, typical of Israel and the Gentiles. Jacob is the elect, but not the heavenly people; he goes back to Canaan, gets the promises, with all sorts of exercises, as Israel will, but, if he does, he must give up old Israel (Rachel) to get Benjamin, the son of his right hand.

In the brief notice of Esau's offspring we find the world in vigour and energy before God's people are; and then commences another history, that of Joseph, affording a distinct development of Christ connected with Israel, rejected by Israel, and sold to the Gentiles. He comes thus to be the head, having the throne, and governing all Egypt. He has done with Israel, receives a Gentile wife, and calls his children by names typical of Christ's rejection and blessing outside Israel when rejected; but he receives back his brethren in the glory. This part closes with two distinct testimonies, the will of Joseph about his bones, and Jacob's prophecy that they will all be back in the land and the promises to Israel be fulfilled.

Exodus.

In this book we find God visiting His people; redemption, and the establishment of relationships with His people, whether it be by the testing of law, or the arrangements of grace, by which He could bear with them, with the distinct purpose of dwelling in them, and, moreover, of making them dwell in a place He had prepared for them. All is connected with four immense principles—redemption, bringing to God, God's dwelling among them, and consequently holiness. Priesthood is established to maintain the relationship with God when the people cannot be in immediate relation. Connected with all this you have, besides the judgment of the world, and the final deliverance of the earthly people. With Moses, the man of grace, you have Zipporah, who represents the church, but the children are witnesses of Christ's abiding connection with Israel.

From the Red Sea to Sinai we find the whole picture of God's dealings in grace in Christ by the Spirit on to the millennium, and the millennium itself.

In chapter 19 the people put themselves under law, and get law instead of worship founded on deliverance and grace.

Leviticus

Gives us God in the tabernacle, as in the midst of His people, ordering all things that suit their relationship to Him. The feasts represent Him as in the midst of the people, a circle round Himself.

Numbers

Treats of the journey through the wilderness, with insight into the inheritance (for us heavenly), and a full prospect of all God's ways in bringing them in, and of Christ Himself as the One who is to reign. Reference is made in this last remark to Pisgah, and to Balaam's prophecy.

Deuteronomy.

A recapitulation of all God's ways and dealings with Israel, as motives to insist on obedience, and to put the people on moral grounds in direct relationship with Himself. The three great feasts (chap. 16) have this character. The testing character of the law is stated, and at the same time the purpose of God in blessing, spite of failure under the law, is revealed; closing with the prophetic blessing of Israel, in respect to their then present condition.

Joshua.

The establishment of the people in the land by divine leading and power, according to promise, but through conflict, in which the faithfulness of the people's walk with God is tested.

The career of Joshua begins with crossing the Jordan in the power of resurrection, and has its place of power for conflict in Gilgal—circumcision—death to the flesh.

They eat of the corn of the land before they have any conflict.

Judges.

While Joshua is a book of victorious power, Judges is the book of failure in faithfulness, so that power is lost: only that God intervenes in mercy, from time to time, to deliver and revive. Gilgal is exchanged for Bochim. Gilgal, the denial of the flesh, though seemingly of little importance, was the place of power; Bochim was the place of tears, but the angel of God was there.

Ruth.

The intervention of the Lord in grace to bring in the promised seed, and the restoration of Israel, but in the way of grace, on a new footing. On a famine in the land, Naomi, who represents Israel, goes away, and loses everything. Ruth comes back with her, and Boaz (strength) raises up the inheritance. It was old Israel, in some sense: the child was born to Naomi, but on the principle of grace, for Ruth had no title to promise.

1 Samuel.

The judicial priesthood connection is here broken. Both judge and priest go in Eli. The ark is taken—a total breach. Power, and the link of connection, are lost. Then God comes in, in His own sovereign way, by a prophet, as He had before brought them out of Egypt. (All on the ground of man's responsibility was gone; but sending a prophet was sovereign mercy.) Before He brings in strength (the king), He brings in prophecy—a notable thing this. Before Christ returns in power, it is the testimony of the Spirit and word, by which a connection is maintained between God and His people. From Eli to David on the throne this is a general principle—;faith and power, not succession.

But flesh required governmental order,1 and gets what it wants; but it breaks down before the power of the enemy. Then even believers who cling to it fall with it (Jonathan). If governmental order be established without Christ, they cannot like Christ to come and set it aside. The one in whom hope is must be content to be as a partridge on the mountains.

Saul was raised up to put down the Philistines; Jonathan did subdue them, but never Saul who was destroyed by them. Jonathan was a believer associated with the outward order. The place of faith was with David. It is the place of the power of faith without the king.

2 Samuel.

Saul falls on the mountains of Gilboa. Then we get the royalty of David, in active power, not in the reign, of peace, with the promise of maintaining his house in whatever way they conducted themselves. God would

chasten them if disobedient, but not take His mercy from them. Then we get David's personal failure when he is king. There is another element—the ark and the temple come in question; the relationship with God is re-established first by faith, not according to order, but by spiritual power according to grace, all being by that spiritual power according to grace. The ark was on Mount Zion, and there they were singing, "His mercy endureth for ever": while at Gibeon was the high place, where Solomon went. There the tabernacle was, but not the ark. Solomon is not seen at Mount Zion till his return from Gibeon, where God answered him. Consequent on God's interfering in deliverance and redemption, the place of ordered worship is set up, connected with earth —the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. It was after judgment, slaying the people and sacrifice. God loves Jerusalem, and so stays His hand in judgment, and shews by prophecy the path of reconciliation by sacrifice.

1 And 2 Kings

Here we have the reign of Solomon, the establishment of Israel in peace, and the building of the temple, the figure of the great Son of David. This fails, looked at historically, in Rehbboam; and then the book of Kings is the history, not of Judah, but of Israel, with sufficient notices of Judah to carry on the history. You get the intervention of God by prophets in Elijah and Elisha, in mercy, in the midst of Israel, who had left the temple, one being a testimony to Israel on the ground of their responsibility, the other in resurrection-power.

First and Second Kings continue the history in Judah till the captivity, and then Lo-ammi was written on the

nation. There are, of course, many details—various characters of faith, etc., as Hezekiah of faith, Josiah of obedience, Jehoshaphat of piety, but never, through association with the world, for success.

1 And 2 Chronicles

Gives us the history of the family of David—ending, of course, like the former, with the Babylonish captivity.

1 Chronicles is David himself. At the close, David has the pattern of everything by the Spirit, and leaves it to Solomon to execute.

2 Chronicles is David's posterity.

Chronicles are more connected with the establishment of the kingdom on earth, Kings more figurative of what is heavenly. In the temple in Chronicles there is a veil (2 Chron. 3:14), in Kings not. The veil will not be rent for Israel in the millennium.

Ezra.

The re-establishment of the temple and divine service according to the law, while waiting for the Messiah. But then there is no ark, no Urim, etc. It was an empty temple.

Nehemiah.

The re-establishment of the civil society and state under the Gentiles.

Esther.

The providential care of Israel when God is hidden from them, while Lo-ammi is written on them. He takes care of them while He is hidden from them and does not own

them. God's name is never mentioned. The Gentile queen fails to shew her beauty, and the Jewish bride supersedes her.

Job.

The possibility of the relationship of a man with God, in the great conflict referring to good and evil between God and the power of darkness; and that connected with the discipline of saints, in contrast with the alleged present righteous government of the world by God; the necessity of a Mediator being intimated, not unfolded; the power of Satan over the world made known, and his character as accuser of the brethren pointed out. God is seen as the originator of all (not of the accusations themselves, I need hardly say, but of the whole process) for the purpose of blessing His people; the whole being without any dispensational reference, while the conscience is thoroughly searched in those He blesses. You get in Elihu the wisdom of God in His word (Christ really), and then you have the power of God (also Christ) in God answering out of the whirlwind. The book may be regarded as typical of Israel, inasmuch as it is in Israel that these ways of God are shewn.

Psalms.

The Spirit of Christ working and developing itself in the remnant of Israel in the latter day; only therewith shewing the personal part He has taken, whether to lay the ground for them, or to exercise sympathy with them; continuing on up to the border of the millennium, but not entering into it except prophetically. They are divided into five books.

Proverbs.

The wisdom of God shewing its path to man, in contrast with the corruption and violence in man. The first eight chapters give us the principle, shewing Christ as wisdom; the remainder enter into details. It is to man in a remarkable way. A man of the world escapes by knowing the crookedness of the world: this book enables a man to escape without knowing it—wise in that which is good, simple concerning evil.

Ecclesiastes.

Is the result of the research after happiness under the sun: adding, that man's wisdom, as man, is God's law.

Canticles.

The relationship of the affections of the heart of the spouse with Christ. This, on the ground of the special form of the relationship, is to be realized properly in Israel, though capable of an application, abstractedly, to the church and to the individual. (What Canticles treats of is not relationship, but desires, faith, getting the joy of the relationship with occasional glimpses, but not established known relationship. The place of the church, though the marriage is not come, is that of being in the relationship. Israel will not have this.)

There is a kind of progress observable, (i) "My beloved is mine" —this is the lowest point. (2) "I am my beloved's" —the consciousness of belonging to Him. (3) "I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me."

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We have had thus, subsequent to the history, the moral development of the heart of man, and of the Spirit of

God working in various ways in his heart: specially in Ecclesiastes, the heart of man making itself a centre, and trying to feed itself; in Canticles, the heart getting out of itself into the heart of Christ.

The Prophets.

In these (except Jonah, and, in a certain sense, Daniel) we find the action of the Spirit of God in the midst of His people, to maintain the authority and character of their original calling, testify against their departure from it, and reveal Messiah as establishing them in blessing on a new footing— sustaining thus the faith of the godly during the departure of the mass, and denouncing judgment on those who persevere in unfaithfulness.

Isaiah.

Here you have the whole framework of God's dealings with Judah, Israel coming in, by the bye, with the judgment of surrounding nations, and especially of Babylon, looking at Israel as the centre, bringing out the Assyrian as the great latter-day enemy. Immanuel as the hope of Israel, and the securer of the land, although rejected when coming as a testimony, being Himself Jehovah—a sanctuary—but a stone of stumbling to the disobedient. We get, in addition, the details of the inroads of the Assyrian, and his judgment in the last days; and, included in the development of all this, we have the blessedness of Israel as re-established. This is the first part—chapters 1-35.

In the historical chapters (36-39) we get two great principles —resurrection, and deliverance from the Assyrians. It is,a risen Christ who effects deliverance, which makes it so important. The captivity in Babylon is

here intimated. This latter lays the ground for what follows.

In the last part you have God's controversy with Israel, first on the footing of idolatry, and, secondly, because of the rejection of Christ. In this Israel is first looked at as a servant; and in chapter 49 the place of servant is transferred to Christ, and, He being rejected, the remnant in the last days take the place of servant. All through this, though Israel be the object of favour, you get a definite contrast between the wicked and the righteous, and hence the separation of the remnant, and judgment of the wicked—the declaration that there can be no peace to the wicked, whether Israel or others (end of chaps. 48, 57).

In the part that refers specially to the rejection of Christ we get the revelation of the call of the Gentiles, the judgment of the people, the coming of Jehovah, and the full blessing of the remnant of Israel at Jerusalem.

Jeremiah.

We have here the present dealing of God with rebellious Judah, making them Lo-ammi by the captivity in Babylon; next, from chapter 30, the revelation of the infallible love of Jehovah to Israel (Judah and Ephraim), and the certainty of their establishment under David, according to the order of God, in Jerusalem, Jehovah being their righteousness; then, after the history of Zedekiah, and the details of what brought in the captivity, and what passed in Palestine after it, we have the judgment of all the nations and Babylon itself.

Lamentations.

In Lamentations we get the sympathy and entering in of the Spirit of Christ into the sorrows of Israel, specially of the remnant; hence the hope of restoration.

Ezekiel

Gives the judgment of Jerusalem—God coming from without, but all Israel looked at, and not specially Judah; the judgment of the nations around, of the ungodly oppressors in and over Israel; the dealing henceforth with individual souls as regards judgment; the setting up of David, and the new birth, as the means of Israel's blessing; the union of Judah and Israel in one stick; and, on their restoration to their land, the destruction of the Assyrian, or Gog, by divine power, in fact, by the presence of Christ; and, in the end, a vision of the restoration of the temple and of the order of the land.

Daniel

Has two parts—the history of the Gentile empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold; and, secondly, special visions of Daniel (beginning with chap. 7), marking out the condition and circumstances of the saints in connection with the history of these empires more fully revealed, and the coming of judgment to set them all aside in favour of Israel. But he only comes to the door of the millennium without unfolding it.

Hosea.

We have here the rejection of the house of Israel and the house of Judah distinctively, as Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi; the door secretly opened to the Gentiles by it; Israel's long-enduring deprivation of everything; and

then the restoration of the whole under Jehovah and David in the latter days. Paul quotes chapter 1:10, and 2:23; Peter only the latter. From chapter 4 we get the most earnest dealing with the conscience of Israel, but closing with their return in repentance to the sure blessings of Jehovah. It is the testimony of the ways of the Lord.

Joel.

Under the figure of the desolation left by a plague of insects we have announced the inroad of the northern armies in the last days, and the coming in of the whole power of man against God's people, and the consequent coming in of Jehovah to judge the whole power of man in the day of the Lord, and in the valley of decision. Meanwhile, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon all manner of people, and the promise of certain deliverance to whoever called on the name of the Lord. You may add, the summons to repentance of all who have ears to hear.

Amos

Gives the patience of God's dealings and ways, which he rehearses in connection with the precise pointing out of the iniquity of Israel's ways; but marking out the punishment of bordering nations on the same ground of definite moral evil. He notices the rejection of a testimony against the evil, and declares the sure, infallible, unescapable judgment of Jehovah on the whole people, the righteous remnant being as certainly saved; closing with the promise of building up the tabernacle of David, as head of the nation, and blessing the people.

Obadiah

Is the judgment of Edom for their hatred of Israel, warning them that the day of the Lord is upon all the heathen, while deliverance should be in Mount Zion, and thence holiness and blessing, and the kingdom be the Lord's.

Jonah

Is the witness that, though God has chosen Israel, He has not given up His right as a faithful Creator in mercy over all the earth, while those that are connected with Himself must be subject to His power and bow to His grace: otherwise the sense of favour is unfaithfulness and self-exaltation. At the same time we get a type of death and resurrection as the way of blessing.

Micah.

In Micah we have the general judgment of the people, Samaria and Jerusalem, for their transgressions, iniquities, and idolatry, and their rejection of the testimony of God. Hence the whole land is treated as polluted, and no longer the rest of His people, who must arise and depart. He judges the princes and their prophets, brings in the power of the Spirit to judge even the chosen city of the Lord, but announces its re-establishment by Jehovah in grace in the last days; bringing in the siege of Jerusalem by the heathen, in fulfilment of God's counsels, though in consequence of the rejection of Christ, on account of which they were given up; and shews that the same Christ stands as their peace and defence, when the Assyrian comes in, in the last days. The remnant of Israel becomes the people of blessing to, and power over, others, while all evil in it is

judged and destroyed, as well as the heathen who have come up against it. Having thus spoken of the restoration in the last days he returns and insists on the righteousness of God's ways, contrasts the attempt at ceremonially pleasing Him with the practising of iniquity which He hates, closing with the looking to Him to restore and feed His people as the God who passes by iniquity.

Nahum.

The power of the world, or man as such, put down for ever; but with the testimony of the faithfulness of the Lord in the midst of His vengeances, and hence blessing to those that trust in Him and wait for Him. It is still the Assyrian: Babylon is another thing altogether.

Habakkuk

Is the soul exercised by the iniquity of God's people—first, with indignation thereat, and then with distress at their being destroyed by those who are God's rod to chasten them. He then gets the answer of God, shewing that He knows the pride of the wicked, and will judge it, and that the righteous man must live by trusting in Him. Lastly, he rises above all to the glorious power of God, exercised in the salvation of His people, so that he trusts in Him, come what will.

In Zephaniah we get the utter judgment of the land for iniquity, hypocrisy, and idolatry, at the great day of the Lord, and of all the neighbouring nations around—everything of man's natural power, Jerusalem among them, because of her iniquity, though distinctly brought out as the special object of displeasure, as connected with the Lord. The prophecy then singles out the

remnant in a very distinct and definite way, calling on them to wait on the Lord, who leaves them as an afflicted and poor people but delivered by the judgments which He executes, and rests in His love over Jerusalem, making it a name and praise among all people.

Haggai

Is occupied with the house, and declares that its latter glory will be greater than its first, at the time when He shakes all nations, and therewith encourages them to build, declaring that His Spirit went with them, as from Egypt, and that He will overthrow the throne of all kingdoms, but establish Christ under the name of Zerubbabel, as the elect man, as the signet on His right hand.

Zechariah

Is particularly occupied with Jerusalem, and so shews the Lord dealing with all nations, having Jerusalem as a centre, using one nation to cast out another, till His purposes are accomplished; and then, when the glory has come, establishing Himself at Jerusalem. In the person of Joshua, the high priest, He justifies her against the adversary; He declares He will come, and puts all wisdom, the omniscience of His government, in Jerusalem. He prophesies of the perfection of the administrative order in the kingdom and priesthood, and the judgment of all corrupt pretension to it, which is shewn to be Babylonish, and builds the temple of the land by means of the Branch; judging the hostile power of the world, and using all this to encourage them at that time in building the temple. Thus far is one prophecy (chaps. 1-6).

In the next He takes occasion, by those who inquire whether they are yet to fast for the ruin of Jerusalem, to promise her restoration (only now, for the present, on the ground of responsibility); declares He will protect His house against all surrounding enemies; brings in Christ in humiliation, but carries it on to the time of glory, and of executing judgment by Judah upon Greece (Javan), gathering all the scattered ones. In chapters 11-14 we have the details of Christ's rejection, and the foolish and idolatrous shepherd, when He judges all the nations as meddling with Jerusalem, defends Jerusalem, brings them to repentance, and opens the fountain for their cleansing; and we then get, in contrast with the false spirit of prophecy, Christ's humiliation, the sparing of a remnant, when the body of the people are cut off from Judea at the end, with the final deliverance and the sanctifying of Jerusalem by the presence of the Lord, making her the centre of all worship upon earth.

In chapter 13:5 we see Christ, the servant of man, the rejected one of the Jews, and the smitten of Jehovah. Read "for man possessed me from my youth." It then appears that it was among His friends He had been wounded in His hands; and the great secret of all comes out, that He is Jehovah's fellow, and smitten of Him. Note, where Christ is owned as God, He calls the saints His fellows; and where, as here, He is in deepest humiliation, God calls Him His fellow.

In these books, Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews are never called God's people, except in prospect of the future.

Malachi.

We have here the testimony of the Jews' total failure when restored, according to what has gone before, in spite of God's electing love, which He still maintains; and then the Lord comes, sending a messenger before His face, but comes in thoroughly sifting and purifying judgment, owns the remnant who spake one to another in the fear of the Lord, in the midst of the wickedness, lifts them up, and sets them over the power of the wicked, the Sun of Righteousness rising upon them for healing. But at the same time He calls them back to the law of Moses, with the promise of sending them Elijah the prophet to turn their hearts.

The New Testament.

The four Gospels give us Christ upon earth; the Acts the establishing the church in connection with Peter and with Paul, either in connection with the Jews, or lifting it up above them; the Epistles, partly addressed to particular churches in apostolic care, partly unfoldings of doctrine for the edification of saints, with the notice of the decay and departure from the truth of the church as formed on earth; and then the connection, through this decay and corruption, of the earthly church system, with the government and kingdom which were coming in. This last is the Apocalypse.

Matthew.

In Matthew we have Christ as Messiah, son of Abraham and son of David, according to the promise—Jehovah Emmanuel—bringing in the testimony of the kingdom and its healing power, laying down the principles on which men could enter into it (that is, the character of

the remnant); and then displaying the various power which characterized and verified His coming. Passing on, though with enduring patience— patience which endures till He comes again—to His rejection by the nation, and the setting up of the kingdom in a mysterious way in the absence of the King, He still continues for the present His ministrations till His hour was come, but reveals the substitution of the church, and the kingdom in glory, for its present setting up by His presence. He then goes up to Jerusalem, arraigns the nation as a whole and in its various classes, and then subjects Himself to the whole distress and power of evil and of Satan which reigned in Israel, and to the smiting of the Lord of Hosts in the cup which He had to drink. He is raised from the dead, meets His disciples on the old prophetic ground of the remnant in Galilee, and commands them to disciple all nations in the new name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but we have no ascension to heaven.

Some special things are, that in chapter 10 He gives a testimony exclusively to Israel, which embraces all the time from His presence there to His coming as Son of man, provided the Jews are in the land. In chapter 23, in speaking to His disciples, He recognizes as subsisting Moses' seat. In chapter 21 He presents Himself as King, riding on an ass, according to Zechariah; then, having, as above, recognized Moses' seat, He declares the utter judgment of that generation as guilty of the blood of all the righteous, puts His disciples in the place of persecuted testimony, the house being left empty till they own Him as coming in the name of Jehovah; passing over all time until the abomination of desolation is set up, and thereupon, after the great tribulation, He

appears in glory, and gathers all Israel. We have also parenthetically the various forms of the judgment of those who profess His name in His absence, and then the judgment of the nations on His return.

Mark.

In Mark we get the Lord's service (and therefore nothing of His birth) and specially His service as prophet. Matthew brings out the order of the facts, with a view to the development of principles, while Mark gives them chronologically. Luke has the same chronology as Mark, where he has any at all.

In Mark, as he reveals Christ's present service, we have in the parable of the sowing Christ's activity in the field at the beginning, and its cessation till the end, when He is again active in the harvest. All the intermediate particulars given by Matthew are omitted here.

In the prophecy on the Mount of Olives we have more references than in Matthew to the disciples' service. The commission in Mark is to preach the gospel to every creature.

Luke.

In Luke you get, first of all, a beautiful exhibition of the state of the pious remnant in Israel, at the time of our Lord's first appearing, and the working of the Spirit of God among them, and at the same time the public state of the nation in connection with the Gentiles (chap. 1). You get the whole political world set in motion to bring a carpenter to Bethlehem (chap. 2). In connection with this remnant John the Baptist comes, announcing Him who is to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (chap. 3). You now get the genealogy from Adam (having

had Israel), and Luke gives us Christ as the Son of man in perfect moral display upon earth, and the grace of God which was displayed in His coming, although still serving in the midst of Israel. This service is unfolded in the various forms of grace, with particular reference to its moral elements, and shewing its extension to Gentiles, and the breaking up of covenant relations with the Jews, distinguishing not merely the character of the remnant, but the disciples as the remnant, “Blessed are ye poor,” etc. (4-7). We get (in the demoniac of Gadara) a special picture, consequently, of the healing of the remnant in Israel, of the ruin of the people, and the mission of the delivered remnant, left as a witness instead of going with Him (chap. 8). In the transfiguration we find special reference to His intercourse with Moses and Elias as to His decease, insistence on the Son of man’s being delivered up, and the judgment of self in all its forms, the declaration that the unbelief of the whole generation, including His disciples, will close His whole connection with Israel, and the claim of absolute devotedness to Himself (chap. 9). Then we see the patient service of Christ to Israel in sending out the seventy, but warning them it was final, and bringing in judgment, and intimating that whatever power He gave them in connection with the kingdom, their delight should be rather that they belonged to heaven. We then get, further, the principle of grace in dealing as a neighbour, instead of the claim of God towards a neighbour; the word and prayer with the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, and the hearing of prayer (this is all transition); the judgment of scribes and Pharisees for the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, by which He had proved that the kingdom of God was come among them, and bound the power of the enemy,

so that He could deliver all who were under it; but that now, in the state in which the nation was, He was the test of deliverance and of going right, and they would be left to the power of Satan, of which they spoke. The hearing of the word was of more consequence than association with Israel according to the flesh—of more consequence than any fleshly tie. Thus the men of Nineveh and the queen of Sheba should rise up in judgment against that generation, and the blood of all the prophets should be found in them. They should be tested by apostles and prophets being sent to them; but these they would slay (chaps. 10, 11).

He then teaches the disciples to trust in God for everything, and to confess Him, the Lord Jesus, in the presence of all this opposition; and that the Holy Ghost should be given them; so that they who resisted and blasphemed the Holy Ghost in them should be judged as they who did it in Him. He taught them (the disciples) that all things should be made manifest. They were to be careful for nothing, but to seek the kingdom which it was the Father's good pleasure to give them. They were to have their treasure in heaven, and wait for the Lord. He then gives the character of the faithful and unfaithful servant in His absence—shews that His testimony will bring in division among men, even into families—warns the people to take notice of the signs of the times, and that even of themselves they ought to judge what was right; Jehovah being as one going with them to judgment, and they must agree with Him by the way (chap. 12).

We have then, in chapters 13 and 14, both in a parabolical way and in direct instructions, the setting aside of Israel, and the letting in of the Gentiles, with a

declaration that, in order to follow Him, men must take up their cross, and be the salt of the earth.

In chapters 15 and 16, the ways of God in grace we have with sinners, still connected with the setting aside of Judaism. Thus we have, first, grace seeking and receiving sinners; secondly, future hopes substituted for present enjoyments; and, lastly, the veil drawn aside; so that what is heavenly is contrasted with all that had in Judaism been promised to such as were outwardly faithful.

You then get warnings against being an occasion of stumbling to little ones; and, on the other side, if there be an offence, exhortations to forgive it—the power of faith in the disciples; but that whatever is done, it is no more than duty. Liberty from Israel is then shewn to be the privilege when the Lord is owned in Christ's person. The kingdom was among them in His person; but He would come unexpectedly in His glory, and execute judgment, but know how to discern the righteous from the wicked. In the distress of that day, and at all times, men were to persevere in calling on God, and reckoning on His answer. Lowliness of mind is urged, both in respect to our faults and in regard to the spirit of meekness. The danger of riches, as a hindrance to entering the kingdom, is pointed out, and the sure blessing of giving up all for Christ (chaps. 17, 18).

He now goes up to Jerusalem by Jericho. This in all three Gospels is a distinct chronological point when He begins to deal again, and finally, with the Jews. Even here Luke brings out grace in Zacchseus; and though a publican, the Lord owns him as a son of Abraham. He is owned as Son of David, yet brings in grace; "for the Son of man is

come to seek and save that which was lost.” Next the parable of the servants to whom money is entrusted differs in Luke, in that the responsibility of man is more brought out. Each gets the same sum, and a different reward according to what he has gained; whereas in Matthew He gives to each according to his wisdom and the capacity of each; and they all get the same reward. In His riding into Jerusalem we have to notice the expression, “Peace in heaven,” which is peculiar to Luke, and indicates that Christ destroys Satan’s power in heaven, and settles peace there, in order to introduce the kingdom. It is here He weeps over Jerusalem—the historical place for the incident (chap. 19).

In His answer to the Sadducees, when the different classes are arraigned (chap. 20), we have the introduction of the power of the first resurrection, as the proof of being the children of God. Here, as in Matthew, we get His exaltation to the right hand of God, as that which confounds the Pharisees as to all their expectations of the kingdom. He judges the scribes, and owns the poor widow who puts in her mite as better than all the rich.

Then in the prophecy (chap. 21) He does take notice, which Matthew does not, of the immediately coming destruction of Jerusalem, and does not speak of the abomination of desolation, but of Jerusalem being compassed with armies; referring, consequently on that first destruction, to the times of the Gentiles being fulfilled. He enters a great deal more into the spirit in which His disciples are to give their testimony, and meet the difficulties attending it.

We find here, at the passover, the extreme evil of man's heart, strife among them which should be the greatest. There is sifting by Satan, with special reference to Simon, for whom Christ had prayed; with distinct notice of the change of circumstances now from those of the time in which He exercised power, so as to secure them on the earth.

In the scene at Gethsemane and on the cross we have the Lord Jesus presented much more fully as man, and His own perfectness, faithfulness, and grace in them. It is not here Jehovah smiting His fellow, as in Matthew, but we see Him sweating as it were great drops of blood. It is the man suffering, and the perfection of faith and grace in the. man so suffering (chaps. 22, 23).

This characterizes Luke all through. You oftener find Him praying, of which I may mention two instances, His baptism and His transfiguration. Another circumstance may be remarked, as regards Luke's gospel, as characteristic—the bringing together a quantity of circumstances in a single general expression, and dilating on some particular one which brings out some great moral beauty and truth, such as the journey to Emmaus, and others. If we have the case of Herod in Luke, and Pilate and Herod becoming friends through their enmity to Christ, we have here also the thief on the cross, His opening paradise to him immediately in contrast with the kingdom, and His intercession for the Jews. I may add, the uselessness of natural feeling for Christ where He is not followed.

You may remark the power of Christ in unspent unexhausted life when commending His spirit to the Father. The centurion owns Him here as the righteous

man, and the effect also on the spectators and on Joseph the counsellor is stated.

Besides the detail of the two going to Emmaus, we may remark that He unfolds the scriptures, in chapter 24, to them, and makes Himself known to them in that which was the sign of death. He presents Himself very fully as the same man, Jesus, and eats in the presence of His disciples. He again insists on the scriptures as to be fulfilled, and that, as the book which we have in the Old Testament (law, prophets, and psalms) to this day. He opens their understanding to understand the scriptures, insisting upon this, that thus it is written. The mission given is that of repentance and remission of sins in His name among all Gentiles, beginning at Jerusalem. They were to be His witnesses, but were to wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost from heaven; and, in the act of blessing them, He ascends.

We have nothing here of Galilee, which we have in Matthew and John, where we have the Jewish thing. That was the connection with the remnant of Israel, while this is His connection with heaven.

John.

In John we have the divine person of the Lord, specially as life and light, and, supplementary to that, the sending of the Comforter down here in His place, and then a brief view of the whole course of dispensations until the millennial kingdom.

The first eighteen verses present the person of the Lord Jesus: in verses 1-5, abstractedly, as to His nature, and the effect of His appearing; verses 6-11, John’s testimony to this, and the effect of his coming; verses

12, 13, the effect and way of grace; verses 14-18, the Word made flesh; verses 19-34, John's testimony to what He would be as to His work and effectual power for man: Lamb of God, Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, owned here Son of God by the Holy Ghost descending on Him. In verses 35-42, John's testimony historically gathers to Him (this is the first day of active gathering); verse 43 to end, the Lord gathers. This, therefore, embraces all the dealing with the remnant during Christ's life, and hereafter, till He is owned by the remnant at the end, represented by Nathanael. Hence He is owned as Son of God, King of Israel, but takes a wider title too, that of Son of man, on whom the angels wait. Read "henceforth," for "hereafter."

Note here particularly (v. 38-42), Christ is the centre, hence divine (else turning us away from God), God manifest in the flesh; and secondly, the path through the world—follow me. The world condemned, Christ separates out of it to Himself, as God anew revealed; and is the only path through it as man. In verse 51 He has a third character—heaven opened on Him as man, and the angels waiting upon man. He is the object of an opened heaven as man. Note, our part is as Stephen's—heaven opened to us, and He, Son of man, there. Note too, Christ has not an object to look at, but every man has one—He is the object.

Chapter 2:1-22 is the double character of the third day (millennial action) in Israel; the marriage; and purifying judgment.

The Lord (v. 23-25) does not accept a present reception according to the intelligence of flesh; but, chapter 3, a man must be born again. This is true even for the

earthly promises made to Israel. But the thoughts of God for man go on to heaven, from whence the Son of man came down, where, in His divine person, He is, and whereof He speaks. God loves the world, and gives Him for individual faith not to perish. This introduces the cross, the Son of man lifted up like the serpent—the Son of God given. Condemnation hangs on believing or not in the Son of God, and it is because light is come into the world, and men love darkness. This is a great moral truth altogether outside Israel. He has fully revealed heaven as He knows it, and made man, by believing in Him, fit for it. John then bears witness to Christ, in contrast with himself and to his testimony, as divine and heavenly, as the One to whom His Father has given all; believing in whom a man has life; not believing, will not see life, wrath abides on him. All this ministry was previous to His entering on His public ministry, which took place after John's casting into prison.

Chapter 4. The jealousy of the Jews drives Him from Judea. In the woman of Samaria the new thing from outside and independent of Judaism is, in principle, brought in: God present to give, but in humiliation, which blessedly inspires confidence to ask, and He gives the desire, and spiritual spring rising to eternal life within man. But nature cannot receive spiritual things. God reaches the conscience by the word. This is recognized as of Him, and then Christ is known and owned as Saviour of the world. And though salvation be of the Jews, God, who is a Spirit, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. And the Father (the name now revealed in grace) seeks such to worship Him, meeting a needy soul. This is Jesus' joy in grace.

Chapter 5. Law, with all its ordinances, can do nothing through the weakness of the flesh; but the truth now is, that the Father and the Son are working, not man. They cannot have their sabbath in sin and misery. Such a sabbath is not owned; but as the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to Jesus the Son to have life in Himself, and He quickens whom He will; and committed all judgment to Him,2 that all should honour Him as they honour the Father. There is no confusion in these ways of honouring Him. He who hears His word, and believes on the Father who sent Him, has everlasting life, does not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. There is then a resurrection to life, and another to judgment (v. 30-47). He is presented as life to the responsibility of man, witnessed by John Baptist, His works, the Father, the scriptures; but they would not come to have it. The Jews would not receive Him: when the false one comes in his own name, they will, as they rejected Moses' writings, which spoke of Christ and His words now.

Chapter 6 is a picture of the order of God's ways in Christ. Prophet already, He would not be King, but goes on high alone to pray. During this time the disciples are toiling without Him against the wind; He rejoins them, and they are at land. This is in connection with the passover, and Christ's proving Himself the Jehovah of Psalm 132. Instead of that now, He is the bread come down from heaven to give life to the world, and must be received inwardly as incarnate, but also as dying, as there is no life in any man; but it is spiritually. Also He was going up, Son of man where He was before.

Chapter 7. The Jews (His brethren) do not believe on Him, and He cannot shew Himself to the world. This is

the feast of tabernacles; but He promises the Spirit to those that believe, instead of His visible presence, as rivers of living water (before as springing up unto eternal life). Jews (of Judea) and people (Galilee, etc.) are distinguished.

Chapter 8 gives the word rejected; chapter 9 the works.

In chapter 8 Christ is the light of the world, dealing with conscience in contrast with the difference between gross sins and sinfulness, and is the Light to lead. His word is the absolute expression of Himself. He is from above; unbelieving man is from beneath, of the devil, who is a liar and a murderer, and abode not in the truth. He is God. The Jews reject Him.

In chapter 9 He gives eyes to see. This is by incarnation, which in itself gives no sight, but when by the Spirit and word, He is thereupon known as the sent One, it does. He is confessed as Prophet, and then believed as Son, through the word received. The sheep are thus put out, but He goes before.

Chapter 10 gives us His care of them. He comes in by the appointed way; then He is the appointed way, giving salvation, liberty, and pasture; He lays down His life for the sheep, yet knows them, and they Him still—as His Father knew Him, and He His Father; laying down His life, He becomes the especial object and motive for His Father's love. He has other sheep (Gentiles), and there is to be one flock (not fold), one Shepherd. He goes from His obedient lowliness to being one with His Father. Father and Son are the names of grace.

In chapter 11 He is declared Son of God by resurrection-power. He is the. Resurrection and Life. This answers to the character of His presence. When present, the dead

live— the living do not die. But while shewing divine power, He is the dependent Son as man—feels for and with us, but is always heard.

In chapter 12 He is Son of David, and the time of His glory as Son of man is come; but then He must die. But before this He is received at Bethany, where the taught remnant enter into His death, laying the ground for the new thing, while thereon the enmity ripens. His death, as rejected by the hopeless and judicially blinded hostility of Israel, now comes fully before us.

Chapter 13. His departure does not close His service to His disciples. He fits them to be with Him when He cannot stay with them; and this is essentially necessary according to His true nature and glory. He came from God, and went to God, and the Father had given all things into His hand. Perfect original, and now in human nature continued divine purity and perfectness, and glorious position, with man traitorously hostile, He loved His own in this world absolutely and through all to the end. And having regenerated them by the word, He washes their feet as their servant, gives them like service as their example, shews His personal love to them, the advantage of habitual nearness to Him to be able to know His mind. On Judas going out He shews that the foundation of the new, but essential and everlasting, relationship with God is laid in the cross, under the title of Son of man. The Son of man is glorified in it, for what so glorious to man as to glorify and make good all the essential attributes of God? God is glorified in Him, and then does not wait for the kingdom or conferred glory of inheritance, but glorifies Him in Himself, and does it immediately. He then puts them, on His leaving them, on love to one another, and warns

Peter he could not follow Him now. The path was through death, destruction, and wrath for man, as having only natural fife. Note, in the washing, the first is washed all over, bathed. This cannot be repeated. It is the feet which pick up dirt in the walk; but the believer therewith is clean every whit, once for all.

In chapter 14 first, the Lord shews that, absent, He is an object of faith as God was. He did not go to be at ease, and they left in distress. If that had been the end, He would have told them. He went to prepare a place for them in His Father's house, and would come again and receive them. Then we learn what they had in His presence, and what they would have after His departure. They knew where He went, for He was going to the Father, and they had seen the Father in Him. They knew the way, for in coming to Him they found the Father. But on His going He would ask, and the Father would send, another Comforter to stay, as Christ could not, and to dwell in them. He had as yet been only among them. Through this last fact they would know Him. If a man kept His words, His Father would love him, and He, Jesus, would manifest Himself to Him; and if he kept His word, His Father and He would come and make their abode with him. He left peace with them, giving them His own peace. Next, he expected in His disciples such love that they should be glad He went, that is, be interested in His happiness—immense witness of nearness.

In chapter 15 Christ replaces Israel, the old but not true vine on the earth, and the disciples are branches, clean through the word. The Father purified the fruit-bearing —cut off the unfruitful branches. They were to abide in Him, and He in them. If a man (not they) did not, he

would be cast out and burnt. If they abode in Him, and His words abode in them, they would dispose of power. Dependence, confidence first, Christ's words—the forming desires and thoughts next. In bearing fruit they would resemble Him.

Next, they were to abide in His love. This by obedience; and all this that their joy might be full. They were to love one another, as He had loved them. He laid down His life for His friends: they were such (not He their friend—that He is to sinners; but they His)—this that they might love one another. The world would hate them, as it had Him. Next, the Comforter would come, and testify of Him. He would as glorified send Him; and they would testify of Him as having been with Him.

Note in chapter 14 the Father sends the Comforter. He brings all to their remembrance that He had said to them. Thus their witness was made good. But He would also reveal His heavenly glory. Here He sends Him from the Father.

Chapter 16 is the Comforter, as present down here and His work in the world and in the church, in contrast with their own state in a hostile world and blinded Judaism. The disciples, absorbed with their loss, did not look to what God was bringing about; yet the Comforter's presence was worth His leaving. He would demonstrate to the world sin, righteousness, and judgment—sin in rejecting Christ; for His presence proved the rejected one, gone to the Father—righteousness, as He, having deserved it, was there (God's righteousness), and the world (disciples and all), who had rejected Him, would never see Him again. The breach was absolute. The world was convinced of judgment, because its prince

was judged who had led it against Christ, in that the proof that Christ's power over him and his wickedness was there. Judgment was proved, for Satan's position was a judged one already. The Comforter would guide the disciples into all truth—shew them things to come—shew them Christ's things, that is, all the Father had. However in a little He would see them again (that is, after His resurrection), and they would enter into the consciousness of their relationship with the Father. As yet they would be scattered, and leave Him alone; but He had the Father with Him, and they might be of good cheer, He had overcome the world.

In chapter 17 Christ addresses the Father ere He departs.

Verses 1-5. He lays the ground of all He has to ask. He is to be glorified as Son, and as having finished the work—the kind of glory in relationship, and our title also to enter. He has power over all flesh, to give eternal life to those given to Him, a double headship over man, and in life to saints given to Him. The knowledge of the Father and of Him as sent is eternal life.

Verses 6-8 put the disciples in their position. He manifested the Father's name to them: so the relationship was founded. They knew Him as having all things from the Father, not Messiah's Jewish glory from Jehovah. All the Father's communications to Him in His position He had given to them, so that they might enjoy it fully as well as have it.

In verses 9-13 He prays for them, not for the world, but for those given Him of the Father, the disciples. His grounds are, they are the Father's (all is mutually

possessed), and He, Christ, is glorified in them; the object, that they might have His joy complete in them.

In verses 14-19 they are put in the place of His testimony, the word (not words) that was in connection with place of relationship; not of the world, as Christ was not, but not to be taken out of it, but kept from evil. They were to be morally set apart to the Father by the truth—the Father's word. They are sent by Christ into the world as He by the Father. And He set Himself apart to the Father as heavenly man, that the Holy Ghost, taking what He was, might set these apart. It was Christ as well as truth, but still truth.

In verses 20, 21, He prays that those that believe through their word should be one in the Father and Son, that the world may believe.

In verses 22, 23, He has given them the glory, that they may be one in the display of glory that the world may know.

In verses 24-26 He would have them where He is who was loved before the world was. They are loved as He was, and He had and would declare the Father's name, that they might enjoy it, He being in them.

Chapter 18. We have to remark the character both of Gethsemane and the cross. It is still the Son of God above the temptation, seen out of the suffering; no "if it be possible let the cup pass"; no "why hast thou forsaken me?" but they go backward and fall to the ground, and He puts Himself forward that they [disciples] may escape untouched. And on the cross—knowing that one scripture has yet to be fulfilled, and recommending His mother to the beloved disciple, and charging him to be to her as a son—He gives up His own

spirit. So He heals in the garden. Peter denies Him. So He answers the chief priests and Pilate, in calm superiority, leaving the former to settle it, to the latter witnessing to Himself as truth, yet submitting to him as to power given from above. The Jews deny all king but Caesar. The Jews are treated with slight, as everywhere in this Gospel. Of Him not a bone is broken, but He is with the rich in His death.

Chapter 20. We have a picture of the whole time, from the remnant then through the church period on to the remnant converted when they see the Lord. Mary Magdalene, who represents the remnant, called as a sheep by her name, is attached personally to Him; then the disciples become brethren, in the same relationship to God and the Father as Himself, are gathered and peace theirs, when they receive the Holy Ghost, and are sent by Christ for remission of sins; lastly the remnant (Thomas), who did not believe without, do on seeing; but they are specially blessed who have believed without seeing. Thus twice He had shewn Himself.

Chapter 21. Next comes the great gathering of the millennial time, when the net does not break at all: Christ had some already on shore; these are brought in from the great waters. Peter, restored, has to care for Christ’s sheep, specially the Jewish flock; John is left to watch in his ministry over the church saints and witness of God till Christ comes: this carries us on to the Apocalypse. Thus we have the Peter ministry of the Jewish church with John’s epistles and Apocalypse (these refer to Christ’s appearing). The Paul ministry comes in between, and speaks of the hidden mystery, the church and the rapture, before the appearing.

Acts.

This book, at its beginning, links directly on to the close of Luke, and we find the disciples acting in the intelligence of the scriptures without the power of the Holy Ghost yet given. Then, the Acts of the Apostles embraces the revelation of the gift of the Holy Ghost and His workings: first, at Jerusalem, where He is rejected by Israel; next, in His free operation outside Israel; and, lastly, in Paul, connected with the revelation of the church among the Gentiles at large, closing with his being delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles and his being sent a prisoner to Rome.

The coming of the Holy Ghost, while not undoing the result of Babel, overleaps it in grace by the gift of tongues, the first sign of His presence. We see the moral effects of His presence in devotedness and unity, and, forming the assembly, the remnant in Israel are added to it. “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” But He still proposes to Israel the return of Christ (founded on Christ’s intercession on the cross) upon their repentance; while declaring that the heavens must receive Him till the times when all that the prophets had said should be established; but Israel rejects His testimony. The Holy Ghost thus come down is received of Christ for this, consequent on His exaltation. They pursue their testimony in patience in spite of Israel’s opposition, and are confirmed in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit is manifested in power, as God’s presence in the assembly on earth, searching the hearts of men. He ministers to unity and order even in temporal things, and acts now in liberty according to faith and faithfulness in instruments of His own choice. This free action of the Holy Ghost calls out the final

judgment of Israel, on every principle of relationship of God with man (but their conduct is characterized throughout by resistance to the Holy Ghost); but this is accompanied by the opening of heaven to him who, on the other hand, was filled with the Holy Ghost and gave the testimony they now resisted. His thorough likeness to Christ, through seeing Him in glory, is beautifully brought out; his death on the earth, and his being received into heaven. The making good church blessings in connection with Israel plainly becomes impossible. Here it is that Saul, the enemy, first comes in.

And now, before turning to any more positive facts, you get the free action of the Holy Ghost extending the gospel outside Jerusalem, consequent on persecution. Next, we find Saul, the apostle of enmity against Christ, broken and brought down by Christ, revealed in supreme heavenly glory, but identifying all Christians with Himself, as being Himself, “Why persecutest thou me?”

Peter’s testimony to Christ has been that the Messiah, the Prince of life, whom they had rejected, God had exalted; Paul’s immediately is that He is the Son of God. Peter never preaches Him as Son of God. Paul’s preaching consequently embraces the two points of the heavenly glory and the unity of the saints with Christ, and his preaching Christ as the Son of God. But Saul, while owned of the disciples, is for the time laid aside. Then the Peter-ministry continues; and the first Gentile is added to the church as existing among the Jews by his means, to maintain its constituted unity. The previous free action of the Holy Ghost outside Jerusalem at Samaria had been connected with it by Peter and John going down, and the disciples’ receiving the Holy Ghost

by the laying on of their hands. We now find the same free action of the Holy Ghost going to mere Gentiles in the great Grecian capital, Antioch. The connection is still kept up by the apostles sending Barnabas there, who goes and fetches Saul. We have then the testimony through prophets (another sign of the Holy Ghost), this same connection being maintained in another way. The prophets come from Jerusalem, and in result they of Antioch send help to those in Judea. We have then the proof of the service of angels to the church. This closes this part of the Acts.

The Holy Ghost now calls, through prophets, for the separation of Barnabas and Saul for the work to which He had called them, and they are sent forth by the Holy Ghost. It is a new kind of apostle. The first thing we find is a figure of the total blinding of the Jews who resist the Holy Ghost, and the eyes of Gentiles opened to believe. Notwithstanding this, Paul (for he is now called Paul) according to the Lord's mind goes always first to the Jews, and afterwards to the Greeks. John Mark leaves them. After having preached round, they choose elders for the churches, of whom we here read first among Gentiles. He then returns to Antioch, and there we find what the laying on of hands had been: that is, they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had now fulfilled. "And there they abode long time with the disciples."

The church having now been freely established on heavenly principles outside Jerusalem, Satan seeks to introduce confusion by bringing in the law upon them; and God, to maintain unity, causes the matter to be referred to Jerusalem, so that the apostles there, and the church, should themselves declare the Gentiles free. The

points to which they were subjected were not introduced by the law, but expressed the title of God in Himself and to all life, and the maintenance of the original purity in which God had originally constituted man upon earth. I see authority here within the church in the apostles. “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,” with perfect liberty of ministry. They dismiss Judas and Silas; and then we get another thing, Paul gathering fellow-labourers round himself: first Silas, then Timothy, whom he circumcises. This was completely illegal. He never rose more above the law than here. Now, we get the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost in the carrying out of his ministry; but that direct guidance as not excluding his drawing conclusions from divine intimations sent to him. Then we have Paul pursuing his ministry—kept of God everywhere—the very demons forced to own him—and as competent as the other apostles to confer the Holy Ghost: free ministry, under the guidance of God’s Spirit, still going on.

And now Paul, returning to Jerusalem, intimates the close of his ministry in those parts to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, predicting the efforts of Satan, and calling upon them to watch and labour with the same earnestness and energy as had marked his own labours amongst them. The elders, moreover, he experts to maintain themselves. He now returns to Jerusalem, the Holy Ghost warning him, and the disciples telling him by the Spirit, not to go up. On the suggestion of the elders at Jerusalem, he accommodates himself to Jewish ceremonies, the believers at Jerusalem being all zealous of the law. This brings him into captivity; but the effect of the captivity is to bring him into the place of testimony before the Jews, who refuse grace to the

Gentiles, before Lysias, Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Nero. But he is a prisoner all the time, and as such he works at Rome. (Paul's gospel was a prisoner at Rome from the first day.) This closes the testimony to the Jews; and thus closes the history we have of the dissemination of the gospel in apostolic times.

Romans.

This epistle unfolds the gospel of God as the testimony of the righteousness of God, and connected with the testimony of His wrath from heaven: but in doing so it begins with the depravity of the Gentiles, the hypocrisy of moralisers, and the guilt of the Jews, concluding thus all under sin, and meeting all this guilt by the blood of Christ through faith; proving at the same time thereby the righteousness of God in bearing with the sins of the saints during the past time, and laying the present foundation of divine righteousness for the time to come. From chapter 4 the apostle connects faith with the resurrection after Christ's deliverance for our offences. In chapter 5 he applies this to justification and peace in the assurance of God's love, and traces all up to Adam on one side, and to Christ on the other, as head, the law only coming in by the bye. In chapter 6 he applies it to a godly life, and in chapter 7 to the law; unfolding in chapter 8 the full liberty the Christian himself obtains by it, connected with the life and presence of the Spirit, God securing all by what He is for us, and how all this is made good to us through Christ, across all possible danger of separation from it. There are three parts in chapter 8: first, the Spirit as life, going on to the resurrection of the body (v. 1-11); then the Holy Ghost as a separate person, dwelling in us for joy, and sympathy

with us in infirmities (v. 12-27); the third part (v. 28 to the end) being God for us—life, God in us, and God for us.

Note another thing. Except just for bringing in Christ's intercession, you never get His ascension in Romans, hence, not the unity of the body, which is only alluded to in its practical effects (chap. 12), but the relationship of the individual with God on the ground of grace reigning through righteousness—God's righteousness being very definitely brought out in contrast with man's, which has the law for its rule (this being useful to convict of transgression, lust, and powerlessness when we have a good will).

From chapter 9 to 11 inclusive, Paul reconciles special promises to the Jews with the no-difference doctrine of divine righteousness. In chapter 9, while professing his own love to the Jews, he uses (while recognising all their privileges) the absolute sovereignty of God proved in their own history by the exclusion of Ishmael and Esau though sons of Abraham and Isaac; confirming this by the witness that it was only the sovereign mercy of God which had spared them at Sinai: he uses, I say, this sovereign mercy to prove God's call of Gentiles as well as Jews, confirming this by quotations from Hosea. He then shews that the rejection of the Jews was foretold by prophets—that it is founded on a pretension to human righteousness. He contrasts, in chapter 10, the righteousness of the law with that of faith; shews the title of the Gentiles to the latter—the call involving preaching to them; and confirms this, as well as the rebellion of the Jews to the call, by their own scriptures.

In chapter 11 he raises the question, Is then Israel, finally and definitely, as a people, rejected? No. He gives three proofs—first, in his own person; second, that where there is the declaration that the Gentiles will be called, it is to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy, and therefore not finally to reject them; third, the positive declaration of scripture that the Redeemer would come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. In connection with this, he puts the Gentiles, introduced on the principle of faith, upon their responsibility; shewing them that if they did not continue in God's goodness, they would be cut off from the tree of promise on the earth, as so many of the Jews then were, and that God could graft the Jews in again; this being the testimony to the wisdom of God, His having concluded all alike in unbelief, that all might be objects of mere mercy.

In the subsequent part we get exhortations. Only that in chapter 15 he resumes this doctrine, that Jesus Christ was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."

In chapter 16:26 substitute "prophetic scriptures" for "scriptures of the prophets."

1 Corinthians

Is the internal ordering of the church by the guidance and power of the Spirit of God in the apostle, putting the assembly on its responsibility, and acting with it, but asserting his authority in case of need. He begins by owning the power of the Spirit amongst them in gift, and recognising the grace that would keep them to the end; but he presses the power of that Spirit in contrast with the wisdom of the flesh, asserting that we, believers,

have the Spirit to search what the eye has not seen nor the ear heard—that these things are revealed by the Spirit to whomsoever God pleases, communicated by the Spirit, and received through the Spirit. We have thus revelation, inspired communication, and reception. (In chapter 2:13, translate thus, “communicating spiritual things by spiritual words.”) Another important thing is—we have the mind of Christ (chaps. 1, 2).

Then the apostle, having shewn that he had rightly laid the foundation, puts the building of God’s building on the responsibility of those who carry it on, chapter 3. He defends his own ministry and authority (chap. 4), and then enters on details of conduct as to purity insisting on their exercising discipline on the wicked, as to going to law, marriage, and eating things offered to idols (chaps. 5-8). He again defends his own ministry, calls their attention to the fact that they may be partakers of sacraments and be lost after all, but in connection with the Lord’s supper presses the point of not mixing themselves up with idolatry (chaps. 9, 10). Then, in chapter 11, he treats of comeliness in any spiritual ministration, praying or prophesying, founding it upon Christ being the Head of all men, and the subordinate headship of the man. He then treats, from verse 17, of order in the assembly, and especially at the supper of the Lord, giving at the same time a lesson of God’s discipline in contrast with condemnation.

The subject of spiritual manifestation follows—the place gifts hold, the unity of the body, and individual membership of it (chap. 12). (Gifts are of the Spirit; administration by them is under the Lord; the operations are divine—of God.) He shews love to be better than the best gifts, the more excellent way (chap. 13); and

returning, in chapter 14, to gifts, shews that those in which the understanding is in exercise are the most excellent, and that this exercise is subject to those who have them, with a view to the edification of all. He then treats (chap. 15) of the resurrection, of Christ's glory, and of ours in it. Lastly, he refers to the collection for the saints; and we get at the close, in the diverse salutations, the abiding liberty of individual ministry—the principle of some giving themselves up to the Lord's service among the saints, and that all such are to be respected and submitted to (chap. 16).

2 Corinthians

Is written consequent on the apostle's getting by Titus the news that the first epistle had taken its effect. He had just been in danger of his life, and, speaking now freely to the Corinthians, opens his heart at large about it, and explains why he did not come to them on his way to Macedonia. In the first five chapters, however, he explains the power of life in Christ, connecting it with the work of Christ, so as to bring in the righteousness of God. He contrasts it with law in chapter 3, shews its supremacy over death in every way in chapter 5, and deliverance from judgment as an occasion of fear, while it urges by the love of Christ to deal with men's souls. In chapter 4 he shews the earthen vessel in which the power of this life is, that the power may be practically of God, the vessel being held to be dead under the cross, and the Lord helping this by His dealings. Hence only eternal things are looked at; and he knows no man after the flesh, but speaks of the ministry of reconciliation, and of himself and others as ambassadors for Christ,

praying men, in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God."

This ministry is then proved real in every possible way (chap. 6). He urges entire separation from the world in order to relationship with the Father, presses their perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and recognises the integrity in them of the repentance he had called for, the news of which had comforted his spirit (chap. 7). He next enlarges upon the collection for the saints (chaps. 8, 9), and is then, against his will, forced to legitimate his ministry by speaking of himself (chaps. 10, 11), closing that part by reference to his being caught up to the third heaven, while his strength flowed not directly from that, but from the power of Christ working in his weakness, shewing still a little uneasiness lest all should not be right, and he should be forced to be what they might not like (chap. 12). He, lastly, appeals to their own certainty that they were Christians as proof of Christ's speaking by him (chap. 13).

Galatians

Specially contrasts law with promises, grace, and the Spirit, not so much with righteousness, though it be spoken of, shewing that it (law) came between the promise and Christ, and that it could not annul the promise—that it went only to Christ, or faith. Connected with this, he shews the independence of his ministry; briefly states that he was dead to the law which brought the curse—dead by the law, but as crucified with Christ; so that, as living, Christ lived in him, and he lived by the faith of the Son of God (chaps, 1, 2).

In chapter 3:20 the point is, that the fulfilment of an absolute promise depends only on the faithfulness of

one; but that the law having a mediator, Moses, two parties were implied, but God is only one. Hence, blessing under the law depends on the faithfulness of another as well as of God, and hence all fails. The promise was confirmed before God to Christ. Christ came after the failure, and we rest on the work of the Mediator, and not on the work of the second party. The law was added to produce transgression, not sin.

Another point: those who were under the law were delivered by Christ's taking its curse; so that the blessing flows freely, and that they may receive the promise of the Spirit.

In Galatians you find death applied to the law, the flesh, and the world. In chapter 6 we find a notice of the fact that there is a government of God which applies to all men, and brings its consequences with it as a general rule.

Ephesians.

In Ephesians we have the relationships of the saints with God the Father, and with Christ as ascended on high; first with God and the Father, which is our calling; then acquaintance with all the plans of God, as heading up all things in Christ, and thus the knowledge of the inheritance, and the place of heirs, and the Holy Ghost given as earnest till the redemption of the inheritance. He then prays the God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Christ being looked at as man) that the saints may know what God's calling and inheritance is, and the power that works in us, as shewn in Christ when God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, so as to set Him over all things, and make the church His body and completeness.

Thereupon he unfolds the quickening, raising, and sitting in heavenly places in Christ of the saints by sovereign grace, so as to shew the exceeding riches of it by His kindness to us. He then shews Gentiles afar off, and Jews dispensationally nigh, brought out of their respective places to form one new man in Christ, and thus become the dwelling-place of God on earth by the Spirit. Thus we have the assembly connected with Christ on high as His body, and on earth the dwelling-place of God by His Spirit.

He then develops somewhat the mystery, as now for the first time introduced, as a witness of the various wisdom of God in heavenly places. The apostle then prays the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that the full blessedness of this may be realised by Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith; so that, being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend the infinitely wide extent of what constitutes God's glory in this character, and the love of Christ, so as to be at the centre of it all according to the fulness of God Himself. With this he desires glory to God in the church in all ages, implying the distinct, continuous existence, of the assembly. (In chapter 3:15 read "every family," instead of "the whole family." Note, in verse 18, the breadth, and depth, and length, and height is not "of the love." The whole of chapter 3 is parenthetic, and the first words of chapter 4 connect themselves with the beginning of chapter 3.)

In the first sixteen verses of chapter 4 the apostle unfolds, in connection with the headship of Christ, the unities into which we are brought, and the instruments of building and edification, as gifts, whether without or within. There are three unities: a real one, one of profession, and a universal one in God. First, one body,

one Spirit, one hope. Secondly, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Thirdly, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all. We are to walk in lowliness, so as to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The gifts are from the ascended man, who has overcome Satan and led him captive, so as to make those who had been Satan's captives the instruments of His own warfare in power, to gather and perfect the saints. At the same time He who ascended is the One who first descended into the lower parts of the earth, so as to fill all things. The measure to which the saints, are to be brought up is that of the stature of the fulness of Christ Himself; the body being compacted, and supplying by every joint in order to its own edification. The first object all through this, however, is individual. We then get the exhortations connected with the new man being created of God in righteousness and true holiness. It is only the new man which has to do with righteousness and holiness.

Hence they are to be imitators of God, and act as Christ Himself has acted in love—the perfect expression of God—the new man. Further, in this new man they are light in the Lord: and the measure of their walk and works is the light itself, of which Christ, if they are awake, is to them the perfect outshining. Hence they are to be wise in the midst of this world. In going through relative duties, he enters on the relationship of the church to Christ, founded on the working of His love in this order. He first gives Himself for it; next, sanctifies and cleanses it by the word; and, thirdly, presents it to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Two things are to be remarked here: (i) That, in the analogy with Adam and Eve, Christ stands in the

place both of Adam and of God. (2) The intimate connection between Christ's present operation and the glory. He sanctifies and cleanses the church, that He may present it to Himself. Then, besides the church being His wife, it is presented according to the analogy of Eve as His body, and Christ is looked at as nourishing and cherishing it, as a man would his own flesh (chap. 5).

Finally, Christians are exhorted to put on the whole armour of God, and in His might to combat, in entire dependence upon Him (chap. 6).

Philippians

Is Christian experience, in which sin and the flesh are never mentioned, except to reject righteousness in flesh. It is a man superior to everything with which he has to say in this world. But chapter 2 speaks specially of a gracious and obedient character by reference to Christ coming down, and being obedient to death, in contrast with the first man. In chapter 3 we have the energy of divine life, looking to Christ glorified as an object to whose state he is to attain. In every respect he is superior to circumstances: his bonds have only furthered the gospel; when Christ is preached of contention, he rejoices in it, and it will all turn to his salvation. Salvation, all through this epistle, is the attainment of the ultimate result in glory, and this is the force of the word "Saviour" in chapter 3:20. Life and death are both so blessed that self disappears, because he can have no wish, though in itself dying is far better. He decides his own trial for his life by the perception of what is for the good of the church. To him to live is Christ. Everything is dross or dung for the excellency of

the knowledge of Christ; and he never does but one thing— pressing on to the glory. Though four years chained to a soldier, he knows what it is always to rejoice in the Lord; to be careful for nothing (chap. 4). God's peace keeps his heart, so as to be instructed in all things, to be full or hungry, to abound or suffer want—he is able to do all things through Him who strengthened him. Hence he counts upon his God for a blessing on the Philippians.

Colossians.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, who seem not to have held the Head very fast, the personal glory of the Head is largely brought out; but the hope is in heaven, and the saints are not seen sitting there. The life of the new man is specially brought out, where the Spirit would be in Ephesians, while He is not mentioned in Colossians, except in one single passage, "your love in the Spirit."

In the first place, after the apostle's prayer for them, in which a walk worthy of the Lord Himself and according to His power is desired, and they are viewed as meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, we get the double headship of Christ over creation and the body, along with His divine glory, in three particulars: He is the image of the invisible God; all things consist by Him; and all the fulness is pleased to dwell in Him. You then get the double reconciliation of the creation yet to come, and of the saints already accomplished; the double ministry also of Paul, of the gospel to every creature under heaven, and of the church, the hitherto hidden mystery made good among the Gentiles by Christ dwelling in them the hope of glory.

In chapter 2 the Colossians are warned against philosophy and the spirit of ordinances, separating them from the Head, in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom they are complete. Hostile powers being overcome by Him, they (believers) are dead and risen, so as not to be subject to ordinances in flesh. As this liberty is founded on their being dead in Christ, so the whole of christian life is founded on their being risen with Christ, who is their life, and with whose condition they are entirely associated, so that Christ is all, and in all (chap. 3); and whatever they do, they are to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

1 Thessalonians.

In 1 Thessalonians, as a general rule, we get the Lord's coming for the blessing of saints; and, in the second epistle, for the judgment of unbelievers. In the first, the saints are associated with the Father, the one true God, in contrast with the false gods they were used to. They are converted, and, through their faith, are a witness in all the world that they are converted to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. The former people of the true God are looked at as in hostility to the gospel, which reveals the Father, and grace to the Gentiles. In the second chapter, the coming of the Lord Jesus is connected with the apostle's joy and crown in the saints to whom he had been blest; in chapter 3, with holiness before the Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus with all His saints; and in chapter 4, with the full explanation of the rapture of the church to meet Christ at His coming. Verses 15-18 are to be taken as a parenthesis, verse 14 being carried on to chapter 5:1, where the character of Christ's coming to the saints

is contrasted with His coming to the world. Then, with divers short exhortations, God is looked to to keep them till Christ comes.

2 Thessalonians.

In 2 Thessalonians we have, first, the saints set right from the confusion into which they had got, as if the dreadful persecutions they were in were the day of the Lord, whereas in that they would be at rest, and the wicked troubled. In chapter 2, the apostle appeals to Christ's coming, and their gathering together to Him, as the evidence that the day could not be there; and then shews what the development of wickedness on the earth would be before that day came, and contrasts their state. In the last chapter he asks their prayers, and gives them divers exhortations.

Their state was very lively in the first epistle; and you may get in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 the full character of christian state and service.

1 Timothy

Gives us the right ordering of the church in its normal condition; 2 Timothy, the path of faith when it is in an abnormal condition—when it is in disorder. You have in I Timothy 3:15 the principle of Timothy's conduct. These epistles, and that to Titus, are not addressed to churches, nor were they to be communicated to the churches as such (the church of God has them, which is another thing), although that which guided the conduct of individual Christians in them is of unceasing obligation.

2 Timothy.

In 2 Timothy Paul saw himself at the close of his career, and though the church had all got into disorder, and he was looking at his course as closed, there is no epistle in which he so much insists on the unfailing courage and energy of the saints, calling upon them to endure the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; but we see his mind got off the connection of the outward church with the body of Christ, and recognising piety and devotedness where he could find it. You may take chapter 2:18-22 as indicative of the tone of the instruction. As regards the state of the church, the faith of some being overthrown, he refers first to the sure foundation of God, the Lord knowing them that are His; next, to individual responsibility, whoever names the name of the Lord is to depart from iniquity. Then, as regards the assembly, he takes the great house as the analogy of it, and shews that in such there are vessels to dishonour, and that a man is to purge himself from these to be a vessel to honour, and to follow righteousness, etc., with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, as distinguishing those who are really saints, and associating himself with them. In the next place he warns of perilous times in the last days—a form of godliness denying the power, and insists, besides his personal authority, upon the known scriptures as a child might read them, and asserts that they are sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus; and, further, that whatever has a title to this name is given by inspiration of God, adequate to make the man of God perfect, throughly furnished to all good works.

Titus.

Timothy had been left to watch over doctrine, but is directed as to the order of the church. Titus had been left to set in order the things which were wanting, and ordain elders, and the body of the directions here are about sound doctrine. We get a full statement of what may be called the christian scheme in chapter 2:11-14; and in chapter 3 exhortations to patience with all through the sense of grace bestowed on ourselves.

In all these three epistles God has specially the character of God the Saviour, with a reference of this title to all men.

Philemon

Is just the way the apostolic spirit of grace enters into details of comeliness of conduct, and does not merely rest on great principles of doctrine. Leaving the world in all its own recognised authorities where they are, it leads the individual Christian to act as. the light of grace in respect of the relationships into which he had been brought by the world.

The Hebrews

Founding itself on the person of Christ in His divine and human natures, gives to the word the personal authority of divine communication and all human sympathies to the exercise of the priesthood on high, and thus connects the saints walking upon earth with heaven, without constituting them the body of Christ in union with Christ; thus setting aside all ancient Judaism, and giving a present heavenly call, but laying the ground for the after introduction of Israel by the new-covenant. With this view, it puts all in Christianity in contrast,

though in comparison and analogy, and a certain connection with what had gone before. The connection, however, only applies to the first part, the communicated word, because it looks on Christ, as to that, as still on earth.

In chapter 1 we get the groundwork of the authority of the communicated word in the divinity of Christ. This is continued in chapter 3, adding to it Christ's authority as Son over His own house, in contrast with Moses, down to chapter 4:13, with the promise of rest to the people of God. Chapter 2 lays the foundation of future dominion and present priesthood in the human nature of Christ. This is continued from chapter 4:14; the glory of it is expounded in chapter 5, as to the person and office of Christ; the impossibility of returning to Jewish elements is thereupon insisted upon, on the ground that if heavenly christian things were departed from, there was no bringing back by some other power; and that from elements they were to go on to that, God having encouraged them by declaring the immutability of His counsel to the heirs of promise by word and oath, strengthening us thus who look within the veil, where Christ is entered for us as forerunner, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec (chap. 6).

This character of Melchisedec involves the necessary setting aside of the whole system of the law, the priesthood itself being changed from dying men to the living Son, the priesthood suiting us, being that of One holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (chap 7).

In chapter 8, having the high priest set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the

sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, offerings are needed: but, before touching on the offerings, the change of covenant is declared on which this ministry is founded, inasmuch as He is the mediator of it. Now, for the better and heavenly tabernacle, we must have better sacrifices.

But in the tabernacle itself there was a difference. The veil was unrent in the Jewish tabernacle, as set up of old; but now the veil is rent, the Holy Ghost thereby signifying, that as long as that first tabernacle had any place, the way into the holiest was not yet opened. Remark here, that in verses 16 and 17 of chap. 9 alone the Greek word bears the sense of testament; in all the rest of the passage it should be covenant. The blood of Christ purges the conscience, not merely sins, and cleanses the whole scene of the creature's relationship with God. The next contrast is, that He had not to offer Himself often to enter into the heavenly tabernacle, for then He must have suffered often; but at the close of all the ways of God to test the world, He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The apostle then contrasts the lot of man, subject to death and judgment, and Christ, as once offered to bear the sins of many, and coming, without any further question of sin, for salvation to those who look for Him (chap. 9).

He then discusses the whole bearing of this sacrifice, alleging that a person once cleansed by it has no more conscience of sins; whereas in the repeated sacrifices, there was a remembrance of sins. He then unfolds the origin of this sacrifice in the will of God, who prepared a body for Christ, who offers Himself to accomplish it in the same willingness; does accomplish it, and sits down for ever at the right hand of God, instead of standing,

like the old high priests, offering often; because by the one offering He has perfected for ever those who are sanctified thereby. The Holy Ghost bears divine testimony to this, declaring, “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” Thus we have the good will of God, the work of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, to give us a divine security of unalterable peace. Thereon he exhorts them to enter into the holiest through the new living way of the rent veil, in full assurance of faith; warning them, that for the same reason, if the one sacrifice be abandoned there remains no other; shewing them that they have need of patience, but that Christ would soon come, and that meanwhile they must live by faith (chap. 10).

To this purpose, he shews that all the saints highly esteemed amongst them obtained their good report by faith. In this list he first lays down the great principles—creation, known by faith; sacrifice, offered to obtain righteousness by faith; walking with God by faith in the power of life; and acting on the prophecy of coming events by faith. We then get two great classes of faith—trust in God, and patient expectancy of faith, and the active energy of faith. All the detailed cases are taken when they were not in the land. He then goes through various sufferings endured of the saints by faith, proving that the world was not worthy of them, and that they died, not having received the effect of the promise, God having reserved some better thing for us, before they could be made perfect (chap. n).

He then introduces Christ as the last great witness, who has overcome, and is set down at the right hand of God, and has there obtained the glory. He then shews that suffering has the additional character of parental

discipline, but that withal they are come to grace, and not law and terror; but, in doing this, he gives the whole millennial result in heaven and earth, as that to which they are come in faith. He then shews that everything made will be shaken, and insists on their leaving the Jewish camp, that is, the principle of connection between religion and the world; but to go out to Jesus on the ground of His being a sin-offering; because, upon the principle of an effectual sin-offering, they must either be in heaven where the blood is, or outside the camp, or gate, where the sin-offering was burnt. He closes with a few exhortations (chaps. 12, 13).

James.

In James you get the perfect law of liberty applied to the Christian's path; looking for patience, so that the will should not act, and confidence in God, so that wisdom and strength should be acquired. If there is evil, it comes from man—if good, from the unchangeable God, who of His own will begat us by the word of truth (chap. 1). He then, as he does afterwards, introduces sweeping denunciations against the spirit of the world and of riches. He speaks of three laws—the law of God, as to which, if we offend in one point, we are guilty of all; the royal law, "love your neighbour as yourself"; and the law of liberty, by which our conduct is to be judged, and where the will of God and the nature we have got run in one channel together. Mere faith of the head is treated as worthless, and its producing works is the test for man of its being living faith. But the works are only viewed as works of faith. Those he refers to would have been bad works, except upon that principle (chap. 2).

Redemption is not adverted to in James; but self-subjection is insisted on, specially as regards the tongue. Hence warning against being many teachers, and the true character of heavenly wisdom. The fruits of righteousness are sown in peace.

The epistle closes with a strong exhibition of the power of the prayer of faith. It is addressed to the twelve tribes; but faith in Christ, and the existence of the assembly, are distinctly recognised, although the synagogue be also recognised as still in existence.

1 Peter.

The Epistles of Peter, while stating redemption, refer especially to the government of God—the first to His government in favour of the saints, and the second in judgment of the wicked. The saints are not seen risen with Christ, but begotten again to a lively hope by His resurrection, and pursuing their pilgrimage, as strangers, towards an incorruptible inheritance, reserved in heaven for them, they being kept by the power of God through faith, but waiting for the appearing of Christ for full deliverance. They are spoken of, however, as receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. He marks out the progress of the revelation of this: first, the prophets testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories following; then, the same things reported in the gospel preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; then, patience till the revelation of Jesus Christ brought these things to them: “Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” On this ground they are called on to walk in sobriety, obedience, and holiness, on the double ground,

that He who called them is holy, and that they call on the Father, who judges without respect of persons every man's work. But this is founded on redemption by the blood of Christ, and being born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, while they believe in God through Christ, whom He had raised from the dead, and to whom He had given glory, all flesh being as grass, but the word of the Lord enduring for ever.

The persons addressed are the scattered believing remnant of Israel in various countries of Asia Minor. Hence he distinguishes them as living stones, come to be built on the living Stone, owned of God and of them as precious, but a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence to disobedient Israel. He then applies Exodus 19 and Hosea 2:23, and hence exhorts them to walk blameless in the midst of the Gentiles who spake against them, which would force them to glorify God in the day of their visitation. He then exhorts them to suffer patiently, seeing that, like Christ, it was the Christian's place to do good, suffer for it, and take it patiently. This leads him to refer again to Christ bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, referring to Isaiah 53.

Then, with various exhortations on details of conduct, he refers to the government of God securing us in peacefulness; but if they suffered for righteousness' sake they were happy: beautifully adding that Christ had suffered once for sins, and that this ought to suffice. They ought to suffer for righteousness, if they suffered at all. He then refers to His being put to death in the flesh as the ground of their arming themselves with the same mind, inasmuch as in death there was found the having done with sin. He then presses the doing everything on the ground of ability from God, and as of

God, whether it be spiritual, or in reference to common things. He then encourages in suffering reproaches for Christ's sake, which is an advance on suffering for righteousness' sake. (This is the only place where we are called Christians.) They are to rejoice in it as partakers of Christ's sufferings; but also with the consciousness that the time had come for judgment to begin at the house of God.

We then get exhortations to elders and to the younger, and to humbleness under God's hand, sobriety and diligence, and resistance to Satan, the apostle finally commending them to the God of all grace.

2 Peter.

In this second Epistle, which he writes to the same persons who have received (not the Messiah in glory, but) precious faith as the apostle had through God's righteousness, he shews that in the midst of incoming evil God's divine power had given everything necessary to fife and godliness through the knowledge of Him who had called them by glory and virtue. He then urges them to all diligence in everything that would give them an abundant entrance into the kingdom, and without which they would be purblind as Christians. He shews them that he must shortly put off this tabernacle; and writes that they might have the testimony after he was gone. He shews them that the transfiguration had confirmed prophetic testimony of the kingdom they were waiting for, and asserts that all scripture tends to one common purpose, being the fruit of one Spirit, and not of the will of man.

He then warns them of false teachers, denying the authority of Christ, whom many would follow, insisting

on their wickedness, but shewing that God could deliver the righteous, and reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished. He gives their character, specially in the working of the will of man in lasciviousness and insubordination; adding to this another characteristic—their scoffing at the doctrine of the Lord's return. He thereupon refers to the deluge as a judgment already once executed, and the day of the Lord, in which the judgment by fire would come, and all that nature trusted in disappear, pressing this as a motive of holiness upon the saints.

1 John

Exhibits to us specially divine life in the person of Christ, but communicated to us, and the traits which serve as a proof that the life is there. He first speaks of this life as he had known it in Christ on earth; shewing it as the means of communion with the Father and the Son, so that our joy may be full. But He who was and is this life has given, yea, has been, the absolute revelation of God as light, so that we are placed here to walk in the light as God is in it, the blood of Christ cleansing us that we may do so; and in this we have fellowship together. But it shews us all sin in ourselves (chap. 1). Further, the intercession or advocacy of Christ with the Father, founded on His being the righteous one, and the propitiation for our sin, is introduced as the means of restoring us to communion in the light when we have failed in our walk down here through weakness (chap. 2:1, 2).

Obedience to Christ's commandments, or practical righteousness and love to the brethren, are next presented as proofs of the possession of this life. Before

unfolding this, he gives the ground of writing to the saints: that all are forgiven, and that babes in Christ have the Spirit of adoption. He divides Christians into three classes—fathers, young men, and babes. This classification he repeats twice. The fathers have but one mark; they know Him who is from the beginning. The young men are strong, are in conflict, have overcome the wicked one, the word of God abiding in them. They are warned not to love the world. The little children, while knowing the Father, are the second time carefully warned as to deceivers; but their own competency as having the Holy Ghost, and their responsibility to judge, are pressed upon them (chap. 2).

He then shews them, as already sons, that is, as having the same name as Christ, knowing that they will be like Him when He appears, and hence purifying themselves as He is pure. The contradiction of the new nature to sin is then brought out distinctly, sin being lawlessness (not the transgression of the law). This new nature is shewn in practical righteousness and love of the brethren. The obedient person, moreover, dwells in God, and God in him. The proof of God dwelling in us is, that He has given us the Holy Ghost (chap. 3).

He then gives directions to distinguish Him from evil spirits, by referring to owning Christ come in the flesh; but having introduced the Holy Ghost in connection with the new nature, he shews that this new nature is a partaking of the divine nature, which is love; and hence, he that loves is born of God and knows God, for God is love. This love is displayed in three ways. First, towards us, by God sending His only-begotten Son, that we might live through Him, and to make propitiation for our sins. Secondly, as dwelling in love, we dwell in God, and God

in us, He having given us of His Spirit, and thus His love is perfected in us. This is true of every one who really confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. Thirdly, that the love of God is perfected with us, so as to give boldness in the day of judgment; because, Christ being our life, and the Spirit of God dwelling in us, as Christ is so are we in this world. We love God because He first loved us; and if this be true, we love the brethren as God has commanded us (chap. 4).

This term brethren includes all that are born of God; but the truth of this love to the brethren is tested by love to God, which is proved by keeping His commandments. To this end faith overcomes the world.

We have then eternal life declared to be given us, and this life to be in the Son, so that he that has the Son has life, and he who has not the Son has not life. The witnesses for this, that is, that it is in Christ, and not in the first Adam or as his children, are three—the Spirit, the water, and the blood: the water and the blood coming out of Christ's side in death, and the Holy Ghost given consequent on His ascension. This gives us confidence for asking everything according to God's will; and so for a brother who has failed, provided it is not a sin to death. The new nature we have received is incapable of sin; and he who has it keeps himself, and the wicked one touches him not. Finally, an absolute distinction is made between Christians and the world. "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." Further, we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, that is, in His Son Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life.

2 John

Insists upon love being governed by the truth; that whoever does not abide in the doctrine of Christ has not God; and that one who brought a doctrine which denied Him was not to be let into the house or wished God speed. A lady was competent for this.

3 John,

On the contrary, urges the reception of those who went about preaching the truth; resists the hindrance of local authority, and commends Gaius, and as a fellow-helper of the truth itself. The doctrine of reward to the workman, through the perseverance of those who are the fruit of His work, is brought forward in verse 4 of this epistle, as in chapter 2:28 of the first epistle.

Notice that 3 John 7 throws light on the word “ours” in 1 John 2:2.

Jude.

Having a great analogy to 2 Peter 2, refers, however, to a very different principle. Peter speaks of wickedness; Jude, of leaving the first estate, or apostasy. He traces this in the Christian system, from the creeping in of false brethren, to the judgment executed by Christ when He comes again; and he declares the objects of that judgment to be the same persons. He notices at the same time distinct characters of evil in Cain, Balaam, and Korah: natural departure from God; ecclesiastical corruption, or teaching error for reward; and, lastly, open rebellion. Lasciviousness and insubordination are again pointed out as their great principles. The saints are exhorted to edify themselves in their most holy faith, praying in the power of the Holy Ghost, and to keep

themselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. They are to make a difference between persons dragged in, and spotted ones whom they are to save with fear. He looks to the saints, in spite of all the evil, being kept from falling, and presented faultless before the presence of God's glory with exceeding joy, for God is able to do it.

The Revelation.

The Book of Revelation is the return of the Spirit's witness to God's relationship with the earth, the church, as an earthly witness, being first contemplated and passed in review in its various phases, and then the saints of the heavenly calling being seen only in heaven; the preparation made for the introduction of the first-begotten into the world; the judgments of God caused to pass in prophetic vision before our eyes; and then the King of kings and Lord of lords Himself introduced, accompanied by the heavenly saints, to execute judgment, and to set up the kingdom which shall never be removed. At the beginning and close we have the thoughts and feelings of the saints, to whom the communication of the revelation is made: the first, in looking back at their own part in that which laid the foundation of Christ's title; and the latter, at their own portion with Christ Himself, in looking forward to the glory and what they have meanwhile—what the glory gives them the conscience of. The first refers to the cross, and its bearing on them (which brought in judgment on the world); and the second, to the glory of Christ and its present fruit.

The first chapter presents God as supreme and eternal, the Holy Spirit in His attributes of divine administration,

and Christ in the glory in which He is connected with the earth. He is coming. Then He is seen as One having called John's attention to it on earth, not in service but in judgment, in the midst of the candlesticks, the place of light in the world, judging their state. We find a divine person, but the Son of man, having subordinate representative authority in His hand— (stars, angels of churches).

These things were seen— "the things that are" next. We get the history of the church: first, in its ecclesiastical state—the four first churches; next, in a state free from the gross corruptions come in, put upon the question of its personal fidelity to Christ. In the first four, are departure from first love, persecution, the world its dwelling-place, and false teachers seducing the saints; their corruption settled there, and the saints thus to wait for Christ's coming, who is given to them in His own heavenly unseen associations, and the visible kingdom too. In these characters, the character of Christ as walking amidst the candlesticks, is given, on which to base the warnings and promises. In the three last, they are new characteristics, save the stars, which are not said to be in His hand; and all refer to the coming of the Lord—more or less—which is spoken of as warning or promise in the two first. In the last it is not judged as Thyatira, but spued out of His mouth (chaps. 2, 3).

The vision then changes to heaven, and the world's judgment is entered upon as flowing thence. The saints are viewed as enthroned and crowned there. God's throne of judgment is set up there, and ministers of His government proclaim His glory, and the saints worship (chap. 4).

There the Lamb appears, and His title to open the book of God's ways is owned, and His glory is celebrated. The angels are seen for the first time, and standing around the inner circle who are connected with the throne. The elders, note, all through give their reasons for worship. The Lamb now opens the book (chap. 5).

The providential history of God's dealings in the Western Roman earth is given. Then the martyrs are seen, and cry for judgment; and there is a universal subversion of the subsisting powers, so that men are alarmed as if the day of the Lord were come (chap. 6).

The remnant of Israel is marked out for preservation; the multitude of the Gentiles to be spared, owned (chap. 7).

The trumpets are the first four specific judgments on the Western Roman earth, on all earthly prosperity and power (chap. 8). The next two are the judgments on men, whose portion is on the earth, but in the east (chap. 9). Then a parenthesis shews the connection of the great Western beast or empire with the east, and the testimony given there, which comes to a close before the end of the period of the second woe-trumpet; and last follows the seventh trumpet, which closes the whole scene (chaps. 10, 11).

A new vision of special dealings is now opened, and more connected with the religious condition of men; but the Jews, hence, are at once in the scene.

The Jewish people are seen, as heaven sees them, in the counsels and purposes of God. So there a Son is to be born, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron—Christ; and, I doubt not, the whole church united to Him. But this is taken out of the way of the dragon to heaven

and God's throne; and the woman—the Jewish people in the latter day in distress— flees from the persecution three years and a half into the wilderness. Thus the great elements of the whole scene are brought before us. Next it is presented historically. There is war in heaven. Satan is cast down, having then great rage; his time, he knows, is short; his career in heaven is ended; the accusation of the saints on the earth over; but he persecutes the Jews, who, as we have seen, flee; but he turns to persecute the witnesses amongst them (chap. 12).

Next, the earthly agents are seen: the beast, with seven heads and ten horns absorbing the other, receives his power from Satan for 1260 days, blasphemes what is heavenly, and persecutes the saints; a second beast, in the prophetic and royal characters of Messiah, ministers to and exercises his power, and makes the world worship him, doing miracles, giving breath to the image which he has caused to be made to him (chap. 13).

Then we have the remnant who suffer like Christ—the testimony, and judgments, and warnings of God; and, finally, the judgment of the earth, and the destruction of the wicked by the Son of man. This closes this vision (chap. 14).

Another great sign, not synchronical, or consecutive, follows. It reaches down to the third thing noticed in the previous chapter. Here the saints are viewed in rest, who pass through the time of tribulation. The sea of glass is mingled with fire (chap. 15). Then the vials are poured out. They are on the earth, and strike the beast's kingdom particularly, and those who dwell in it. Then all the kings of the earth are gathered; for the smiting galls

their pride, and does not correct them; and the last judgment of God is executed even on Babylon (chap. 16), the beast remaining for the Lamb's (chap. 17:14).

This gives occasion to give a description of what she is, how she rides the beast, and corrupts all nations: but then more fully of the beast himself and his horns, for whom judgment is yet reserved. The Lamb shall overcome them. Babylon is Rome (chaps. 17, 18).

When Babylon is judged, the marriage of the Lamb takes place, for He is now coming forth out of His heavenly withdrawal to be revealed in the earth (the rapture of the church belongs to church revelation—could not come into the Book of Revelation, though we may see the saints in heaven). Then He comes forth as King of kings and Lord of lords, as the word of God in judgment: the saints, witnessed in righteousness, in the fruit of their works, accompany Him. The beast is taken and the false prophet, and are cast into their final doom (the false prophet is the second beast now, being with the beast; his royal character has disappeared): the rest are slain. This is the judgment of power and war (chap. 19).

Therewith Satan is bound, and shut up in the abyss for a thousand years. Then follows sessional judgment, which will last. They are on thrones, for this is royal judgment, and judgment is given to them, ell the heavenly saints. This is the first resurrection; then the second, in which the dead are brought up to be judged, not to life and to judge (chap. 20).

Then heaven and earth flee away, death and hades give up all, and God is all in all in a new heavens and new earth (chap. 21:1-8).

Then the Spirit returns to give a description of the heavenly Jerusalem (as He had of Babylon and its relationship to the earth) during the millennium (chaps. 21:9 to 22:5).

After warnings to those who are in the time of the book, and to all, Christ comes forward Himself as the One who had given the revelation. This draws out in the bride, with whom is the Spirit, the desire of His coming; and her whole position— towards Christ, towards those who hear the word, towards sinners—is vividly expressed. John seals with his own desires those of the church, that Jesus should even come (chap. 22:6-21).

The re-introduction of God's government into this world in Christ, in this book, and the discovery of the relative position of the church, is full of interest. It closes, in this sense, the canon and scriptural subjects (complete in this entirely), with the doctrine of the church. But as this was to come in meanwhile and was heavenly, the judgment already revealed, and the course of worldly dealings (on God's part that led to it), are confided to the church to close the book historically, as the church closed it doctrinally, as [herself] above the world.

1 It is quite true that there was a want through the misrule of Samuel's sons. If the spiritual energy failed, there was a want in consequence. The church can only stand in power, so that when it turned to succession all was lost.

2 Though largely shown to be God, the Lord is, from chapter 1:14, always looked at in John as a man living on earth, only manifesting the Father.

Hints On The Book Of Genesis

Being the Substance of Remarks at a Scripture Reading.

Genesis does not begin with any counsels nor even with the existence of God, though both are given in the New Testament.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”: this is the opening of the creation. There is nothing of counsels, but you are before the world, and also get more in the New Testament. Time begins with the responsible earth, the creation of that in which the first Adam was placed; but there is nothing of the plans of God here. Promises and ways come afterwards, and the existence of God is assumed very naturally. His counsels are not brought out. This is not unimportant to notice: the whole plan of God is not here at all. There is the sphere first created in which the man was to be put, and the broad fact that God created everything; but even so we do not get everything, for the angels are not here. Yet we know from Job that, when this took place, “the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.”

The subject is really the responsible man, though you must have the earth where the man was, and the dust to take and make him out of it. And when we come to know the truth, this is really important. The whole of “our glory” belongs to God’s counsels. We had the two things in the cross: Christ made sin for us, which looked back on the responsible or first Adam; and also the foundation for bringing out God’s counsels laid in the second Man. The first part only, as to responsibility, is here, promises come after. Even of creation it is only in respect of man,

and not of angels. We see how different a sphere grace is from the creation, in that God takes up the first creature of the revelation here, and goes down through his sin below any creature, for it is unto death, and then takes him up far above all creatures in His Son, and so makes a totally new and different thing altogether.

What a petty thing is all the Darwinian theory of progress! The author of it goes through all the lowest things up to the highest; God takes man, and puts him (in the person of His Son) down lower than all. This is far more wonderful.

The first fact is, God created the heavens and the earth, that is, the universe. Nothing is said about what then happened.

In verse 2 we get the earth in a state of chaos.

In verse 16 “the stars also” come in by the bye; for God had created them when He made the heavens. Afterwards the earth “was without form and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep,” that is, the formative agency of God.

The word “created” (v. 1) is right, that is, originally (though used of “great whales,” and also said of “man,” when it is progressive formation). But in verse 2 the action is only where the darkness was, on the face of the deep. The mention of the darkness sweeps away a whole range of geological infidelity, because they say light began here. But you find ichthyosauri had eyes, and they were created long before. All that is said is that darkness was upon the face of the deep, and not that there was no light; the contrary rather is implied. Where the ichthyosauri were, there must be light: and they are found in strata, which, if you take them for anything at

all, would shew that thousands of years had passed since they lived. If you get a thing with eyes, it is fair to suppose that there was light for it. The deep was chaos, an unformed state of things. And this was subsequent to a state of light. I have no difficulty about the light. As for geology, it is not the object of scripture to teach it.

It is not that God formed the heavens and the earth (v. 1) in a chaotic state; but we here find (v. 2) the earth so, "without form and void." It is not said how long elapsed. However I do not at all believe the dates that are given, though we need not allude to this here.

The scriptures do not tell me about these early animals. Why want the Bible to tell me about fish that eat other fish? There they are; and I can go and see the fossils, if I want it. As for death too, it may have existed long before among these animals; there is nothing to intimate that it did not. If it be urged as the general thought that death came on animals because of sin, the answer is that so it did in this present state of the world.

Geologists pretend that a given sandbank must have taken so many thousand years to form, and so on. Without believing them, one can let them take any length of time they like; and still the word of God is sufficient for the believer. There is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and then, all that scene of them being there left out, this earth is without form and void.

Who could tell what God ought to create?

The passage in Isaiah 45:18, "he created it not in vain" (chaotic), is conclusive that the earth was not created chaotic at first.

The earth got into the state of chaos—it may be by what destroyed the animals; but we know nothing about it: what I do know by faith is that God created everything.

Then follows a detailed account of this earth, as we have it: God makes a place to put man in (Gen. 1:3-31).

Not a word is heard that beasts were created immortal. Rather, I suppose, animals were made to be destroyed, because Peter says they were made to be taken and destroyed. Yet the expression, “beasts that perish,” is merely a fact stated; and Peter may possibly only refer to the present state of animals.

But it seems to me a much more laborious thought that God created all sorts of dead animals lodged in strata and stone, and elsewhere, though I do not care to take up the question myself.

As a general fact there is an order from the positions relatively of these animals, shells, fishes, etc. There is a proof of order in these, though I have no interest in it myself one way or another. Clearly too scripture leaves a gap, and that gap is ample for any such purpose. We find God creates things “good.”

There had been pitch darkness; and then it is not that the evening and the morning make a day, for they would not. But after the darkness, which did not count, we get the light, and then the evening and the morning make the day. The pitch darkness did not count for time. God causes light to be; that is day, and He calls it day: then came the evening and the morning with the light again. In Israel it is clear they counted any part as a whole; if a king reigned as from December 30, they would count in a whole year, and the king that had reigned through that year had that year too, and this creates many difficulties

in chronologies. You must count the day first, and then get the evening and the morning to complete the day. The morning is the coming back of dawn. It comes from the revolving of the earth now; but when God said, Light be, it came at once, and that is day, not morning. It is broad day, it lights all up; and it is said, “He called it day.” Light was. The sun is not mentioned here, though 1 have no doubt it was created long before. But as to the earth, there was light before the sun was set to give light by day. This is revealed. Think now, if I had been making a book, should I ever have thought of making a difficulty like this on purpose?

They say by light there is no gold, or silver, or lead in the sun, but plenty of iron and other things. When observing a total eclipse, they were astonished to see like little red mountains round the sun; by enlarging the spectrum they lessened the light as the sun shines, and then they saw all this without an eclipse.

If the question be asked whether God created everything in the earth in maturity, such as the coal measures, I answer that, if God had said it, I should have believed it directly, in spite of all the geologists in the world.

Observe, in verse 20, “and fowls that may fly” should be, “and let fowl fly.” It is not that the water brought them forth, but God formed them out of the ground (see Gen. 2:19).

“The firmament” is the expanse. God made a heaven, so to speak, to this earth.

I believe myself that they were six days of twenty-four hours each, having no scripture reason against it.

Now we get after the six days' work, in verse 25, "and God saw that it was good"; and what is important for us to notice is, that the creation of that day is finished like the others (except the first two), "and God saw that it was good." He has done with creation, as creation, and now begins counsels in the most solemn way: "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let them have dominion," etc. Thus the creation as the sphere and scene is quite complete, and then God makes man in His own image, and sets him over it all. But you have it in the most formal manner: the subject creation is completed, and then the lord of it is brought forward in this way. I get, over fish and fowl and beast and everything that is created, something in God's counsels that is lord over all. Man stands quite alone: all is finished; and then he has dominion over it.

"Image" is different from "likeness." In the image he stands as the representative of God. If I say, image of Jupiter, it is not likeness merely, but the image stands there to represent him. And so did man. He was there the centre of all the affections of the whole world, and he ought to have stood so. You never have an angel set over anything so, but here man is the central object of all, and he represented God too. But he was also made after God's own "likeness." He was not righteous and holy, but sinless and innocent. Righteous supposes a judicial estimate of right and wrong, but man had not this at all until he had eaten the forbidden fruit. Till then there was nothing evil in him: when fallen, he got conscience to judge good and evil.

Likeness is moral. Man was made like God morally; he was made upright.

There is a figure here in man and woman before the fall; for the apostle uses it so. But Eve came out as a distinct thing.

It is well to notice that God takes counsel: “let us,” etc. If you make the distinction of the persons of the Godhead, I am not aware that creation is personally attributed to any but Christ and the Spirit. Every operation is the direct work of the Spirit, not that He is an independent Spirit, but God. The three are united in scripture. The Son was working, and He says, “the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works,” and again, “if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.” But you do not find stated in scripture that the Father created; it says God; and this is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is so far important to see that we have the divine agency. The particular operation of miracles was by the Spirit. “If I by the Spirit cast out”; by “his Spirit garnished the heavens”; and when Christ was raised, He was “quickened by the Spirit.” I can allow nothing, therefore, that attempts to lower our thoughts of the Son and of the Spirit.

Holiness supposes good and evil, and the hating the evil and the loving the good; innocence does not know of evil. In righteousness I see judicial authority about it, but holiness is the nature repelling or delighting in. Righteousness is the judgment formed either in mind or in act.

So God created man in His own image. Verse 27 states the fact, though they were created afterwards. The animals were there, and now God says, I am going to have something higher; and man stood there representing God in the earth, made with no evil in him.

He still has that character, though it is all in ruin, i Corinthians n:7 says he is the image and glory of God. James 3:9 speaks of men having been made after God's likeness.

Then God gives the seeds to man, and the green herbs to animals.

We shall see in chapter 2 that man's responsibility rested entirely on the forbidden fruit, the eating of which was evil only because God had forbidden it.

"To every beast of the earth I have given every green herb for meat." This would imply that animals were not carnivorous. There is a difference between cattle and beasts; but in that statement the cattle are left out; the "beasts" are what we call wild beasts. It is perfectly competent to God to have restricted them for the time, or to have changed them.

Chapter 2. It is striking to notice that, except in setting the seventh day apart, you never have holiness mentioned in Genesis, nor do you get it anywhere until redemption is accomplished. And you never get God dwelling with man until then. He visits Adam and Abraham, and no more; but the moment we find redemption, holiness and a dwelling-place for God are spoken of. God created them in innocence, but there is no habitation for Him on earth then. Immediately after redemption, He says, "make me a habitation," and He did dwell among them. So, the moment the people were redeemed, He says, "be holy."

Here we have a day set apart to God, to which I attach no small importance, and to what the day means also. In connection with the question, I believe the sabbath-day is an essential part of man's nature and of his rest in

God. I remember saying, outside a town in Germany, when looking at some crows flying, “Well, there is a creature that has nothing to say to God, and to it one day is the same as another.” But the fact that man has something to say to God proves that he must have a day set apart from the remainder. It was God’s rest here, and man was to have part in it. According to the commandment, everything men had was to enjoy that day (Gen. 2:1-3).

Man ought to have enjoyed it before Exodus 16, but did not, because the first thing he did was to sin. The point of this is, that it is the rest of the first creation; and, now that sin has entered in, you cannot have a rest in the first creation. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” How can a holy God have rest in the midst of sin and misery? What kind of rest can God have here? That is Christ’s answer. God could have destroyed them as sinners; but if not, He must work.

If revealed to Adam, he did not enter into it. There are signs of it from Adam to Moses in a way, but no sign that man really kept it. Man had fallen away from God, and all was wrong. There is nothing to shew that he did not know of it.

It is referred to in Hebrews: “As I have sworn in my wrath if they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” Then he quotes this passage, and says after, “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God”; and you get this too, that our Lord says, “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” But then He takes it up in the Gospel of Mark in this way: that

He, Christ, was the head of it, and so was not bound by it.

Christ was dead and gone into the grave on the sabbath: this indicates a great deal.

The sabbath is given in Exodus on the ground of creation, but in Deuteronomy because they were brought out of Egypt. Exodus is a typical book, and Deuteronomy consists of direction for what they were to do in the land, Exodus applying only to the wilderness in its latter half.

Then there is a very important thought—God was resting, and man does not enter into it; but still there is a rest. The next point is, God sanctified it; He set it apart from all the rest of time. The reason was God had rested, and, sin having come in, man could not rest in sin.

Now we come to “Jehovah God” (chap. 2:4). Some have made a great talk about the difference between God and Jehovah, His nature as such, and His relationship with Israel. He was specifically revealed to the Jews by that name, because it is a term of relationship, and it was important for the Jews to know that their national God was the eternal true God, and no God beside Him, Jehovah Elohim.

First in creation you have God, Elohim, made this, and that, and the other. Now we find Him having to say morally to a particular part of His creation; and the moment we come to relative things we get Jehovah, as in chapter 2:4. The whole chapter becomes relative now. Read verses 4-7. There is the history of the character of man in his great moral elements— man not made like the beasts of the field, but formed out of the dust of the

ground; and when He has done that (and there one sees what death simply is, “dust thou art,” and death is going back to it), then I get something that is not dust, something directly from God, and this makes all the difference.

The beasts were formed out of the earth, and the man is formed into shape first, and then God says, “I am going to connect this with myself,” and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. By “connect” I do not mean that the man might not fall away from God in will, for he could; but the breath of life which made him a living soul was directly from God; He was capable of dying, but still he had the breath of life from God immediately, which was a thing distinct from every other animal.

“A living soul” means anything that lives by blood and breath. I say this because it says, “whereinsoever was the breath of life, died”; all animals were living souls. Man was, and the animal was; but the essential difference was that God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living soul. This might be separated from his body, and the body return to the dust. That is what is referred to in “for we also are his offspring.” As I said to an Annihilationist, Do you mean to call a pig God’s offspring? Neither would Adam have died if he had not eaten of the forbidden fruit. His body is formed first without life, and the way he gets life is by God’s breathing into his nostrils the breath of life; he receives it as a creature, but direct from God. Adam was not made as other animals were.

“This mortal,” or “mortal body,” leaves the soul by implication immortal. “Mortal” is always used of the body; and it is clear that death does not touch the soul,

for you have the wicked man in hades after death. I am quite satisfied that it is true to say “immortal soul.” The opposite thought is founded on the words, “who only hath immortality,” spoken of God, of course (that is, who only hath it in Himself); but this does not mean that He cannot communicate it. So the angels are only immortal by God’s making them so, and we the same. If I were immortal in spite of God, then I might do as I like without fear of death. In the rich man and Lazarus is a perfectly clear case: the one goes to torment, the other to Abraham’s bosom, after death. But they say “these are only figures.” “Yes,” I reply, “but figures of what?” I am not going to Abraham’s bosom, but I am to Christ. I asked them this, “Could God give eternal life to a dog?” Yes. “But would the dog be answerable for what he had been doing while he was a dog?” and if he would not be, Christ had not to die for him, and so they destroy atonement. Put it in another way: if I am a mere brute, only a clever brute, until I get Christ as my life, my responsibility is gone.

But man was put in his place of responsibility not to eat the forbidden fruit, a thing in which there was no evil, save that it was forbidden.

And you get a striking thing here, one which has been a question even with heathens, and it is also a ground of discussion between Calvinists and Arminians: the tree of life, which is free gift; and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is responsibility. Man has been trying to unite these in himself, and never can. Man did take the responsibility-tree, and was lost.

Then the promise came to Abraham to shew that grace was really the thing after all—the tree of life; and then

came the law, the other tree. People have made the life dependent upon the responsibility-tree, which is utter folly.

But we find in Christ the two principles united; for He is the man who charges Himself with our responsibility, as He is Himself the life. If I have Christ for my life, with whom also I have died, I can bring the two together. But if taken out of Christ, it is impossible to unite the two things, any more than they were one in the garden.

If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, he would have been an immortal sinner. As he was, we have got the responsibility-man, not the man of God's counsels; but to faith the first or responsibility-man is set aside for Christ, the Second man. We have Christ as our life, and are bound to live in that life, and not in the old man. When it comes to a question of responsibility and judgment, I say I am not in the old man, but in Christ. And in my actual condition I say, Christ is in me, and I am to manifest Him as my life.

But there is more than this. God took the man, and put him in-the garden to dress and keep it, gave him one commandment, and then said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." So He gives him a wife, and also puts him in the place of authority, which is shewn by bringing everything to Adam to be named. Giving a name is an act of authority all through scripture. And Adam says of his wife, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman." There we get the institution of marriage, but, above all, Christ and the church. We see dominion which is entirely in Adam, not in the woman. Dominion belongs to Christ; but, being rejected, and accomplishing redemption, He

is exalted on high, and instead of dominion He gets the church, which He associates with Himself now, as well as when He is in the dominion. This is the place of the church, which is neither the Lord nor the subject creature, but is associated with the Lord over the creation. God's plans are here in imagery. Adam was "the figure of him that is to come" (Rom. 5:14). He was head over all things to Eve, who was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. We have in this relationship two stares, the actual responsibility as created (which Christ was in a certain sense), and then what was historically true, the image of Him that was to come. Christ gave up everything, leaving father and mother (that is, Israel, if you take it as a figure). How often we hear it said, that Christ was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh! No doubt He did become incarnate; but really it is when He is in glory that we are made bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh; the other is never said in scripture.

Thus we have the responsible man set up, but still a figure of Him that is to come; and as Eve out of Adam, we are all taken out of Christ, in a sense; we are quickened together with Christ when He has gone down into death, and we are set aside in the place He has taken. Just so the deep sleep fell upon Adam, and the rib is taken and made a woman, and is brought to him.

But observe in chapter 3 that the point is not knowledge of good and knowledge of evil, which is a mere blunder. The question of the tree was not conscience. If it had not been forbidden, he was just as free to eat as anything else. Thus we acquire the knowledge of good and evil, and hence conscience. You see it as early as anything in a child. It slaps its mother, say, and you hold up your finger—it understands very well that it has done wrong.

God says, “the man is become as one of us”; that is, he has got intrinsically the knowledge of good and evil. If a boy at school steals one of his companions’ marbles, he hides it, for he knows he has done wrong. It is no question of commandments here; though it was by the breach of a commandment that conscience was got.

Adam was enjoying good in the garden, although the knowledge of good would not have been so full. I quite admit my knowledge may be corrupted; still, I do a thing because it is right. I may think I am doing a very good thing to put my father in the Ganges at a certain time of life, because then he will go to Buddha or some one; but it is only the difference of good and evil I know; it is not knowledge of good and knowledge of evil. The thing for Adam was not an intrinsic knowledge of good and evil, which was not required, but only a question of obedience. Man got a conscience by the fall, and he never got a conscience till it was a defiled one. But it may get hardened or seared.

Observe, in the account of the fall, that, before a lust comes in, there is another principle shewn, which is, that Adam, like Eve, lost confidence in God. The devil suggested that God kept something back from her because it would make her like God. “God doth know” — this is the reason you “may not eat this” —you will be as God, “knowing good and evil.” At this suggestion, that the Lord had kept back the very best thing, Eve lost her confidence. But mark, when Christ comes into the world, I see Him walking through the world where all the evil is, to shew to man that, no matter how defiled it all is, we can have the fullest confidence in God. He comes to win back man’s heart to God. There He was reconciling man to God. Were you, a woman, ever such a sinner,

who could not shew your face to a fellow-creature, come to Him, and God will receive you. But this loss of confidence is just the same in all of us. If I trusted God to make me happy always, I should always do God's will. Suppose I do not trust Him to make me happy, then I must turn to myself. This is just what we see: men do not trust God to make them happy, and so they try to make themselves happy. This is the world.

We were speaking of the beautiful character of Christ's coming into the world in humiliation, God coming to win back man's heart to Himself. This goes beyond the chapter, but it is produced in souls at times before forgiveness is known. When there is a clear gospel, forgiveness comes out first, but many are like the poor "woman that was a sinner," who had her heart towards God or Christ, though she did not know forgiveness yet. There was faith in His person. She was attracted by the grace in Him, and broken down about her sinfulness (Luke 7). So many a pious soul now does not know forgiveness.

It is all a mistake to confound trust with faith, though no doubt faith produces confidence. You can hardly separate the two things, but there is this in faith: "he that believeth his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." In Luke 7 it was a living word. But when I have the Spirit of adoption, I am a son. Christ revealed the Father: "I have manifested thy name"; "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it." The moment the Son was there, the Father's name could be revealed; but it was not until the gift of the Holy Ghost that they had the Spirit of adoption. But in Christ here below, God was coming into the midst of sinners in love, and winning back their confidence; and one sees in the poor

woman that was a sinner a heart trusting Him, though His work was not yet completed.

The temptation was, “ye shall be as God,” not gods, “knowing good and evil.” Eve takes, eats, and gives to her husband, who eats: thus their eyes were opened. The counterpart is seen (Phil. 2), and intended as such, in Jesus, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore also God hath highly exalted him.” That is, Christ in taking the place of the second Adam went exactly opposite to the first one. Adam was in the form of man, and set up to be as God; Christ is not only a man, but God, and did not set up, like Adam, to take what did not belong to Him, for He was God, but, having laid all aside, He became obedient unto death, the death of the cross. He goes down all the way, till He comes right down to death, death, yea, death of the cross—the exact contrast of what Adam did. You see the progress in Eve. When confidence is lost, the woman saw that the tree was good for food: lust comes in. It was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. Accordingly she eats, and then Adam eats. He was not deceived; the woman Eve was, and so was in the transgression.

The devil came hiding himself in that serpent, using it as an instrument of mischief.

“Dust” means utter and entire humiliation, as “lick the dust”: “Arise ye that dwell in the dust,” and so on. It is

constantly used in this way. In Daniel 12 it is the same, “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth.” In the text it is used to express the judgment that shall be upon the power of Satan.

It is curious in the olden times that they used to eat serpents to get wise. And it is wonderful how widespread was the idea of wisdom in the serpent. Aesculapius had a serpent in his temple. A serpent with his tail in his mouth was the image of eternity, the whole circle was in that. The Agatho-demon, or good demon, in Egypt was a winged serpent. They found represented in Mexico (though I do not know how far you can trust pictures) a woman under a tree, and the serpent offering the woman an apple. It was found as a picture. There was a great collection of such things: but it is all dispersed now. There were traces of similar things among the Druids, but evidently the Druids came from Persia.

Fallen, they knew good and evil, and that they were naked; they are under the shame of sin; and then we learn how utterly powerless all human means are to hide sin. The moment they hear the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, all the fig leaves are simply nothing. They were used to cover themselves from one another; but the moment God was there, they say that they are naked. Afterwards God made them coats of skins; it was a very different thing when God did it.

We do not know in what words the command was given; it is merely told us generally. It was pressed upon Eve’s mind that she was to have nothing to say to it; she does not give exactly the words of God, “in the day thou

eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." It was probably her own impression, not the exact words of God—just the main effect produced on her mind.

It is well to remark that, before ever God turned Adam out, he had got away from God: I do not mean his heart merely, but he had a bad conscience; he went and hid himself in the trees of the garden, and that is the first of it. But the great question, besides what had been done, is, "Where art thou?" This is a far wider question than that to Cain— "What hast thou done?"

There is no history of man in innocence. The first thing we find in the history of man is the fall. Children were begotten after the fall, and all else follows. The fall comes in first both historically and morally; and so it has always been. The first thing Noah does is to get drunk. The children of Israel made a golden calf even before they had really got the law, though they had just promised obedience. It was the same thing with the priests, Nadab and Abihu: they offered strange fire the very first day; and then Aaron was forbidden to go into the most holy place in the garments of glory and beauty. Was not all this serious? It is not a question of the "first day" exactly, but of their first act noted in scripture. And it is just as true of the church. Peter says, "The time is come that judgment should begin at the house of God"; Paul, that "all were seeking their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's"; and then John says, "even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time." All the apostles tell us so, though they stemmed the torrent while there. So Jude says, "of these Enoch prophesied, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment," etc. There

they are, he says; more morally there, perhaps, than historically.

We see then that man departed from God before ever God turned him out; that is, his conscience drove him away from God, and in the end God drives him out. How God detects everything! “I was afraid because I was naked.” … “Who told thee thou wast naked?” Now it comes to what he has done; the first point was, “Where art thou?” To Cain it was, “What hast thou done?”

As a matter of doctrine, I was led distinctly to notice this in the Epistle to the Romans. There first it is, “all have sinned”; then, “by one man sin entered.” Thus it is our condition: what we have done is proof and fruit of it. Adam cannot be with God at all. Such is his condition; and then God asks, What have you done?

It was God looking for man, perhaps I should hardly say in grace; it was God coming in. Of course God knew everything; but, speaking as to His manner of dealing, He is expecting Adam to have intercourse with Him. God could go and walk there, and, according to the principles of His position, expect that Adam would receive Him as his benefactor. It is, “What has come of you?” so to speak. If one expects a person to be there, one says, “Where are you?” This brings out of Adam what the real state of the case was; and when God asks, “How did that come about?” Adam does a base thing, for he says, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” It is “whom thou gavest.” If you had not given me the woman, I should not have done it! as much as to say, “You may settle with the woman.” And God says, “Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten”: this

is what He condemns Adam for. And whenever we make an excuse, this in fact is what we are condemned for. Adam listened to the woman instead of to God. People say, “I was tempted,” and this is true; but why did you yield to the temptation? It was not a lie, in the outward sense of a falsehood; but he had followed the woman instead of God.

Then what the woman said was true, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” When the woman of Samaria said, “I have no husband,” it was true; but the object of it was to conceal the truth for all that. It was legally true, but ethically false; true in fact, but truth told to conceal the truth all the while.

It is important to remark here, that all the judgment stated is in this word simply. There is none of the truth that comes out afterwards, when life and incorruptibility are brought to light. Men try to spin this out into what is more (and there is an immense deal more to a spiritual mind): but the actual iudgment is in this world. Thus the serpent is not here cast into the lake of fire; God says, “because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life.” There is nothing about the final judgment of Satan, “and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” You may see something more there, figuratively and mysteriously prophetical; but that is no present thing: the actual judgment on the serpent is in the former verse.

Another thing to notice here is that there is no promise to man. As regards a great deal of the Arminian system,

much of which is infidelity, all of it is cut up by the roots. There is no promise to man. The promise is a future judgment pronounced on Satan, which has no application to Adam; for it is clear he was not the seed of the woman. Then on the woman it is merely the sorrows of childbirth, and she is made, not simply a companion, but subject, to her husband.

All depends on whether this distinction is made: it is no question of restoring the first man. The promise brings in another man instead of the first. And it was not even by the seed of the man, by any descendant of man as man, though He is the Son of man, but it was by the woman it came in; as we read in Galatians, “made of a woman,” and “under the law” too—the two things, one applicable to man, and the other special to some.

What is here is this: God cast out the man; yet Adam fled away from God before he was turned out. But when God turned him out, this was judicial, and God put cherubim there, and a flaming sword, turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life. That is, Adam was not only going to dust, but could not get at life again; it would have been horrible if he could. He was an outcast from God altogether, and this is everlasting misery. Once partaking of the tree of life would have immortalised.

But it is no question here of judgment being everlasting. It is separation from God. “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also, and thistles, shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” What was to

happen to his soul, there is not a word about. The question of the inner man is quite untouched. When God drove him out, the soul did not die; neither was it dust to go back to dust, for soul was not made of dust. But to be driven out was eternal misery, though one must have a spiritual mind, in a sense, to know really that it is infinite misery to be shut out from God.

As to original sin, it is well to say what we mean by it, as men's thoughts differ widely. We read that "by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world": there we find that the sin of Adam put him in this position. There are two things in what is commonly called original sin. It does not consist in following Adam, but that I am alienated from God, and also that I have an evil nature. The two go together, just as reconciliation and a new nature go together. My heart is renewed from and to God.

The first is that man departed from God. I have sometimes said, when they have talked about the race damned for eating of the tree, that it is not God shutting man out for an apple, but that man shut out God for an apple. His heart was separated from God, and then he got lusts and self-will instead of subjection. Then follows the judicial part, "Where art thou?" —where? that is, as to my state (not what? a question of my deeds), though men are judged according to their works. When there is spiritual intelligence in me, the first thing that strikes my conscience is my deeds. Ordinary evangelisation takes up what man has done; but this alone never sets one clear with God. A soul still has to learn another thing, and that is where he is; that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. But the preacher who dwells on this does not reach the consciences of people.

If I take the “What hast thou done?” and the “Where art thou?” then I have all. From this point of view men as men are alike bad, and the prodigal son was as great a sinner when he just crossed his father’s threshold as when he was eating the swine’s husks, because he had from the first turned his back upon his father. Nor is the work done in a soul, until it finds out how bad it is in itself, the tree bad, the root bad, itself away from God. My works refer on to the day of judgment; but by what I am I am lost already.

Both are perfectly true of every man. It is works rather in Adam’s breaking the law, and still more distinctly in Cain, in whom it is sin against a neighbour or a brother. Adam sins against God. Cain’s terrible act brings the inquiry, “What hast thou done?” But the what or where we are is a great deal deeper in the testimony of the thing than what we have done.

Nothing is more important than to have these two clear before the mind. “I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” This is not what I have done. “By one man’s disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin”: this, too, is not what we have done; but we “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” this is what we have done, that is, it is sins.

The right translation of Romans 5:12 is, “for that all have sinned,” not “in whom.”

The judgment in Genesis 3 was upon Satan, though it was there for Adam to lay hold of. There was no promise to the fallen Adam, no promise to man in sin any more than innocent. Evil came in by the devil; with man, by temptation. God was over it: this is the reason why He suffered evil and the fall—in view of a greater good to

come in. My answer to him who asks it is, “why, you foolish man, if you had not been a sinner, you would not have had Christ at all.” And this is a true answer too, because it was in God’s counsels to introduce and reveal Christ in glory ultimately.

God created not merely stones, but moral beings, beings with responsibility; and if responsibility be a fact, there is liability to good and evil, as it means having to answer to Him. To a man in the state described in Hebrews 6 there is no restorability; the passage says so. Again, there is no restorability to angels, because they fell when they were in the good itself. Jude tells us of angels who kept not their first estate.

So Ezekiel 28, from verse 11, is commonly, and, I have no doubt justly, applied to the fall of Satan. It is not the same as the prince of Tyrus, who is judged historically in the beginning of the chapter. “Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” Then in verse 17, “thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness,” and so on. Under the figure of the king of Tyre clearly, but under figure, we see this, which goes far beyond the

idea of a mere king of Tyre, and, I doubt not, it is Satan. The prince of Tyre who was there was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. On the other hand, I see no foundation for the king of Tyre representing Adam. Satan “was a murderer, and abode not in the truth,” so that he is a fallen being. The meaning of the word “covereth” refers to a cherub, and gives the idea of protection, I suppose. There is power and beauty in the creature. These precious stones are here in creation, as again in grace in the priesthood, and yet again in glory in the new Jerusalem. All this diversified beauty from God was upon him, and the light shines from the creature as from the precious stones. We have no detail, for God was not teaching men about Satan. He abode not in the truth, he was not kept in dependence by God’s power; and angels fell with him, because it says “the devil and his angels.” Where Adam sinned in the presence of good, it was only natural goodness received from God; he was not in the glory of God in the upper creation.

But other angels fell apart from the devil. Of some scripture says, they are “reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day”; whereas Satan roves all about the world now, and others with him, so that they are not in chains under darkness. Jude says, those that “kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day; even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” They, doing evil, are set forth for an example, their condition now being an abiding testimony to their

judgment. “In like manner” refers to giving themselves over as the cities did. “The sons of God,” in Genesis 6:2, were angels, just as in Job, “the sons of God” presented themselves before God.

All is confusion everywhere, except what grace has done, whether it be angels or anybody else; no creature stands when left to itself, and so as to angels, we read of “the elect angels.” The good angels are looking on, and therefore a woman is to have her head covered. All creatures have a sphere of responsibility—I do not mean Satan, of course, but moral creatures. Verse 24 is to be taken literally: why not? The infidel would refuse it, and improve man. You do get relief in a way afterwards: so Lamech named his son Noah, and said, “This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed.” It does not say the curse was taken away; but there was a comfort concerning it. There was a certain testimony to the state of things. The curse is not gone; but it was mitigated in its effect. On the other hand, in chapter 4, Cain was cursed from the earth. He got an additional curse: “The earth shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength.” In the garden Adam did not toil to get food: he ate the seed, and the animals ate the grass; but when driven out, he had to toil to get things to eat— “in the sweat of his face.” Then after the flood seed-time and harvest are secured, agriculture in a way is blessed: not the curse gone, but man comforted, so that I should think it is less work to get things out of the earth now than it was before the flood. It would seem that the end of chapter 8 implies a change; for there is a promise that, though there might be toil and difficulty, yet “neither will I again smite [that is, in the flood] any more

every thing living, as I have done: while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." He gives sufficient for agriculture, but the seasons remain. In Israel it was not the labour removed, but the amount of blessing on the labour increased. Adam had to dress and keep the garden, and he might well enjoy it.

In the millennium the labour will continue; but they shall not plant and another eat the fruit, and so on. Still, the works of their hands go on. The labour does not cease, nor will it be in sorrow that they eat. The earth shall yield her increase, but men must toil to get it. Scripture shews that some part of the earth will be barren, as marishes shall be given to salt. The actual judgment goes no farther than death in this world, and no farther than the body—this mortal body. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The question of the soul is utterly untouched. Those who oppose the truth as to this identify eternal life with immortality; but when we have eternal life in Christ, we do not cease to be mortal. The whole thing is really a stupid blunder.

I consider that Eve is called "living" there as being Adam's faith, though you may not lay it down as a dogma. It is remarkable, coming in just after the curse and after the judgment on Satan too. After death has come in, she is called the mother of all living, not of the dying. But it was no object of God to tell us whether Adam was saved or not.

The cherubim are connected with a judicial throne and judicial power, and so always judicial. I speak of it practically so—what judges a thing right as well as what

judges a thing wrong. The cherub is always God's judicial authority and power. There were cherubim on the veil in Exodus 26, as over the ark and elsewhere. On the veil it is the symbol of judicial power, so in Ezekiel when he sees them. So it is on the tabernacle: only on the mercy-seat it is judgment for us. It is not merely a throne judging what is wrong, though this is true, but a judgment on my behalf, according to what the blood of atonement is. Law takes up man on responsibility; and this is met for me by Another at the mercy-seat. The difference between them and seraphim appears to be that cherubim are judgment, according to the responsibility of man—judgment from God, of course; and the seraphim have to do more immediately with God's nature. The only place they are expressly mentioned is in Isaiah 6; and there they cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts." The only other being that is called a seraph is the fiery serpent in the wilderness. [See Num. 21:6, 8; Deut. 8:15].

There are two elements of judging with God. The first thing is, Have I maintained that which was set up to be? and the other is the Lord's coming, when I shall be in God's presence, Can I then stand in the glory of God? can I abide this test then? In Isaiah, we have the first in chapter 5, "What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" that is, as a vineyard, what has it borne? And then, in chapter 6, Jehovah is seen high and lifted up, and how could a man stand in His presence? "These things spake Esaias when he saw his glory, and spake of him," John 12.

In chapter 4 of Revelation, the four living creatures are seen full of eyes before and behind, crying, "Holy, holy, holy," having the cherubic and the seraphic

characteristics too. It is extremely instructive. “And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal, and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind.” So stood the seraphim. “And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle”; this is cherubic. “And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come”: this is seraphic again. Farther on we find the judgment of the beast and of the false prophet, and then God coming out in His holiness at the end. In Israel we have the cherubim all through; and when Nebuchadnezzar comes, the judgment on man according to his responsibility. The only thing in which we see the holiness and righteousness of God in itself is the altar outside in brass, and inside the blood put on the golden altar. Thus we have the two obligations (or measures rather) of righteousness. Israel meets God on the ground of what man ought to be outside at the brazen altar; and then when the blood is upon the mercy-seat, the golden mercy-seat of God, there is the righteousness of God as it is in itself. “The Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.” The two attitudes of righteousness in the cherubim are at the gate of Eden, and then upon the mercy-seat. At Eden they bar the way against Adam in judicial righteousness; whereas God was sitting on the mercy-seat, and, though He was not approachable because the veil was there, yet He dealt with man; and, if righteous, He accepted man there; and when the blood was on the mercy-seat, there

was that which met the character of God. Therewith God Himself was satisfied, for this was Jehovah's lot. There is more known now, because the veil is rent. Christ's work not only took away my sins, but glorified God in His judicial character. It is His righteousness to justify the believers.

In the garden it was the exclusion of man, but in the cross we find not only the sins borne, but much more; for there is such a work of Christ as glorifies God, besides putting away our sins. There is Jehovah's lot in full. Towards the poor thief on the cross the Lord will not wait for the kingdom to be set up in grace in the world, but there is a positive going to God where He is. And we have more than sin put away; we have also that which lays the ground for the accomplishment of God's counsels in bringing us in His Son into His presence. This is no part of responsibility; it is nothing of me—putting me into the glory, but the fruit of God's counsels accomplished in Christ. Christ does meet my responsibility by dying; but there is a great deal more than that. His delight was with the sons of men, and He is going to have them in the glory with Himself. Christ glorifies God, and the answer to that is that He goes into the glory, and this as our forerunner.

It is only in the kingdom, I take it, that the cherubim pass on into any connection with the church. We get inside the heavenly city; what is judicial would be outside. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, that is, they dwell in their own glory; but the nations of the millennial age walk in the light of it. We inside, we have the glory of God lightening us; and they outside walk in the light of the city itself. Christ is glorified in His saints, but they who are outside will

never see it as we see it inside. So, in the transfiguration, the disciples fear when they see Moses and Elias enter into the cloud (Luke 9:34).

To understand better Psalm 99, which speaks of sitting between the cherubim, let us look at the Psalms from 93 to 100. They are descriptive of the bringing in of the First-begotten into the world. It is a most beautiful series from the commencement in Psalm 93 to the accomplishment in Psalm 100. Psalm 93 gives the thesis. In the rejection of Christ there was judgment in Pilate, and righteousness in Christ. Taking the world as such, we find the one righteous man absolutely on one side, and judgment in the place of authority on the other; but when Christ comes to reign (Ps. 94:15), judgment returns to righteousness, and they go together. Then it is asked, “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?” There is the cry of the remnant then. In Psalm 95 is the summons to them to return while it is still called “to-day.” In Psalm 96 the heathen are summoned. In Psalm 97 He is coming. In Psalm 98 He is come. He hath shewed His righteousness, He hath remembered His mercy. In Psalm 99, having come and made known His salvation, He sits between the cherubim, taking His place in Jerusalem. Then Psalm 100 summons the nations to come up and worship in peace. Moses being the lawgiver, and Samuel the first prophet, the psalmist takes the originators of things in Israel to call upon the name of the Lord.

Notice the psalms also that go before. Psalm 90 opens with “Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.” Israel goes back to Jehovah, having been their care-taker all through. In Psalm 91 “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide

under the shadow of the Almighty." "Most High" was first stated to Abraham. It is God's millennial name. So what the psalm says is really that, if you dwell in the secret of Abraham's God, you shall have all Abraham's blessing. It is a beautiful conversation, so to speak, in the psalm.

In Proverbs 8 it is the wisdom of the counsels of God. "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; when there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world; when he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the foundations of the deep, when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him as one brought up with him," (as His own beloved nursling), "and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." Wisdom personifies Christ there. In Luke the heavenly host say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in man": the proof of this was that His Son became a man. We could not have a part in counsels until redemption was wrought, but when it was, we are brought in. Now in Proverbs we see Him always rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth

before the earth was made; and so when He comes He does not take up angels, but sons of men.

But in Genesis it is not what wisdom was before the foundation of the world, but the foundation of the world, and man put in his responsibility. In Proverbs 8 His delight was not in creation itself and (therefore we have "habitable"); it was in the men themselves. But we have no counsels brought out until Christ died. In the first seven chapters are good and evil, corruption and violence; and then in chapter 8 God's wisdom in His counsels. And in the former chapters you have too the divine mind expressed in the relationships that God has formed; it is "my son, hear my voice," and so on. It is remarkable it is nearly always Jehovah in Proverbs, while you do not find Jehovah in Ecclesiastes at all.

When fallen, Adam got Christ for the tree of life. So Augustine exclaims, "Oh, happy fault!" that Adam sinned. God never would have been known as He is if it had not been for sin. There would have been no need for grace, redemption, righteousness, that is, as to man. But now all that God is has been displayed, and this in the cross, righteousness of God against sin, the holiness of God, and the love of God. These would not have come out at all if man had not sinned; and they are the things that the angels desire to look into.

"Prudence," in Ephesians 1, is wisdom in putting it all together.

God does not shut the man out until He has covered his nakedness—sovereign grace at the very beginning. It is the intimation that God covers him in mercy.

I have no doubt that death had come in, because it is "skins," and animals must have been killed; how, it is not

said, but this is the case with many things, because it is not the object of revelation. They had made themselves aprons of fig-leaves, and still were conscious that they were naked as ever, for they hid themselves in spite of it. But God clothed them, and then they were not naked at all. It was grace coming in, but only, of course, the sin thereby covered. And I think there was faith too, because it comes immediately after Adam calling his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living.

But we read, "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life"; because God would not let him take of it and live for ever: that would have given him life in sin. Man might have attempted to countervail the whole thing, and to set up the old man thoroughly.

Thus the turning out of the garden was more than judgment; it was mercy, when we come to think of it. It could not be allowed that man should not die in spite of God. So it was judgment, but mercy at the same time in another way. There would have been no possibility of a flood to destroy, or anything else to put an end to man's wickedness.

Now came Cain and Abel (chap. 4). The question is early raised, whether a man can worship God without Christ. Cain was a wicked person; but, as appearance went, he was doing what was right in paying what he owed to God. But really it was bringing the sign of the curse; it was going to God as if nothing had happened; it was the most perfect hardness of heart, because, if I come to God at all, why have I such toil and labour? why give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul, except I am away from God, and something has happened? The whole

thing tells its own story. Mar has been driven out, and he cannot come to God on the samt footing as if he had not been put away. When in the garden there was any feeling of God, he goes and hides himself; but now, when outside, he goes hardened to God. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” But how did he know that this was right? He knew of these beasts slain for skins, and he may have had more for aught we know. “By which Abel obtained witness that he was righteous,” was by sacrifice as well as by faith. Both are in the verse, “God testifying of his gifts”; but sacrifice is the least thing referred to. We see that the man is pronounced righteous. In Hebrews the point is not God giving a thing to us, but faith carries Christ in hand figuratively, and God says, “you are righteous.” What is the value and character of my righteousness? I say, Christ. Abel is pronounced righteous: but the measure and character of his righteousness is Christ.

Cain came as the expression of horrible hardness of heart; to him and to his offering God had not respect. So Cain was wroth, and Jehovah says, “Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? “

Should it be “sin,” or “sin-offering,” lieth at the door? I am disposed to think it a sin-offering; only that the sin-offering is never mentioned historically until we come to Leviticus, under Moses. It is in this kind of way, “If thou does well, shalt thou not be accepted? and unto thee shall the desire of thy younger brother be, and thou shalt rule over him; but if thou failest to do well, there is a remedy, and therefore thou oughtest not to be wroth.” “Lieth at the door” means crouching. It is not the expression, “It is at your door,” as we say; and therefore I was inclined to take it, “If thou doest well, shalt thou

not be accepted?" ("and if thou doest not well," there is a remedy, in parenthesis) "and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." I have no quarrel with the other view, because sin did lie at his door.

"And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? "It is not only now the testimony of sin against us, to say what have we done as sinners. But we hear from God, "Where is Christ?" The Holy Ghost is come, and convinces the world of sin, but more than this. He comes and says to the whole world, on God's part, "Where is my Son? "Then there is haughtiness too in Cain's reply, "Am I my brother's keeper?" as though why should God ask?

Besides this and more, another important principle comes out—the practically self-righteous man rejecting Christ is then turned out; he leaves the presence of the Lord, and dwells in the land of Nod (that is, "vagabond") where his son is called Enoch, and he builds a city, calling it Enoch too, after his son. Thus he stretches himself in the world, and gives a family name to the town, and the history shews us artisans, and arts, and sciences, all in the train. He goes out from God, and settles himself in the place of judgment, to to his best with it, in open defiance of God. God neglects nothing, and Cain cannot get out of the reach of His hand, of course; but in his own will he was entirely outside. Cain sets to work to make the earth as comfortable as he can without God; Adam did not want all that in paradise.

As to lake dwellings, and caves with stone hatchets, and many similar things, we have to remember that in New Guinea people are doing the same thing now: how would

London like to do so? In Switzerland and Italy they have been finding, covered with bog, and in the lakes, a hundred villages, and all kinds of remains—what the people were eating, and what clothes they wore, as round the Lake of Geneva and elsewhere. And they have learnt the natural history of those times. There was a stone in a hole that they could not make out, and at last found it was what they wove with. Occasionally they have discovered a thing that came from Phoenicia, which was civilised at the very time these villages appeared to have flourished. In North America, lying under some magnificent trees, seven hundred years old, was a piece of native copper, or a square cradle, put ready to be carried away, with other distinct marks of an earlier civilization than the present.

Civilization does die away in places; but I know of no case of light from God going away, and bringing in barbarism.

It was God's providential government when Satan made the Chaldeans go and take Job's goods. If we refer to the sentence on Cain, there was no direct government at all in that, it did not kill him. Man is now left to himself until we come to the second world. God protects him, putting a mark on him, lest any finding him should kill him. This I believe to be a figure of the Jews unto this day.

Cain is "I have gotten," Abel is "vanity," because he went to nothing. Eve fancied she had gotten this man from the Lord—that this was the promise, while it was only from nature. Cain means "gotten," Seth means "appointed," and Abel means "the dying man." Eve thinks she has the man that can inherit the blessing. It was not so, as we

well know. If you take flesh, the Jews were [Cain] the men from the Lord, and it only resulted in their killing the Lord; first that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual.

Chapter 4:23 may be taken historically, and it is true; but typically it refers to the Jews at the end. There is self-will in it every way. Typically it is the remnant of Israel in the last day; but we must not dogmatise about that. Cain is a figure of Israel having killed Christ, and made a vagabond on the earth. At the end the remnant of Israel will own, like Lamech, they have killed this man to their wounding. In the historical sense he kills somebody, and says, “I have been touched, and I will be avenged.”

If one disputes this sense I do not contend for it. A man once took me to task about a parable, and said, “What proof do you give me of its meaning so-and-so?” My answer was, It is like honey, which is given you, and you ask me to prove that it is sweet! If you cannot taste, I cannot prove it.

Seth is the man appointed instead of both Abel and Cain: God hath appointed, in contrast with I have gotten, as Eve said of Cain. So now, Seth from God.

Calling “on the name of the Lord” (v. 25) was dependence; but Cain’s family would not own the Lord at all, the appointed man and his family would. In short, it is the same dreadful truth as to Cain there as in 2 Thessalonians 2. Only it will be final by-and-by. And what is noticeable is that Cain was settling himself in that place without God; it was not so much resistance as independence.

After Seth the appointed man comes in, they began to own Jehovah specifically. This is the meaning of “then began men to call on the name of Jehovah.”

As to the discrepancy between the Hebrew and the Septuagint, as to the years in chapter 5, I say nothing, save that there is a curious fact in this, that to each of these hves the Septuagint adds a hundred years. Thus “Adam lived 230 years, and begat,” instead of 130. This adds fourteen hundred years to the time of the world, the Samaritan Pentateuch more still.

It is not a casual mistake, but done on purpose, for it is to each, and it is only carried down to the point where, if they had gone one more, they would have pushed it over the flood; but there it stops. In Matthew the genealogy is a copy of Jewish records. I do not doubt myself, though it has been disputed since the second century, that Luke’s is Mary’s genealogy. Luke takes it back up to man, but Matthew from David and Abraham, because his reference is to promises. In the Talmud they have got Mary the daughter of Eli.

Then we get afterwards the length of years pretty much the same, except Enoch, where stands the important fact that heaven is brought in for anybody that has faith to look at it. God had men for heaven in the midst of all the confusion; as with Elijah, He had seven thousand left that had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Enoch is a figure of those caught up, Noah of the remnant of the Jews that go through the tribulation. In Noah the world is comforted, the figure of the millennium.

As to any consecutive meaning in these names, certain people have made something out of them; but I think

nothing of this and the like spinning of webs out of the imagination. We must look for scriptural warrant, at least for the principle; and this is lacking here.

We are coming to the world we have been reading about destroyed by the flood. Hitherto it has been the old world with a wonderful series of principles in it, which is the character of Genesis, especially at the beginning.

Man is seen in his original responsibility (but with a number of figures in it) before God began to deal with him. It is a distinct principle of condition that there were no specific dealings, no government, no nations, no law, no promises, no covenant. There was the revelation or prediction of the Seed of the woman; there was Enoch with a prophecy; but no dealings of God. No miracles are stated.

Afterwards we find government put into the hands of man; then the law; and last, Christ Himself.

God’s prolonging man’s life at that time acted instead of writing the word; we see God’s wisdom in it so. At the flood we get life shortened by half; and by half again, when the earth was divided and portioned out to the people. It would not do, in the way the world is now, for men to live 900 years.

Noah was a just man, and did know God.

The two grounds of condemnation are found in Romans 1: the one is, the visible world in its witness; the other is, men’s having known God previously. For (1) “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” Then comes (2) “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.” These are two distinct things.

They did not heed creation: and they gave God up when known. But Enoch walked with God, or “pleased God,” as in the New Testament it is said. It never says so of Adam, because he walked away from God, and did not please Him.

In Genesis 6:3 the Spirit is said to strive with man in the testimony God had given by Noah; He preached by Noah to the spirits, now in prison, of men drowned at the flood.

God gave men 120 years to repent. It was no question of age. Man never got 120 years as a fixed portion, though life was thus long in Moses’ time.

Enoch’s prophecy was preserved, but we know not how. It exists in tradition; but only in scripture have we it given us as it really was. It is preserved in books, and was well known in the second century; indeed they talk about Job borrowing from it. Bruce brought three copies of a book of Enoch from Abyssinia; of course this was an apocryphal book. There is a regular system in it by which the Lord judges, and so on. I have no doubt the book was written just after the destruction of Jerusalem, and against Christians. The writer sees the “tower of the flock,” as he calls it, destroyed; and he could see no farther. He was a Jew writing in favour of the Jews, and talks about perverse men, who were Christians. It has reference to the history of times before the flood; and it has a kind of vision which Noah relates to his posterity, or an angel tells him things. He makes the flood come to the earth because it got a tilt. Enoch’s prophecy was preserved traditionally and incorrectly. It is a testimony to shew how really the coming judgment was looked for.

Bruising the serpent's head is given in a way as coming to destroy the power of Satan.

In chapter 6:11 are the two general characters seen in man; the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence. So it will be at the end: Babylon is corruption, and the beast is violence. So with ourselves, we find plenty of the corruption and of the violence too.

But "Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah," that is, divine favour rested on him; personally righteous doubtless, but all through grace of course. Moses says, "If I have found grace in thy sight"; it is a common expression. In the next chapter God says of Noah, "Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." But the earth was completely filled with violence. Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually; if sin comes in, it is sure to ripen up.

God changes His mind, but only as to creation (v. 6) or the like—never when there is a purpose. It is, if the thing totally changes, that God judges differently about it. So it was now, and therefore God would destroy man. It is not as if some change took place in God, but the aspect of His mind is changed towards an object that has itself changed.

"All in whose nostrils is the breath of life" included man and beast; all go together in that kind of language. Then at the right time God takes Noah with his family, and all enter the ark, "and Jehovah shut him in."

As to the number "forty," it seems to me to have the sense of endurance in it. Forty stripes save one is thirty-nine; for they need a three-thonged rod, so that they could only give thirty-nine by the law, not to exceed forty. It is a length of duration and trial in that way,

testing and patience and endurance. So Moses in his three periods of life. Again, Ezekiel lay forty days on his right side for Judah, as a sign, a day for a year, according to the years of Judah's iniquity (Ezek. 4). Jonah's proclamation was yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown; though they did not yet come under the penalty, they were tried. Elijah had been forty days apart, as Israel of old in the wilderness forty years. Here it was till the ark floated.

As to the "two of every sort" in chapter 7, and "seven clean "in verses 2, 3, the first were male and female, to keep them alive; when they were clean beasts, he took fourteen. I have no doubt the "clean" were what were customarily given for sacrifices. Who would offer a ravenous wild beast in sacrifice to God, but sheep or oxen? This difference of a provision for the race and for sacrifice is bound up with the different use respectively of God (Elohim) and of the Lord (Jehovah).

The fountains of the great deep were all broken up, and the windows of heaven opened, that is, above and below, all together broken up: in what way we cannot tell, but they were. Then we hear of a raven, an unclean thing, which could fly about in this world without difficulty, whilst the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot.

Tisri was the first month, that is, part of September and October. The fourteenth day of Abib was the end of March, as Abib began in the middle of our March, and went on to the middle of our April. It was five months that the waters prevailed; and after the end of the 150 days the waters abated, and the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, the waters being two months and a half in running off.

I believe the flood was all over the earth, wherever man was. There is no mistake. People have called the universality in question, using general terms, as if it only covered the inhabited earth. But scripture says, “the mountains were covered,” “and the tops of the mountains were seen,” and so on; this looks like universality. You must let in a miracle in any case: and so it is all one after all. Suppose Mount Ararat, fifteen or sixteen thousand feet high, in northern Armenia, was covered; well, if the waters were not all round, and away too, they would have run off, and covered somewhere else; there must have been a miracle anyhow. The universality of the flood, absolute universality, seems to me to be positively meant and intended, because of destroying the world that then was. God puts an end to the whole system of the world. It was as complete a judgment of the earth and all that was on it, on the part of God, as it will be presently by fire. Everything in the whole order and system of the world that had life perished, “the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished”: so Peter tells us, and anything that enfeebled it I should not admit: all mere physical things are consequent upon it. Either reject the word of God, or else Mount Ararat was covered. As to universal destruction, everything in the world was put an end to. The world that then was is distinct from the world that now is; and this is of immense moral import to us. God says He will never do it again, but the next time it will be by fire.

We see (chap. 8:20) that offerings were usual, as they had been from Abel; and it was an act of faith. These were sweet savour offerings; the burnt-offering involves

sin, but not so exactly sins. It is not a guilty conscience which brings a burnt-offering as such. Christ comes and offers Himself a sacrifice for sin, gives Himself up to absolute obedience to glorify God; and, the blood being shed, atonement is made; but the burnt-offering is the perfectness of His obedience in suffering everything for God's glory. Sin-offerings were not a sweet savour. The burnt-offering was the glorifying God in that place, taking up the righteousness of God against sin. In the sacrifice of sin-offering I see positive sin laid upon the victim.

It is not exactly thanksgiving here, which would be more the character of a peace-offering. It was offering to God a full acknowledgment of Himself, as the basis of renewal after judgment. This is how Noah offered. Through the eternal Spirit Christ offered Himself without spot to God, to be a sacrifice. Many want to make out that He bore our sins up to the cross; but when He offered Himself, He was a spotless One, and the Lord laid our sins upon Him. In the two goats on the day of atonement the bringing up of Jehovah's lot was in order to the slaying; but the slaying followed; and when once it was slain, the blood could be taken in. So I find, after the gift of Himself, He is made sin, or the sins are laid upon Him. Besides the meeting of our responsibility, God was dishonoured about sin, and Christ stands in that place of dishonour for God's glory, not merely to put away my sins.

Now it is this that gives the great character to Noah's act. He did not come with a sin-offering, as that would have been going to God for his sins, but with a burnt-offering, and Jehovah smelled a sweet savour. Of course there was no -possible ground for any blessing except

upon the footing of the sacrifice of Christ. Now we have, what we find in the case of Moses, the general coming in of sacrifice, in its result, as a ground of blessing. In chapter 6 “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.” Now in chapter 8, when Noah offers, Jehovah smelled a sweet savour, and Jehovah said in His heart, “I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake, for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth, neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done.” The moment the sacrifice has come in, God says, as it were, “If I am to smite the people and to curse them, I must always be cursing them! “Now therefore He goes on the ground of sacrifice, because (this is the point) man is so bad. Previously the evil was before God, bringing His judgment. Now it is before Him, and through sacrifice, a reason for not cursing the ground any more.

It was so in the case of Moses and the people. “Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them,” Ex. 32:9, 10. And then in Exodus 34:9, Moses pleads, “If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Jehovah, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us, for it is a stiff-necked people.” And we know, I know, that sin in me is the ground of my being lost; and yet sin in me is the very ground of my going to God to keep me, now that sacrifice has come in. It shews a wonderful character of grace, its overflowing fulness, to give, as the ground of

God's being with us, what was the ground of judgment; that is, when once sacrifice has come in.

What is often said of Noah's carpentry is man's imagination. Yet if he had plenty to do, he had plenty of time. But let us bear in mind that, as to preparing the ark, it is not necessary to suppose that he and his sons did it all by themselves. Such things are not much if no doctrine be founded upon them.

In chapter 9 it is said to Noah, "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea." This was not said to Adam.

In Noah it was more power than what is called natural authority, as in Adam. After the ruin of Israel, in Nebuchadnezzar it is another kind of thing, it is rule wheresoever the children of men dwell, another sort of authority (nothing about animals and fishes and birds there): he had dominion where his empire reached, though he never made it all good, any more than Solomon did.

Then it is found that, God having saved the sons with Noah, men of the second race were brought into blessing. But the life of man slain by a beast, "at the hand of every beast will I require it." We thus see that God maintains His title to life, even a beast's life. They must come and offer the blood to God. Man had no flesh to eat before He gives it to man. We all know that many are seeking to do away with capital punishment; but what do they care about God? The whole order of God is broken up now. Even a beast killing should die. Verse 6 gives the reason: "In the image of God made he man ";

so that it is always true up to the end. Men only think of what fits men; but we as Christians have nothing to do with that.

Even Christians who take a very prominent part in the advocacy of the abolition of slavery go along with the world.

Man's life was going to be shortened and the whole system was changed. I am very glad that the appointment of God is seen to be there, so that it be not turned to Jewish principles.

"In the image of God made he man." It was despising God's image to kill man. Again, a man was free if he caught a fox to eat it then, not a Jew after the law was given.

It does not necessarily follow that clean and unclean were known, though there is some distinction when Noah was taking the animals into the ark. There we see that some were reckoned clean and some reckoned unclean. Cattle and beasts of the field were distinguished to Adam, and we find Abel a keeper of sheep. When Leviticus comes, it limits the offerings to sheep, goats, bullocks, and so on. It may have been instinct in man in a way at first, and that God put His positive sanction en it when He gave the law.

And now He establishes His covenant, and His bow is set in the cloud, the token of the covenant. This, I take it, is the reason that the rainbow is round about the throne in Revelation 4. It is the covenant with creation seen there, as of old in Genesis. Only it is "like unto an emerald." The presence of the bow in Revelation means that God's covenant with creation is remembered that there should not be a flood again. The bow is given to be

for a token of the covenant rather than that it was created then. God might, of course, have put plenty of clouds above the earth without a rainbow. He says, “I do set my bow.”

The moral point at the end of chapter 9 is that the blessing given him is abused to destroy all his competency to govern. Noah gets drunk: this is not exercising authority. Afterwards comes in the wickedness of Ham; and then “blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.” In contrast with this He cursed Ham in Canaan, that is, in his family. Everything went by families now. Shem was the root of God’s family, with the name of Jehovah even then attached to it, whose lot it would be to judge the races of Canaan and to take their place.

In verse 27 the “he” is Japheth, who “shall dwell in the tents of Shem,” and Canaan shall be Japheth’s servant as well as Shem’s.

The family of Japheth pushed out far and wide, and did dwell in the tents of Shem.

As to the colour, especially black, I do not pretend to account for it in mankind. The Egyptians were not black; they are always painted red in the hieroglyphics. Their pictures in Nubia are seen with prisoners all black. What Livingstone found in Africa was, that if there was a wet country along with heat, there the people got black. The Portuguese are black in certain hollow islands. As to what people have stated about races, I have no hesitation in saying that there is nothing solid about it whatever.

We have had in a certain sense the whole history of the new world as regards Noah and his sons, the altar, his

drunkenness, and so on. In chapter 10, n, you get a statement all by itself, before you come to God's dealings with the world as now commenced afresh.

We have first the history of Noah's generations.

In verse 21 Japheth is stated to be elder son. In verse 5 you have "by these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families in their nations." There you get "nations" which is an immense thing; then the sons of Ham, who stretched from the Euphrates to the Nile and got hold of Canaan somehow; the sons of Shem come last.

Chapter 10 is not history, but a survey of the whole earth. There were no tongues or nations at all till Babel; if you try to put this chapter into time, you will go all astray.

Then in Ham you have another principle, and that is a royal conquering power. "Cush begat Nirnrod," who began to be a mighty one in the earth, with beasts first and then with man. He was a mighty hunter, wherefore it is said, "Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh in the land of Shinar." Then Asshur goes out and builds Nineveh. These are the first great monarchies.

"Before the Lord" means just that he was very great; as Moses was fair or beautiful "to God," and in Hebrews "exceeding "fair. So too, in Jonah 3, "Nineveh was an exceeding great city" is a city "great of God" (in margin and literally).

Then we learn how the dispersion came.

I suppose Eber (verse 21) is mentioned because the Hebrews came of him. There is another fact in verse 25: in the days of Peleg the earth was divided, and at that moment man's life went down to just half at one bound. You see it in the next chapter. Eber lived four hundred and sixty-four years, and Peleg lived two hundred and thirty-nine. Here, so far then, we have the history of the world: the world is settled, and it is all regulated in its general principles with all the races still going on; then in chapter 11 it goes back to the races, "and the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." And they set to work to build a city and a tower, that they might make a name: not out of the reach of another flood, as some say, for this is the greatest nonsense possible; it was to be a great central temple to their own name. Babel was in principle apostasy, for it was a name for themselves instead of God. It is man uniting for himself. They say, Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad. They wanted to concentrate themselves there so that they should be all one. And this is just the great idea of the present day. But then the Lord comes down and confuses them, and they are all scattered.

This is followed by the specific generations of Shem, until you come down to Abram and a totally distinct line of things. We have had the generations of Noah, a genealogical history; and the generations of Shem are a specific thing besides. In it you find the shortening of life we spoke of, when the earth was divided.

They went to the East and got a name, they were the direct descendants of Eber. God did not call them Hebrews j it was the other nations. Some take it from Arba in Hebrew, for the word means to come over, because Abraham came over the river.

Languages do blend, though kept apart, and I do not doubt providentially too. We cannot say much about it in England; for we have two or three languages together, Latin, and German, and so on.

Then we go on to Terah. Abram comes first, not because he was oldest, but because he was the important one. All that we have got thus far is the fact that the whole world is parcelled out into nations, and this comes from the judgment of Babel because man would not be scattered. And you hear nothing of Noah in all *his: his power is gone, though he was alive all the time. He lived to Abram's time if you take the Hebrew computation. Shem lived to Isaac's time, who was twenty-eight when Shem died. Noah died a few (twelve) years before Abram's time.

We have seen how the world was settled, and, after Noah has gone from the scene, the nations divided, and the fact of God's judgment confounding their language. The languages we know come, I believe, from Sanskrit or Zend. Latin and Greek, they say, were sister languages, and not mother and daughter (and they call them now Aryan), and all the languages of Europe except the Basque, and so all the northern languages of India. Then there is the Shemitic and that class of languages, the Turanian, the North American languages having been Shemitic made up since. Scythian or Assyrian they cannot read yet. They have made out the Shemitic and Aryan, but not the Turanian. Such are the great roots of what has covered the world.

There was nothing to hinder Moses from speaking Hebrew: the Jews all spoke it among themselves. It is a very child's tongue, not an elaborately formed language

at all. Besides, God may have made him know it perfectly. They have found an inscription put up by Mesha, king of Moab, the sheep-master, in an old Phoenician character. The Samaritans still keep nearly the same. When the Jews came back from Babylon, they had only the present Hebrew characters.

Thus the old world is done with, and certain great principles shewn, and then the new world is set up, being split up into these nations; and with that the beginning of what will be the beast's (that is, in Babel) empire was set up in Nebuchadnezzar, but the germ of it is here. And we have the sphere in which God's plans and purposes come out.

Then as soon as we have the world parcelled out into nations, peoples, tribes, and tongues, God's providence doing it, the first thing He does is to tell a man to leave it all. "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house into a land that I will shew thee," Gen. 12.

Providence is never the guide of faith. God may govern by providences, He overrules things, and so on; and I may be forced to use a circumstance, or it may come and stop me because I am like a horse or mule that must be held in by bit or bridle; but providence is never the guide of faith. In the case of Moses, was there ever anything more providential than that Pharaoh's daughter should come and take him up just as he was exposed in the river, to be brought up as her own son? But this is not the guidance of faith. I may be controlled by circumstances; God may use them so, He will lead the blind by a way that they know not, yet this is not seeing.

But the principle here is, that He calls one out—Abram. The first dealing of God, when He had put the framework of the world to work in, is calling one out to work by. And there is another principle; when He does call him out, Abram is the father of the faithful. As we had a bad race in Adam, we have a race of God now. The Jews were the fleshly seed of Abram, but Abram is the head of God's people at large. There is another thing, and that is what all hangs upon: election, calling, and promise, belong to this family, and to nothing else. God takes Abram out: this is election. He calls him, and the God of glory reveals Himself to him, giving him the promises. It is not church ground here, but it is grace, in election, calling, and promise. These are the first three things.

"Election" means choosing. And the calling is of those whom He has chosen; it is the making good their election. In "many are called but few are chosen," the two are in opposition, not as here where they go together.

Then Abram is to go out by faith; the necessary consequence when he is called. There is trust in God, believing His word; and so we get upon a new footing altogether.

It is not the old world with just a testimony of Enoch, but God positively dealing in the new world. As the apostle reasons, the first thing after the world is settled is grace, then law after; but now we get into the direct dealings of God, which is an immensely important thing. There was no dealing of God before, except the flood, and this finishes that state. There was a revelation of

important principles, sacrifice, and so on, but no dealings of His.

Abram did not go out at first, or rather he went out, but did not go in; he left his country and kindred, but not his father's house. "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abraham's wife; and they went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, and they came unto Haran and dwelt there." Stephen says in the Acts, "after the death of his father," whilst chapter 12:4, says, "So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him, and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran, and Abram, and Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came." In Joshua 24:14, 15, you find the occasion on which God called Abram out—the worship of other gods. All the world had gone into idolatry, and the nations into which God had separated it.

The God of glory had revealed Himself to him, and it becomes quite a new scene. It is all on the earth of course: you get nothing of heaven here, but the land and earth.

I believe Abram went afterwards to heaven, but here it is, "I will make of thee a great nation" (not you shall go to heaven), "and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

In 2 Peter 1:3 it is by glory and virtue (it is the dative of the instrument there, not “to”). He says, There is My glory, and you must have the courage to cut your way through to it. In Abram’s case the God of glory appears to him; but what He calls Abram by is the land. In the second epistle of Peter the principle is the same exactly. Only, as we have Christ in the glory above to whom we are called, so Abram was called to go and possess the land. Clearly the force of the word “virtue” there is moral courage.

As soon as Abram had got to the place that God had called him to, he was obliged to look higher still, or did so however. Our calling and our place are identical; but with Abram, he went forth to go into the land of Canaan and came there, while God did not give him so much as to set his foot on. And so it was he had to look for something else: not that he ever gave up the land.

The city for which Abram looked stood very much as the glory in Peter practically, but his calling was to the land. Abram found he had to look for something else by being in the land where he had no city, no possession, and he had even to buy a grave in it—that was all. He had a tent, and he had an altar there, but no more. In that sense it is the picture of the life of faith. God says, “I will make of thee a great nation, and thou shalt be a blessing.” He puts him as a centre of blessing: “Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee”; and then you get the thing that is insisted on in Galatians (chap. 3): “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,” though we have nothing about the seed here stated: the great nation is the fleshly seed. Abram is the root of the tree of promise.

There is no promise to Abram and his seed as to our blessing; there was to be a seed of his like the stars for multitude, but this is not “one.” What you get in chapter 22 is, “because thou hast done this thing,” when Isaac was offered up, “and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.” The promise was given to Abram and confirmed to Christ the Seed: it was never given to Abram and the seed, but confirmed to the seed. The offering up of Isaac was the occasion, for then the promise was given in resurrection, and it is confirmed to the seed. You do get Abram and his seed when you come to the land. In Galatians 3 change the order of the words, “Now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed,” and he says, “If it be a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto,” etc. He insists that you cannot have the law along with Christ: “Now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed,” which is Christ; and the promise which was confirmed before of God to Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot annul. When God has confirmed it, you cannot disannul it, nor can you add to it. You must take the promises as they come: this is true of man’s covenant, much more of God’s.

Another thing is, that the promise was absolutely without condition. The law brought them under conditions: there were two parties to it. But there are not two to this covenant— it is an absolute promise without any condition whatever. “So Abram departed as

the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him," and so on. "And the Canaanite was then in the land, and the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land, and there builded he an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him." There we see another thing: not only God appeared to him and called him, but God reveals Himself to him in the place of promise; and this makes worship. He is in the place promised, though he had not got it yet; and there he builds an altar. Then he goes about to a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east, and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. There we have Abram's history as the child of faith and the father of the faithful. The rest of the chapter is his failure as the child of faith, and what comes of it. "And Abram journeyed going on still towards the south, and there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there." He has not consulted the Lord; but he tells Sarai to say that she is his sister—a kind of picture of the way in which the church has denied her Lord.

I think I have found that typically viewed the woman represents a condition, and a man rather the action in the condition or conduct if you please.

The church is Christ's wife, but has denied its real place and gone into Pharaoh's house. But you will find another thing: the Lord delivers Abram and Sarah, but judges Pharaoh.

"And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south, and Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold, and he went on his journeying from the south even to Bethel,

unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai, unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first, and there Abram called on the name of the Lord." Down in Egypt we have no altar, and no calling on the name of the Lord: God takes care of him, and watches over him; but Abram is no worshipper there, nor until he gets back. He goes down to Egypt, forced, as people say, by circumstances, not in the place of dependence or communion: it is the character of the position. You find the same thing in Jacob, only he came back to Shechem.

Where you get "all the families of the earth," it applies to us, although it will be really made good in the millennium in another way. Galatians 3:8 says, "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed: so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," and thus we come in.

The promise in somewhat different terms is given to Isaac and Jacob; but in Abraham is the root of the olive tree, and therefore all the great general principles are found. In Isaac the reason is, "Because Abraham obeyed my voice," whilst in Jacob we see God's dealings with Israel, that is, as to mere general principles. And so about Isaac you have very little given except that he is heir of all his father has, and he is brought up and takes a wife. In the case of Jacob after Sarah's death, it is an earthly picture; there is no resurrection glory or the like.

Now you see Abram had been snared a little in going down into Egypt. It looks like providence and provision. But when he gets back, we come to another principle: a

person that had been walking with Abram not by his own faith, but by Abram's, is before us, and that kind of thing cannot go on for ever; that is Lot. And they could not dwell together in the land, so Abram gives up everything. Lot chooses the world; he is a believer, but he sees "the plain of Jordan that it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoar: then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan." There Lot goes and settles and loses everything he has, because he was a believer. But in Abram's case, the moment Lot has left him, God says to him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever, and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth," and so on. It is very striking and definite.

Abram did in the famine slip a little into what was not the life of faith, but Lot went quite astray, and he vexed his righteous soul from day to day. Yet it was no thanks to him that his soul was vexed; if he had not gone there, he would not have been vexed. And he is no witness either. They tell him presently, "This fellow came into sojourn, and must needs be a judge." He had no business to be a judge in Sodom; and he calls them his brethren. "I pray you, my brethren, do not so wickedly." His whole place was wrong.

Then again, "Abram removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord." There he is living the life of faith, sojourning, and building his altar where he goes.

Next, we see in Abram power over the world. Lot has been taken prisoner. The four kings beat the five and Lot was carried off. Abram arms his servants, comes upon the kings, gets the victory and Lot's things back. But he will not take from a thread to a shoe latchet; he will have nothing to say to it at all. Here then we get Melchizedek, and a millennial picture. You have the heir of faith beating his enemies entirely, and then, looking at it as the accomplishment of victory, Melchizedek comes forth to meet him, and says, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand." It is the final triumph in that way, looked at typically, with Christ as Melchizedek coming out to bless upward and bless downward: just what Christ will be in that day. Thus viewed Abram represents Israel, I have no doubt, in that day; but Christ will come with the armies of heaven. The history of Lot comes in here by the way, just shewing that the believer, if in the world (or with it rather), has no power against it.

Melchizedek's priesthood is special; but we have had an altar before. There is no establishment of a family priesthood yet. Abram as the head was the natural person in the family to be priest, and they were all living in families: whoever was head would offer. Abel was not the head of a family, but he offered as Noah did; and Melchizedek also.

Here we have immense principles: a person justified by faith, called out from the world, having no altar while in Egypt, and, when back in the land, no possession, but only a tent, and with that an altar—great principles of the life of faith; and in chapter 14 a typical expression of

what has yet to come on earth, a royal priest at once in Melchizedek.

In chapter 15 we find Israel. There is the sacrifice in full first, and then the covenant of Jehovah with Abram, and the communication of special features in Israel's history, the Canaanitish nations to be judged, and limits of the land, besides the prophecy of the deliverance from Egypt. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards shall they come out with great substance; and thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age; but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

We may notice that all that comes out to Abram after Lot is separated is, I will give thee the land, and thy seed shall be innumerable. Next, in chapter 15, after Lot takes the world, and Abram gives up everything, he then gets the promise a great deal clearer. Abram, having refused the world, brings in God saying, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." He had in God the two things he would not take from the world. "I am thy reward," says God; and then Abram says, "What wilt thou give me?" Whatever you think of the request, still the Lord allowed and bore with it, answering him most graciously; just as Peter was the occasion for the Lord to bring out blessed revelations, though Peter was not very brilliant in some respects.

"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to

number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." There you find the great principle of God's ways, stepping in chapter 15 right into Israel's position by faith and death. Abraham has no heir. God says his seed shall be as the stars of heaven; it is a numerous seed; and the land again, but more follows. And he gets it all by faith, and by faith righteousness too.

It will be seen as to faith, if one go through carefully all the uses of the Greek word, that with the dative in the New Testament it is believing in a person, and eis or en gives the ground of confidence. In the case before us faith is counted to Abram for righteousness; it is the general broad fact that it is imputed or reckoned.

But the ministration of imputed righteousness is a monstrous proposition. If you take it as the value of something imputed, it is the value of faith—just the way Roman Catholics take it. If not so, you must take it that God has counted righteousness because of it, which is the principle; but if you try to make it so much made up and imputed, you must make it faith that is imputed. Abel is counted righteous according to the value of his gift. Romanists say that faith is counted for righteousness, but charity is greater still—man's love, not the love of God in Christ.

There was practice, of course, but there was no righteousness revealed in the Old Testament. It was prophesied of, but it is now revealed in the gospel. All that is stated in the end of Romans 3 is "the forbearance of God"; and if you ask why He did forbear with these person's faults, I can tell now, because it is all revealed.

Again, now there is another character that they had not, and that is, “accepted in the Beloved”; and more, as we may learn in the Epistle to the Ephesians, etc.

This is the first time faith is mentioned, though no doubt it was there before, as Hebrews tells us; but it is the first time it is brought out. And then, too, I find death—God binding Himself by death. We know by Jeremiah, and other means, that death was used to ratify a covenant. So here God binds Himself by bringing in death, but the power of death passes, in a sense, on Abram; it is when a deep sleep comes upon him that he gets the blessing. I see a peculiar character here, because God comes in as by a smoking furnace and a burning lamp. That is, it is light that shines, and also a furnace that burns and consumes the dross, just as we talk of a fiery furnace. Now will God take His place. He tells Abram about his seed, and signifies that He will lead them by a lamp, and purify them by fire. Abram came under a deep sleep, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him. That is, he came under the power of death as to his own condition; it was not actual death, of course, but the shadow of it—the type. So we must die with Him. Death must pass upon any flesh in order to inherit the promises.

He says here, “In the fourth generation they shall come hither again,” while in Exodus 12:40 they sojourned in Egypt 430 years; yet Galatians says the law in the wilderness was 430 years after the promise.

But Exodus does not say in Egypt only, but their sojourning was 430 years; the Samaritan Pentateuch and others give “in Canaan and in Egypt.” From the promise to their going down into Egypt was exactly half

the time. The words in verse 13, “shall afflict them four hundred years,” is a general statement in this place. Egypt is the great thing. And the “come hither again” refers to the land clearly.

Verse 12 may illustrate “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” Practically it is the same thing, though here it is the general principle, and more like Romans 6. It is death passed upon him. Flesh (as such, I mean) could not inherit a promise; nor even will Israel in the millennium, except through death and resurrection.

The fowls, in coming down, came to defile it, if possible — that is, the activity of life. It is a mystical scene. Abram keeps it all pure and clean. The broad fact is to keep the sacrifice untouched, the foundation of everything. It was the valley of the shadow of death Abram had to go through.

We have had the seed promised in a general way; and now Abram wants to get it according to his own will in the flesh, and he takes Hagar (chap. 16). Ishmael is “he that is born after the flesh,” which is really of the law, an attempt to get the heir on legal ground, and take the promises. It was an attempt to get the heir by the flesh, which all came to misery and confusion. Hagar gets turned out, that is, the old covenant.

But when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and there was no hope of seed naturally—his body was now dead—God reveals Himself by His name to him, “I am the Almighty God.” He had never given His name to him before, but now He gives it, taking up in it the character of the dispensation, and then brings in Christ later on. God had reserved Himself, so to speak. We have not

Christ in this scene, but the one who is the figure of Christ comes afterwards. God Almighty, El-Shaddai, is the name by which God appeared to the patriarch, the first of His three names—Almighty, Jehovah,-and Father. We were speaking of them before.

Chapter 16 is a kind of parenthesis. Abram has got a promise, and tries now to make it good independently of God. But when Abram is set aside, his body now dead at ninety-nine years old, God reveals Himself, and says, I am going to give you a numerous seed, and you must circumcise them, and so on. That is, now that you are viewed as dead, I can do something with you.

God's name is Almighty; but He waits until Abram was virtually dead, and then He has him circumcised, which was the seal of the covenant he had got. Then he gets the promise of the seed, personal seed, really Christ. "And I will bless her [Sarah], and give thee a son also of her." Abraham falls on his face and laughs, "and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety-nine years old, bear?"

Abraham's was the laughter of joy, I believe; but Sarah was ashamed of her laughing, because it was unbelief. And the getting a promise of a seed of his own makes Abraham think of Ishmael, that he might live before God.

Next Jehovah comes with the two angels (chap. 18). The world must be judged where Lot is, and where, in fact, the fleshly seed is. The promise of the seed is renewed. Abraham has intercourse with the Lord, hearing the promise of the seed come into this world to be heir of the world: so the apostle says. Then in what follows is

the confirmation of the promise, God visiting Abraham, and the promise is immediate of Isaac— of his appearing; and an immediate promise that God will return at the time of year. Then Abraham has communion with Jehovah at the top of the mountain, while the others, the angels, go down to judge the world.

We have the world and Israel in Sodom and Lot, while Abraham looks down upon it all. He is in intercourse with God, and God is there talking with Abraham about what He is going to do with the world. Abraham is called the friend of God, and here it is seen. I talk about my business and what has to be done with my friend, but not of what T am going to do for him until it is all arranged. God does not tell Abraham what He is going to do with Abraham. But the person who has the seed promised completely and immediately coming in is in full intercourse with God about what He is going to do with other people.

It is beautiful to see the Lord does not judge Sodom until it has all got so bad that there were not even ten righteous persons there. If there had been ten, God would have spared the cities. Abraham goes on interceding until this is shewn out.

The Lord was there incognito, as we say, until the tent scene is over and the angels are gone, and then it is all open. While in the tent, Abraham addresses Him with full deference, but the Lord does not come out with the secret until He gets alone with him. Read chapter 18:1-5. Abraham says, My lord, not My lords; he has perfect consciousness that One is superior, and his faith evidently sees through it all. In verses 10, 14, it is, “I will return”; in verse 17, “Shall I hide? “and so on. “And

the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord "(v. 22). He sends on these two angels, and we find them at Sodom directly afterwards. Then Abraham calls Him "the Judge of all the earth." He addresses Him as Adonay (in verses 3, 27, 30, 31, 32), but it is Jehovah. It may be the administering power; but Abraham sees who the administrator is. I believe myself that all the appearances in the Old Testament are the Son's.

If Abraham goes as far as he dares, God judges the whole thing, but spares the righteous. He was in the church's place, as Lot in the Jew's place was saved so as by fire. So Noah was in the Jew's place, but Enoch gives the church's place in the earlier history.

In what follows we see the origin of the people of the land whom the Israelites were not allowed to destroy—Moab and Ammon.

It is striking here to notice the incapacity for anything definite in unbelief. The very place where Abraham was talking with Jehovah, Lot had looked at as most barren and desolate; but when he sees the cities of the plain burning, he would like to go to the mountain, the place of faith, though first, he says he cannot go there. When in the world, you are afraid of God's judgment there; and so is Lot, till at length he slips off to the mountain, the place of faith, obliged to get there at last.

In chapter 21 Abraham is seen planting a grove (a kind of boundary of the land, as I suppose), and there we hear of "the everlasting God," because God was there, the One that secures the land for ever to His people. Jehovah is the everlasting God, and when He gives a promise, He is sure to make it good at the end. I believe

the everlasting gospel is the Seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head, that is, the declaration that the Lord shall destroy with power when He comes in judgment. It is the announcement that the hour of His judgment is come, the unchanging good news right from the beginning and onward. From the first Christ was to bruise the serpent's head. The Christian has the special relationship—union as associated with Him who is going to bruise the serpent's head—being thus identified with the King of the kingdom.

As we come to a break now, it may be well to run over the chief great principles of what has been before us. Genesis is an important book in this way, that it contains the principles from which all start; a great deal of instruction as to ways and life and so on comes afterwards, but here is the framework of the thing. First, there is creation itself; this seems very simple, but in a way it is not, for it is only by faith we know it. None of the heathen knew it, and infidelity now is going back to their darkness, for infidelity is but modern heathenism. In John's Gospel we go before all that even, for we can say, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him." It goes back beyond creation.

As soon as the fact of creation is set out in chapter 1, you see the world as the sphere in which God is going to put man, and in which all moral relationships are to be brought out: here stands first the responsible man; then his naming the animals; then his wife is given (chap. 2). There is thus the creation of this world and of what is in it, creatures and so on, and man, as a centre and lord of it, in God's image, the world fashioned for the purpose,

and the rest of God, which man never entered into. Then follow the relationships in which God set man, to Himself, to the inferior creatures, and to his wife (in which the church is typified). Next man's responsibility is tried by temptation, and we see his utter failure, but the judgment on Satan, the serpent, with a promise to the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head (chap. 3). But the first manls driven out from God, and then he becomes the head of a fallen race, though Eve hopes to get the promise in the flesh, saying that she had got a man from Jehovah. Alas! man completes sin by killing his brother, and the world is set up without God; but God gives another and an appointed seed, Seth (when men called on the name of Jehovah), in lieu of the slayer and the slain. Christ was slain; the world slew Him; but He is coming again in glory; this is what all that typifies (chap. 4). Then comes the genealogy of the race of Seth, and one walks with God who is transformed and taken away to heaven (chap. 5). Last comes the total corruption and wickedness of man up to the flood, with Noah preserved through it, man and animals too (chaps. 6-8). This closes the history of the first world. Next Noah founds the relationships of the new world upon sacrifice; but he fails himself entirely: and, having given the prophecy of the world's establishment in his three sons, his history closes. God gives a promise not to bring in a flood any more, but there is no great principle in this that I know of. Government was set up to restrain; but this fails, and it closes Noah's history (chap. 9).

Then we see the settling out of the world in nations from the three sons of Noah (chap. 10). There is the world in nations and families, and this happening by the

judgment of God upon their setting themselves up to be independent of God at Babel, making themselves a Shem or name. Then we see Abram brought in by Shem's genealogy, which is merely a peg to hang it on, as it were (chap. n). But he is an elect one, called out, and the promise is given him to be the head of God's race in the earth. Then he, having followed the calling of God, is in the place of promise, a stranger and a worshipper: through pressure of circumstances he gets out of that place, loses his worship, gets into the power of the world, but is delivered out of it (chap. 12). We have then his entire abnegation as to the world, and a full revelation of the sphere of promise, or subject of promise (chap. 13). Then we see Abram's victory over the world, and the revelation of Melchizedek as priest, when the victorious kings are defeated (chap. 14). Thus millennial blessedness is brought in, and this closes that part of the history, when we have come to the royal priest blessing Israel, and God the possessor of heaven and earth. The broad abstract principles finish with chapter 14.

Then in chapter 15 we see righteousness connected with faith for the first time, and also the promise of the seed, a covenant founded on death, with details of the land. Then in chapter 16 we see a fleshly attempt to have the seed in the flesh. But in chapter 17 grace acts. God reveals Himself by His dispensational name to Abram, giving him promise of the seed, and the seal of circumcision on it. "A father of many nations have I made thee." Confirmation is given, followed by Abraham on high in communion with God, and when the world is to be judged, he is a prophet interceding inside with God. Peter's comment on this is, "the Lord knoweth how

to deliver the godly out of temptation." This is down below. So we have Enoch, the heavenly man, and Noah, the earthly remnant; now we have Abraham the heavenly man, and Lot the earthly remnant. This is a second witness.

Now in chapter 20, though I have a little more difficulty in my own mind about it, Abraham is seen failing, in respect of those that were strictly the vessel of promise, to Abimelech who was within the land. The Philistines have always that character, it would seem, those who were professedly within. It is failure before those who are outwardly in the place of promise, the denial of the truth of the church of God. Abraham says, "she is my sister," and not my wife. It is only in David's time that the Philistines were rightly dealt with and put down ultimately.

As Lot by going to Zoar saves himself in a little city, being afraid to go to the place of faith; so we have in chapter 20 a rebuke put upon Abraham in respect of Sarah, the vessel of promise. The world knows very well that the church ought to be for the Lord.

In the next chapter (21) the son of promise is born, and legalism, or the legal covenant, with the child of flesh is cast out, that is, Hagar and Ishmael; now Abimelech, or the Philistine, who is in the place of promise, the son being born, becomes subservient to Abraham. The borders of the land are given. Abraham figuratively takes possession of the land of promise, and worships. He plants a grove too—the only time he ever does so. He was only in a tent before; now he plants a grove, which was Abraham's act, but had specific reference to the seed and taking possession of the land.

After chapter 14 is the place of the break really, because there we get to the millennium; then come the details in connection with Abraham's conduct and the promise of the seed.

Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac at Mount Moriah begins a new series (chap. 22), which gives us thereon the promise confirmed to the one Seed, not to the numerous seed, but the promise of blessing to all nations (in chapter 12) confirmed to the Seed; and this after death and resurrection, which furnishes a completely new principle. Abraham has given up the promises according to life here, and taken them in resurrection, "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure," Heb. 11. All was taken up in resurrection, founded upon sacrifice to God.

Then in chapter 23, we see the old vessel of promise dies. Sarah is not the church now in any sense, but the Jews; the vessel dies, that is, Israel is really set aside.

Isaac being the heir of everything, Abraham sends down what represents the Holy Ghost—Eliezer—to get a wife for his risen son. Isaac is on no account to go back to the old land; he represents the risen Christ. So Abraham sends down his chief servant to get a wife out of the place of his own family for the heir of promise. Eliezer confers gifts on her, and brings her out, all things being given to the son and heir. Abraham sends his other sons away, but Isaac's wife is brought into the place of the vessel of promise, Sarah's tent. This is all the history of Isaac (chap. 24).

The Jews were the vessel of promise, and now the church is become so.

When we come to Isaac old and blind, the history leans really on Jacob. We have done with all the first great principles of faith, and the risen one, Isaac, and we find the Jewish history in Jacob. It is the history of Christ, in a way, all through, but the history, of the heir in connection with the earthly promises; whereas Isaac was figurative of the heavenly ones. Jacob gets a wife in Padan-aram, the house of Bethuel, his mother's father, but Abraham tells Eliezer, "Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again."

Then we get Jacob, who is a poor sample anyhow, but who values the promise, though for the earth, while Esau does not, but forfeits his birthright. It is by grace Jacob comes in, because he had no title; Esau had title, but in the election of grace the elder was to serve the younger. In point of fact it comes about by the profanity of Esau, while Jacob does value it, though the means by which he got it were evil.

That is a great lesson. We now have to do with the means. God secures the result, and all we have to consider is the right means. Isaac could have crossed his hands, or in many a way have acted under God's control, just as Jacob did afterwards with his own grandchildren, without his going and listening to his mother, and deceiving. Then we have the renewal of the promise to Isaac; at the same time he is forbidden to go down into Egypt. He has never anything to say to the world in his Isaac character. He is not to go into it himself, but his wife is to come out of it. Alas! he follows his father's example, and denies his wife, not in Egypt, but in the place of the Philistines. It was his failing in the place of promise. I think you get Isaac upon lower ground altogether: he digs up again the wells his father first

dug, which the Philistines had stopped, and then surrenders them. You get decay, besides denying his wife; but when he comes into the place which God had given as a limit, to Beersheba—there they have to own him when he is within his limits. Before, it was a contention with the spirit of the world where he was, and he has to yield.

Now we get Esau and Jacob, and Jacob gets the blessing as he got the birthright, still by deceit. As we saw before, Jacob goes down to get his wife himself. I have no doubt that Leah represents the Gentiles, and Rachel the Jews. And we are down upon the earth, we find Jacob looking for blessing here, and he promises tithes (chap. 28:22). And God does take care of him, but this is not enough. He goes acting with duplicity towards man. It is worse than earthly ground indeed here, though God still takes care of him.

If Jacob at all represents the Lord here, it is not in his conduct. He loves Rachel, who represents the Jews, but he gets Leah instead of Rachel, and is there paid in his own coin. At the present time Gentiles are being blessed instead of Jews. God blesses Leah, but then you must mark all the wretched course of the low state of faith. Laban cheats him, and he cheats Laban. There was faith in a sense, but faith going through a thoroughly carnal way to get the blessing. Then Jacob runs away. God does take care of him, and brings him back to the land, as He will bring back Israel. After he had been a slave twenty-one years, He brings him back with his children. You get Mizpah, or Jegar-sahadutha, or Galeed, and much instruction in it all, for the Lord takes care of the believer; but where he walks in this low carnal way he is chastened through and through; twenty-one years a

slave-cheat, and is cheated; he believed, and got to be believed, but his means were carnal, and it was discipline in every possible way, because he walked carnally. Then Esau is coming, and poor Jacob again lies, sends all the troops before him, flocks and so on; God sends two hosts of angels to meet him; but how little of real faith! He sees God's hand, and says, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands."

You see the arrangements; you see all the weakness of this carnal system, though he did trust God in the main. It was all a low kind of life. God does not allow Esau to touch him, yet he says, I cannot overdrive the cattle a day or they will all die, "let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant, and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord to Seir." Yet he had not the most distant idea of going to Seir. Then having sent away the cattle he remains behind (chap. 32:23, 24). "Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the break of day." God, who would not allow anybody to touch him, takes him in hand Himself, wrestles with him, gives him grace to overcome, but will not reveal Himself, and makes Jacob halt all his life. It is all discipline, though there is blessing. Jacob gets blessing because he believed in the promise.

It is very hard in Jacob's story not to get into detail. You get a great deal more experience in one who is walking badly than in one who is walking well; you have not a bit of all this in Abraham. But it always is so: in ups and

downs is a great deal more of what you call experience, if not walking well. The other's life is much simpler. All was given in a few words in Enoch's case: "He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." Mark the difference again between Abraham and this: Abraham is up on high interceding with God for others, and Jacob down at the brook wrestling for himself. Jacob was a prince with God, and prevailed; but it was God wrestling with him and would not reveal Himself. Abraham intercedes for others and wrestles for nothing for himself; whereas Jacob has to contend for himself to get the blessing. He did get the blessing, for there was power through grace. Then another thing: he goes and builds an altar, making another blunder, buys a piece of land, and so on. Abraham bought a sepulchre: that was all. Jacob settles in the place: then these wicked people propose to marry and go on together. The altar he built he called El-elohe- Israel, God the God of Israel, with difference from his former altar. God had given him strength to prevail, but He did not reveal Himself to him; there was power given in the conflict, but no revelation of God. And then come all the affairs of Dinah and Simeon, and so on, all bad together; whereon God says to him, Do you go up to Bethel: this was where he started from.

God says, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." The moment God says so, out comes what Jacob knew all the time he had never done with: there was a quantity of idols in the house, and now he thinks of it. It is not that he did not know of it, for he did; but there is no real putting away of idols until we get into the presence of

God. Observe, when the idols are buried, the first thing God did was to tell him His name. He did not before, but now that is the first thing: “God appeared unto him, and said unto him, I am God Almighty,” the name He had given Himself to Abraham. And then, though the intercourse was short, and there was no intercession for others, God went up from him just as He did from Abraham. You do not get here as much bright blessing, but God does reveal Himself now and talks with Jacob and does not wrestle with him.

This brings us back to the history of Israel. Jacob goes through humbling discipline, and at last God is revealed to him; then in Rachel’s dying who represents Israel (she had borne Joseph, figure of Christ) we have Benjamin, that is, Christ going to the right hand of God. Rachel called him Benomi, son of my afflictions; but his father called him Benjamin, son of my right hand. When this man was born, then Israel (Rachel) was cut off, but his father takes him as son of the right hand of God. Israel is ended in that character entirely.

Next, the world is seen set up in power before God’s people are (that is, Esau): no want of kings and dukes there. That closes the history of Jacob really.

Now we have the history of Joseph, that is, in the main. His brothers, Jacob’s sons, were a good-for-nothing set as ever were; and Joseph with all his dreams, interpreting, gives us “the wisdom of God,” but himself a despised one. Soon after we get him manifested as the “power of God.” He is a distinct figure of Christ, rejected by his brethren, sold to the Gentiles; he shews himself there, the patient godly one and having the wisdom of

God, while he is the delight of his father too; and then he is exalted to the right hand of power.

It is a well-known history. Everything in the world (Egypt) is ruled by him, and in that character he receives back his repentant brethren, and puts them into the first place in the world; that is, Israel. In the midst of all that you get Judah going on with wickedness in chapter 38: really it is the genealogy of the Lord Himself in flesh. And that is the whole history until you come to Jacob going down to Egypt, and that type closes (never run one type into another), and there he dwells in the land of Goshen. Still Jacob looks to the land as the place of inheritance to be buried there; and, remark, Joseph becomes the first-born, the heir: the birthright is his. It is Christ in that character. It is said so in terms in i Chronicles 5, that the birthright was Joseph's.

In chapter 48 Jacob crosses his hands to put the sons of Joseph rightly in their place; as in chapter 47 you see how he could bless Pharaoh, though without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. Thus Jacob blesses the highest king of the earth in that day.

Then you find the blessing of the children of Israel, and I think that of Jacob is a general view of Israel. The blessing of Moses is much more historical. This is general, and down to Dan; with the exception of Zebulon, you get present blessing. The place of strength and power was in Judah: though it goes on after all with failure, Judah was in the place of power, and that is judgment in one shape or another; and then in Dan you find the power of evil. Outwardly Dan lost his place and had no place. I suppose the apostasy is connected with

it. The Jews had a tradition that Antichrist will be of his tribe.

All is failure in Israel until you come to “I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah.”

Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are corrupt and violent; Judah is connected with God’s purposes as to the royal stock; Zebulon a haven of ships, and Issachar a strong ass burdened, are linked with prosperity in commerce with the nations, or Gentiles; then Dan is to judge his people. Thus when Israel joins with the Gentiles in that way (Zebulon and Issachar), you get the serpent brought in; and then Gad is overcome, but overcomes at last; and then all is power and blessing after that in Asher and Naphtali, in Benjamin and Joseph.

It is the history of the tribes of Israel divided into two parts. All is failure first, and then abundant blessing.

At the end (chap. 50), whatever power and magnificence Joseph had, his heart is in Israel; and he waits for his bones to be taken up when they should go back to the land, for they had buried Jacob in the land, and he passes in faith over the Egyptian bondage and looks on to their return to Canaan.

The First Man And The Second

Genesis 3.

Man is by nature both a sinner and ruined—shut out by sin from the presence of God: and man, shut out, could not get back as man. The last Adam brings us back, not in the same way, but in a heavenly one—not to an earthly paradise, but into the very presence of God in heaven. He does not bring back to innocence, but to the "righteousness of God"; for the believer is "made the righteousness of God in him." This scene in Eden shews out God and man.

There is the natural conscience of man; for he acquired by the fall the knowledge of good and evil. A man steals, and he is conscious he has done wrong. Whether or not God's law tells him so, his conscience knows it. Look at Satan's temptation. What was his object? He wanted to make God's creatures think that God was not so good to them as He might be—that He was keeping back from them something that would be for their good—that He was jealous of their becoming as Himself. The natural heart is always calling God in question for having made it responsible to Himself. Its very nature is to question God's goodness.

Satan's great lie was, "Ye shall not die." It is his constant aim to make men believe that the consequence of sin will not be that which God has said it shall be.

When the woman, had listened to Satan, lust comes in. Once away in heart from God, she must follow her own way. And what are men doing now? Helping one another to make themselves comfortable away from God, and in

those very things that they know He hates. Beloved friends, should you like to meet God just as you are? You know you would not. If God should say to you, Come and be judged, you would wish to have it put off. You know you would. And, moreover, you do not like to think about this unreadiness. What did Adam do, and Eve? They hid themselves from God—nay, further, they hid themselves from themselves and from one another; for the covering of the fig-leaves was just to hide the shame of the nakedness which they discovered. And when they were hiding away from God, they were away from the only source of blessing. It was saying, The light has come in, and I must get far from it: just what the conscience of itself does now in the natural man.

Mark the character of the sin. They believed that the devil told the truth, and that God did not. Whatever thoughts they had in their hearts, they acted upon this. And men are still believing the devil's lie—hoping to get into heaven their own way, when God has said that nothing defiled shall enter in.

He wanted too to make them think that God was not so good to them as he would be—that God was keeping back from them the very best thing they could have. And are not men now looking to Satan for happiness, instead of believing God? Man cannot believe that it is God's mind to make him happy.

And now, beloved friends, this is not only a history of Adam, but it is a history of man, of yourselves. You may say, I have done very little harm. Well, then, you shall be taken on your own ground. Is it little harm to make God a liar? What had Adam done? He had eaten an apple. Do you say, And what was that? What harm was there in

eating an apple? Alas! Adam and Eve cast off God, and that was the harm. Whether it was eating an apple, or killing a man, as afterwards came out in Cain, the principle was the same. It was casting aside God's authority, and making Him a liar. The root of the evil was there. It had only to bring forth and bud. Suppose I see a plant peeping above the ground. It has but two leaves; but I say, Here is a thistle, cut it up. I do not wait till it is grown to see what it is. And so with sinners. The evil is there, and has only to be developed. A little evil is seen, and there needs only time to manifest all.

Adam hides himself from God. Is there no harm in having so broken with God, as to want to get out of His presence? And it is not God you have harmed (as it is said in Job, "What profit is it to him if thou art righteous?") so much as it is yourselves. The God of love brings down into man's conscience the knowledge of the harm he has done to his own soul. One weighty reason why God has given His blessed word is to shew man what he has done to himself before God. It is in love He has given it; for if He were dealing with men in judgment He would have left them under it.

God called to Adam. When God speaks, it awakes the conscience; but this is not necessarily conversion. God speaks to shew man to himself, and bring him back to blessing. Alas! man is afraid of the only place where holiness can be happy. The awakened conscience shews the presence of God. You would not hide yourself from a policeman: and why? Because you know you have not done anything to make you afraid of him. But you would hide yourselves from God if you could: and why? Because you have done that which you knew He hates,

that which separates you from Him. Man cannot bear to meet with God.

It is remarkable that the only thing in man as such which one might in a certain sense call good in him—that is, conscience—only drives him away from God. Sin has made man get away from God, and it has forced God to drive out man from His presence. See man's sad condition—a sinner, ruined, and shut out from God. And there is no way back to God except one, and that is through the Second Man. If Christ comes in by the door into the sheepfold, there is no getting in some other way. He is the door, and whoso enters must come by Him. The flaming sword kept every avenue to the tree of life. There was no possibility of creeping up to it by some unguarded path.

Innocence, once gone, can never be restored. It is the same in common every-day things.

Man cannot get back to God by himself. Everything around us shews that man is out of paradise: toil, and suffering, and sorrow, and sickness, and necessities, and death, tell us of it every day.

There is another character of evil in our souls—and that is a readiness to excuse ourselves. Adam laid the blame on the woman. "The woman whom thou gavest me," etc. It was as much as saying, Why did you give me this woman? It was your gift caused the sin. He wanted to put it off from himself as a question between God and the woman. It was not untrue, and yet it was as far as possible from the truth. It is the way of our guilty nature to throw upon another the sin in which our own will is concerned. And God judged Adam out of his own mouth. The excuse he makes is the very reason for which God

condemns him. “Because thou hast hearkened,” etc. Our excuses are thus our condemnation.

There is not a word of comfort in all that God says to Adam or his wife. It is all sorrow and suffering in prospect—toil and pain. God shews man his sin to convict his conscience, not to make him happy. Grace comes in, and salvation, and therein he can rejoice. But God wants sinners to feel their sins, and not to find any comfort except in Him. He must take them out of themselves for that. If my child has been perverse, do I wish him to be happy about it? No; I want him to feel his naughtiness. I am longing to forgive him, and winning him to forgiveness; but he must feel his sin.

God did not leave these poor condemned sinners without comfort. But it was to the serpent He said, “The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head.” It was a new thing that God was bringing in—a new person and a new way. Christ was the “seed.” Where the sin had come in, the remedy was to be brought out. The blessing should come by the Seed of the woman through whom the curse had entered. This was the perfection of grace. And grace is perfect in another way. If sin has come in, sin must be entirely put away. He who shut man out from heaven has fully provided that which shall shut him in again. To be brought nigh to God through the precious blood of Christ is the place of believing souls. And how is this blessing brought? Because of the grace which is in God. Christ loved us and gave Himself for us.

God must have us see our sin as between Himself and us. We shall be justifying ourselves till we justify God in condemning us. We are then of one mind with God. To see sin as God sees it is repentance. It is “truth in the

inward parts." It is holiness and truth in the heart. And then there is all grace to meet the need that is thus found out. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." A man judging himself in God's light, without seeing Christ as the promised Seed of the woman, is almost in despair; but "God commendeth his love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." We do not want a good Adam,'but a great God and Saviour. In the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, see all the wrath for sin laid upon another; and that other, who? What the soul wants is pure simple grace to meet it just where it is. If you were driven out of paradise yesterday (it is as though God were ever saying) here is comfort for you. When you learn that you are ungodly and without strength, behold what has been done to bring you back. Are you so content with God's judgment about you, as to submit to this grace? It is the woman's seed that must be the hope.

Sin must be perfectly put away. The sinner brought back to God must be spotless. Christ does not enter heaven again till He has accomplished this. "When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down," etc. When all was finished, He took the throne of righteousness. It is a more living and mighty truth to my soul, that Christ, as the last Adam, is in the heavenly paradise, than that the first Adam was cast out of the earthly one.

It is through grace, and through grace alone, that we get to know God. If I could present myself at the door of heaven, and seek admittance on the ground of my own righteousness (supposing for a moment it were possible), how should I stand there? For "to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." I might know God as the One who dwelt there,

but it would be a cold entrance; I could not know Him as a God of love. What grace is shewn in paying a man his wages for His work?

No, it is my joy to find it all in another, and not in myself. God justifies me when He says, My Son has been given for your soul, and died for sin. We are clothed with Christ—we have put Him on. If I be asked, On what ground do you expect to get into heaven? I say, I am become the righteousness of God. What more could I have or want? If asked what I am in myself, I say, A poor sinner, and this to the very end; but I am now in Him who is the delight of God. True, I do not know Him fully, but He has redeemed me; and I am in Him that is the life. He is in me, and I in Him; and where He is, there I shall in due time be also. Now I want to serve Him better and to shew forth His praise. Perfect power will by-and-by come in, and not a particle of my dust can be left behind. The body is His as well as the soul. Death has been vanquished for it. We are still in the body, and bear it about with us as yet in the bondage of corruption; but Satan's power is crushed. The serpent's head is bruised. We have to do with him now, but his power is broken. He has been overcome, for Christ went down under the full power of him that had the power of death; and He came up from it triumphant, for it was not possible He should be holden of it.

We are told, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." We are not to overcome him (that we never could do), but when he meets Christ in me, he cannot stand that, he must flee. "Thou shalt bruise his heel." The blessed Son of God came down to go through this for us. He said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God": and that will was our salvation. "By one offering he perfected for ever

them that were sanctified"; but then that offering had to be made. See the Lord Jesus Christ coming down from heaven in love, to devote Himself to God for our salvation; and this changes a man's heart. Jesus drank the cup of wrath for sin, full and to the dregs. He tasted death—was shut out from God's presence— endured the hiding of His countenance; and all this, that He might bring us back into the presence of God without judgment and without sin, but with everything that could make us happy and blessed for ever. He lived in God's love; He dwelt with the Father; and He knew well what He was bringing us into, what He was giving us to share. But He knew too what the holiness of God was, and what His wrath was; and therefore He knew what He was delivering us from. How I shall hate sin, if I have seen Christ agonizing for mine upon the cross!

Well, the moment a poor sinner looks to Jesus by faith as his divine sin-bearer, his sins are all gone—they are put out of God's sight for ever. And Christ is in heaven. Could He take the sin there? No; His very being in heaven proves it all left behind. The poor sinner gets the fruit of all that He has done, and all that He is—pardoned through His blood, brought nigh to God Himself. Peace has been made through the blood of the cross. And the glorified Man is in heaven, appearing in the presence of God for us—of His Father and our Father, of His God and our God.

Genesis 3

It is not only the word of God which lets us know that there is sin and misery ia the world. Man knows very well that iniquity and defilement are in himself, and no one is satisfied with his portion here below because he is

ill at ease in his own heart. The word of God shews us much more—how Satan entered the world, and the consequences of sin in our relations with God.

The first thing the old serpent does is to put something between God and us, to put himself between both. The only thing which can render us happy is that there is nothing between God and us, and that God loves us. Satan begins by rendering the soul distrustful of God, and suggests to the woman to wish for a forbidden thing, and to satisfy the wish, hinting that God does not love to gratify us, and would keep some great good from us. The enemy does not direct our mind either to the goodness of God, or to our obeying God. The woman knew well why she ought not to eat of the fruit of that tree, and that death would be the inevitable result. Had not God forbidden and threatened?

God has warned us of the consequences of sin. He had said, “In the day that thou eatest, dying thou shalt die.” But Satan, who ever seeks to deny and lower the truth of God, says to the woman, “Ye shall not surely die … ye shall be as God.” And it is true that the fall has rendered man much more intelligent relative to good and evil; but Satan hid from him that he would be severed from God, and with an evil conscience. Their eyes were opened, it is said; and they knew that they were naked as they looked at themselves.

All that which is near us appears more important and greater than that which is still distant. The forbidden tree being near, and the judgment of God far off, Eve takes of the fruit and eats. So the spirit of falsehood says till this day to men, Ye shall not die; the threatenings of God will not take effect. He conceals the warnings of

God; and one does then what Satan and one's own lusts push one on to do. If a Christian is not vigilant, his conscience will lose its activity, and in place of seeing God he will see his own nakedness.

Man still uses leaves to cover his nakedness. He does his utmost to hide from himself the evil which is there; but when God reveals Himself, it is quite otherwise.

God draws near as if nothing had happened; then what ought to have been a joy for man without sin becomes, because of sin, the source of immense alarm. Adam flees, and seeks to hide from before the eye of God, as if he had succeeded in veiling his nakedness to his own eye. What a horrible thing for man to be thus hiding himself before God!

Adam fears, for conscience is always touched by the presence of God; it takes away every hope of enjoying sin when it penetrates into our conscience. Then one only sees God, who is feared, without our being able to appreciate Him.

The relations of man with God were thenceforward broken, and in a manner irreparable, as to man.

"Who told thee that thou wast naked?" says the Lord. Adam answers by accusing the woman, and God who had given her to him. Dastardliness always comes into the soul with sin. Adam wishes to excuse himself by lies, and to leave the fault and blame between his wife and God. He leaves to God the care of arranging the thing with the woman. Thus a bad conscience fears God too much to confess its sin, yet it knows too well that it has sinned to deny it. If you had full confidence in God, and were perfectly sure that God loves you, you would be very happy. But Satan is here; and his great power

consists in producing distrust where there is happiness and intimate relation with God to destroy in our hearts. You trust your own will and your own efforts for your happiness; but, distrusting God, you will not, you cannot, confide to Him the care of this happiness, and leave yourself to His mighty love.

The beginning of sin is the unbelief which doubts God. Thereby in effect Satan began. He persuaded Eve that God had kept something for Himself that the creature might not be too happy and blest.

The woman was wrong in conversing with Satan; she ought not to have listened to a voice which insinuated distrust of God. What Satan did then and always, he persuades every man that God is too good to condemn us because we sin; and man, spite of his sin and his conscience, hopes and persuades himself that he will not be condemned. It is the voice of the old serpent. Now God has shewn by the death of His Son that the wages of sin is death.

Conscience being evil, every effort of the world is to hide from itself its nakedness before God. It would remove from men gross and outward sin, drunkenness, murder, and robbery. It seeks by law, and efforts of philanthropy, individual and co-operative, to blot out the open effects of sin in the world. Such are the aprons of fig-leaves, which remove nothing at all, but serve for the moment to hide from ourselves our nakedness and our misery, to avoid thinking of the justice of the condemnation God has put from the beginning on the sin that dwells in us. Now that sin is between our conscience and God, one wishes at least that there should be something to hide us before Him. With this

end in view, man employs what he calls innocent things. Thus the trees were so, but man made use of them to conceal himself from before God. God had given all to man in this world; but man uses it now only to deprive himself of the sight of God, and thus pretends to be innocent in employing these good things after such a sort!

When the voice of God awakens conscience, people still wish something to hide them from Him; but this is impossible. God says to Adam, “Where art thou?” There is no means of hiding any longer. If God said so to each of your souls, would it be your joy to be in His presence? God alone is our resource and refuge when we have sinned. It is only God who takes away guile from the heart, for He alone can pardon. Now if you hide yourself from God, where are you for your soul? God had not yet driven Adam from His presence till Adam fled from the presence of God. Conscience tells us that if we have sinned, no leaves or trees can hide us in His presence. If there be a just God, man is wretched in his conscience; he cannot be quiet in sin but solely on condition that there is no God. Every hope of unbelief is that there be no God, or, what comes to the same thing, that He be not just or holy.

Adam wishes to excuse himself, as if he had not lusted himself, as if he had not followed the voice of his wife instead of hearkening to God, as if he was not responsible for having failed himself. Now if there were not lust in us, sin would not be produced. In the midst of all God’s goodness, who has given His Son for poor-sinners, you have no confidence in God, and this is a state of sin. It matters little how it is manifested, it displays ingratitude and distrust. Eve listened and

believed Satan, instead of hearing and believing God. This, man ever does; and he hopes for salvation and eternal life though he sins. All the efforts you make to be happy shew that ycu are not happy. Why the arts and pleasures of the world if the world were happy? All that which would have been the effect of God's presence in your hearts and consciences would stop your pleasure. Therefore if all your pleasures are incompatible with the presence of God, what will they be for you in eternity? Will they carry you to the foot of the throne of the Holy and Just, to shew Him that you have spent many innocent hours far from Him? There are not only disobedience, distrust, falsehood, which are sin: there is worse still—the state of soul which seeks to be light and giddy, far from the presence of God.

Man may withdrawn himself from God's presence whilst grace lasts j but he will not be able when God shall judge him. Satan will help you, your best friends according to the world will also help you, to withdraw yourself from His presence, to deny and forget it, but that will certainly not go on longer than the time of grace granted to us. Therefore, while it is called to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. God knows that you are sinners: He knows the iniquity of Satan, who would make man his prey; but there is an answer to that which Satan knew, and of which man could have no idea: God makes a revelation of grace (v. 15). A promise is not given to those who are incapable of enjoying it. The natural man cannot enjoy what flows from grace, because faith is necessary to that, and confidence in God. The question thenceforward is wholly between the serpent and the second Man. God says nothing to Adam but words which shew the actual

consequences of sin; He says to the serpent what He will do. Thenceforth the only hope for lost man is in this promised Seed; and even before he is driven from His presence, God reveals what Jesus will do to destroy the work of Satan.

There is not a single sign of repentance in Adam after his sin. He had shewn the dastardliness, meanness, and fraud of his heart; but God only occupies Himself with His counsels and the answer He has in Himself. He announces the Seed of the woman, whose glory and power are developed throughout all His word.

Now it is no longer an anticipation or promise of grace: Jesus is come. Wretched man thought that God did not wish to give. him something through jealousy of his happiness; but this was the lie of Satan. God, who seemed to refuse a fruit to man innocent, has given His Son to man a sinner. And the heart of man is so perverted that he has no confidence, though God has given His Son. Jesus, instead of fleeing from condemnation, went to meet it; He took on Him the sins of His bride, instead of loading her with fetters. He has by death destroyed him that had the power of death. The effect of the death of Jesus is to inspire us with perfect confidence. The death of Jesus put us in relationship with God, without fear and without difficulty, because it clothes us when we are naked and miserable. There is nothing but grace for us after the judgment which has struck the Son of God.

Is your confidence in God? Do you believe that He gave His Son, that His love did so to save fully poor sinners? This confidence gives peace and obedience, because nothing is more precious than the love of God; and this

love makes us prefer obedience and its consequences spite of all the difficulties. May God touch your heart, and give you to render Him glory by receiving all that His love has done for you!

Abram

Genesis 12.

The contents of this chapter are peculiarly important, as unfolding the dispensations of God. In other parts of scripture may be more fully seen what the means were by which the purposes of God should be accomplished, and the great object in which those purposes found their result; but the principles on which the dealings of God hinge are nowhere more clearly produced. It is, in fact, their first exhibition, and therefore (however succinctly) they are definitely and very completely produced and stated;—not in theoretic principles philosophically declared, but in the statement of that on which they all depended, and in the exhibition of which, therefore, they could alone be fitly taught;—that is, in the sovereign acting of God upon the principles in which we were thereby to be instructed.

Thus it is that the scripture continually teaches by realities, for in them God is introduced. No theory can reach God— the human mind is incapable of it—but God acting is always the adequate exhibition of Himself; and thus the object of faith is exhibited in the way in which He is revealed; while at the same time those with whom the history may be conversant present all the characters of man, as subject to God, or in the exercise of that will which requires to be corrected, as being alienated from Him and opposed to Him.

The great point of the chapter is the call of God, and the principles on which it proceeds. The calling of God is a cardinal point in His dispensations. It is identified with grace, and in it there is no repentance; God does not swerve from it. It expressed His purpose, as it is written, “The gifts and calling of God are unrepented of,” Rom. 11:29. Of this there had been heretofore no mention; individuals may have been called (as assuredly every saint had been from Abel downwards), but until this chapter it does not form the subject of the revelation of God.

It is important to consider what subjects the scripture previously presents; they were substantially two—Adam and Noah; creation, and creation secured by government. That Adam was placed at the head of natural creation will be called in question by none. That Noah stood as the representative head of government I learn from the committal of the sword to him, or at least from the revelation of the principle to him, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” There might be repentance in these things, though in gift and calling of God there could be none. He was not declared as the God of Adam, or as the God of Noah; but He was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; “this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations,” Exod. 3:15. Creation, in point of fact (as to its existing estate), was repented of —” God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy”; and He did destroy, sparing favoured Noah; as it is written,

“I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them,” Gen. 6:5-7. But God’s calling is His purpose, and He hath sworn in His holiness, and He will not repent.

The natural good of creation in the hands of the first man had not only proved fallible and corruptible, but it had failed, and become corrupted; and destructive judgment had been executed upon it by the hand of God, few, that is eight souls, being spared, together with what was with them in the ark, out of all in whose nostrils was the breath of life. To Noah (as I have before said) the principle of government was communicated, in order to restrain evil in its effects; that violence might no more cover the earth, but that in detailed instances the wrath of God might be vindicated against it—life belonging unto Him. Sin, however, in its principle, still remains at work, exhibiting itself in the failing of Noah the saint, and in the recklessness of the disrespectful father of Canaan.

As regards this part of the history previous to Abram (that is, the earth under government), we have the fact recorded of the division of the earth amongst its various nations and families; this we find in Genesis 10, where the fact is stated, the origin of which we find explained only in chapter 11. But first let us consider the fact—the earth was divided (a new and not a necessary circumstance for it as placed under government) into distinct nations, separated by place, language, and (as to the various lower branches), we may add, more immediate origin. Thus, whatever may have been the particular changes since, the earth under government

assumed the form which it now bears. Various indeed, in particular parts, might be the interchange, division, or growth of power; but the characteristic state of things continued to be the same, and in fact its great features were indelibly impressed. Indeed not only is this the case, but it is interesting to observe, that if we take the list of nations spoken of as gathered together under the wilful king in the latter day, and under Gog in Ezekiel we shall find ourselves brought back to the same nations, and tongues, and families, which are presented to our view at the outset, as the immediate consequence of the establishment of this principle of government in the hands of Noah, and as formed into actual condition by the sin of Babel. The rest of the intermediate scripture is the history of calling and grace.

To the sin of Babel I would now turn. In the history of Babel we have shewn the sin of man, under the circumstances in which the one family of man was then placed; even in assuming the earth to themselves; in seeking to make a name, lest they should be scattered; a city, which they purposed should be an abiding monument and centre of power, but on which God writes Babel. Until they were scattered abroad, they had one speech, and one tongue, and thus they were practically one family, having a common bond of association. But the lust of ambitious selfishness was at work, and this union was broken to pieces. Hence they were separated and (the earth subsequently being formally divided among them, Genesis 10:25; 11:18), they became, to every intent and purpose, distinct nations. Although its origin was sin, and its character confusion, the reaching out of grace was shewn in the testimony of the day of Pentecost, as extended toward the world, and as

contrasted with anything towards the Jews merely; this I remark in passing, but it is not on this that I would now dwell.

But although circumstances were thus altered, the principle of government remained untouched; however it might be exercised, righteously or unrighteously, it was placed in the hand of man, “not bearing the sword in vain,” “the minister of God to execute wrath.” It might be exercised according to its institution, in repressing evil, although merely by power; but even this in the sin of man was not the case; the result is described in Psalm 82.

“God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods.

“How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?

“Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.

“Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

“They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

“I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.

“But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

“Arise, O God, judge the earth, for thou shalt inherit all nations.”

The judges of the earth had all gone incorrigibly wrong — they neither heard, nor yet understood. God was obliged, therefore, to take the matter into His own hands; He was obliged to arise and to judge the earth. Thus is shewn the failure of power in the hands of man from another part of scripture, as is also shewn in Daniel 7, etc.

We have thus brought before us in Genesis, up to chapter 12, creation, and then its failure and its judgment; next we have government of the renewed earth introduced for its peace, in consequence of evil having been proved in man. Man's pride, rebellion, and self-sufficiency, are shewn: together with a judgment, which did not alter the principle of the dispensation (for had it been otherwise, evil would have been without check), which was to continue until God should take it into His own hands, but which exhibited how man failed under it, in its common form; how under the consequent judgment it assumed the form of distinct nationality; and how the lust of personal ambition and power, or of obtaining a great name, was associated with the divinely sanctioned principle of government, and thus came into existence the beginning of kingdoms; however unrighteously this principle was exercised, it still continued to be unalterably recognized of God. Here were all the principles drawn out, and the scene was closed.

The circumstances might vary, but there was no change in the principle till God takes the matter into His own hands. Countries and kindreds were now formed; and inasmuch as they were separated one from another by the spirit of intelligible association, so much the more were they united in stronger personal and local

interests; selfishness became national, and adverse interests became (not simply personal) but those of countries, and peoples, and tongues.

But into the midst of all this there was a new principle introduced. The calling of God—a principle and a power which, while leaving these untouched, acted paramount to them all—to natural relationship, and to formed associations.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.” Here is distinctly shewn the calling of the “father of the faithful.” Country and kindred were recognized as existing; how they were formed in creation, and under government (as established in Noah), and the subsequent circumstances, we have already seen.

They were now left just as they were. They were not meddled with. In fact, in their own place (though corrupted), and as having instamped upon them that they had been God’s ordinances, they were both distinctly maintained. There is not to this day any abrogation of them, nor indeed ever will be in principle, though they will be transferred to Christ, and under Christ they will be unto righteousness and blessing. “A king shall reign in righteousness,” and although the queen and Jewish partner of His glory shall be taught to forget her father’s house (being called through grace, not descent), yet the offspring of the remnant shall be blessed with them; instead of the fathers shall be the children. However, therefore, evil may have overrun them, both government and relationship, home, etc., are principles in no way rejected, nor could they be

abstractedly. But the calling of God acts paramountly to them, or else there could be no other principle, and the prevailing of man's evil in them would be left unremedied.

But in the wisdom of God, the corrupted state of things was no longer judged or acted upon, but the witness of better things was introduced; had they been judged, then must have been the end in utter destruction, or the premature assumption of all into the hands of Supreme power. Yet even that by which evil was to be suppressed, that is, government, being corrupted, was now become the instrument of evil. Hence entirely new hopes could alone be introduced, and not merely a present amendment, for that must have come to the same end; but new principles, not destroying the sanctioned and appointed instruments of God, for such destruction would have proved, not so much the evil of man, the creature, but the evil and foolishness of the Creator's appointment. This appointment was left just where it was, to be judged in due time upon the maintainers of it. But in grace another principle was introduced—the leaving in self-sacrifice all these things for better hopes. The existing ties of country and kindred are recognized, but in the call of God there is set up a paramount claim: —"The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house."

We have then, in the calling of God, the assertion of a paramount claim on God's part upon an individual in grace, leaving everything out of which he was called without further change; only calling him out of it. This is one very strong, distinct, and new principle, not previously revealed, consequent upon, and acting in, an

especial and paramount way, in reference to the existing relationships, which had arisen out of what was previously ordered and appointed. No declaration of blessings or principles to men where they were, but the calling of them out thence, and thus a personal calling is what we find. The principle further established in it mere personal obedience, upon the ground of this call, to individual responsible action. “God had said to Abraham, Get thee out.” Here on the word of God the individual responsibility of obedience attached. It necessarily and avowedly involved the breaking of subsisting relationships in person, as to his own interest in them, but without affecting them, as they stood in themselves, in the least. He was to leave his country, and his kindred, and his father’s house. They might still continue just what they were before (they might, or they might not): this was a question of Providence; obedience to the words and calling of God was the only point in grace to Abram, the only point to be considered by him. The word of God led the way in the direction which was given, and gave the promise to him as that which should encourage him in acting. “Into a land that I will shew thee”; this was the certain hope of certain faith, by which a man is made entirely a stranger where he was before at home. It was indeed merely a promise, but it was a promise which involved not only the certainty of God, but also the guidance of God unto the thing promised— “to a land that I will shew thee.”

Let us turn more to the detail of this calling of God; we have seen already that its grand distinguishing feature was separation from the world. “The Lord had said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house.” This was the

substance of the present character of the calling, as acting upon a nationalized world; and thus was brought forward the specific character of the church.

There was involved then in it the immediate favour of God, not in present comfort, but in personal calling. The personal revelation of Himself to Abram, as it were, identified him with Himself and with His purpose, and with the blessing of an appointed inheritance. This calling, however special and personal, however distinguishing in favour, necessarily involved obedience. The call of blessing to Abraham was a call to get out of his country unto a land which God would shew to him, and thus it necessarily involved obedience. Whatever the power which acted on his mind might be, obedience was the result; for in the very terms of the call it was manifest— no obedience, no blessing. He was (to use the words of scripture) “sanctified unto obedience,” for there was nothing else now given but the command, “Go out”— “the Lord had said.” It was not to gratify the present selfishness of Abram’s nature, saying, “this is thy country,” but it was “Get thee out of thy country” — to go where? “to a land that I will shew thee.” It implied, therefore, implicit confidence in God for faithfulness, power, and love. Taking Him for the security and the portion (as the scriptures reveal it), he went out, not knowing whither he went. It is on this that the Spirit of God so specially rests as characteristic of his approved faith. By separation from the world, on the ground of implicit confidence in God, he lost everything, and got nothing but the word of God, sealed of course to his soul (for his faith rested in it) by the power of the Spirit of God. The God of glory had appeared to him in the

matter, and God would shew to him the land. So Abram departed.

Here then is the pattern and character of the church, and also of the individual believer; they are called of God in faith out of all that into which the world and nature have been formed (and while not meddling with these things, or disowning them in their place, but recognizing in them God's ordering hand, and moreover the sin of man): trusting in a promise not at once fulfilled, but taking God, and God alone, as the security, the warrant, and the guide; it is faithfulness, as being assured of the present loss of all things, and the present gain of nothing; it is a walking by faith, and not by sight, not only as regards present things relinquished, but also as to things hoped for—things to come— "for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" But they are sufficiently assured of God; and in Him, and knowing Him, or rather being known of Him, they are ready to give up all for His word. Thus it was not the reward that was taken as the portion, but God, the promiser of the reward, and therefore it was faith. The object was as simple as the security. "They went forth to go to the land of Canaan"; the result was as certain as He who called was sure; "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came." Such is the history and the character of the church of God in its calling. Called out by God into separation from the world, which it leaves just where it was to go into a land of promise—a land which God will shew it—it walks by faith, and not by sight, going forth to go thither, and thither surely coming, according to the calling and power of God.

A darker picture now remains—the actual practical conduct and condition. There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down into Egypt. This was not confidence in God, who had brought him thither, nor was the land of Egypt the land of Canaan, as was afterwards well proved.

And here I would remark, what will, I believe, simplify the use of many types, and be found (at least I have so found it) that men who are types represent the energy of faith, the spiritual energy of the church, under the circumstances in which the type represents it, or perhaps its failure therein; and that females who are presented to us as types represent the state and condition of the church.

Abram may act in faith in going out, and he may act in want of faith in denying his wife; Sarah is the New Covenant, Hagar the Old, a freewoman and a bondwoman: one, more or less, presenting the acting of the Spirit of Christ, the Gibbor, the bridegroom; the other, the estate or condition in the dispensation, whether clothed with the sun or in the wilderness, in bondage or in freedom. And thus it is that they may vary; thus David, or Ahaz, or Manasseh, would be very differently presented as a type of any individual: but respecting the church or Jewish economy typified by a woman, it was all one (as being the possessor of the throne of David), because the economy, or condition of the church in which they so acted, was all one. I state this merely to illustrate what I mean; the woman is the state in which the dispensation is; the man is the conduct of faith in it.

Here then we have Abram and Sarai introduced; and afterwards the actual conduct of the church, and not the calling, is the thing brought before us.

Present circumstances were distressing in that land into which the promise of God had called him. It was still a land of promise; the Canaanite was then in the land. Ahram felt the famine to be grievous, but we find no reference to God, no recurrence to Him, no directions from Him, no exercise of faith; there was no previous direction for this. The fact is all we have—Abram went down into Egypt. Alas! too true. But was the God of Abram near? He had not inquired this, but was acting on his own prudence and reasoning. Fear of the Egyptians came upon him as he drew near their land. If there was not famine for the saint, there was the denial of the blessing and indissoluble bond which subsisted between the church and its bridegroom, represented in faith by those who stood in that relation before God. He came into the regions of the prince of this world for his own comfort to satisfy his present need, not of faith in God. The consequence was, the immediate denial of the holy separation from the world and union with Christ which belonged to the church: she was his sister, not his wife; true, perhaps, in one sense, but deadly in its actual character as to the faith of God's elect. She was very fair to look upon, for indeed God had set His beauty upon her as His daughter, the object of His love, as of Himself, as well as being the spouse of Christ the Son; she was commended in the world. The faith of the church had denied and disowned its unalterable affiance to Christ. The church was taken into the world's house, the house of the prince of this world; and the prince of this world entreated Abram well for her sake.

He who had denied the bond, and given up that which was essential in their connection, obtained thereby plenty and ease at the hand of the prince of this world; “he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.” But was this comfort to him? Was it satisfaction (if he had any truth of heart) for the circumstances in which he was placed? And if we turn from the mere beggarly circumstances of the type to the blessed and indissoluble union between our blessed Lord Christ and the church, how does it picture the shamefulness, the baseness, the want of faithfulness, in unbelieving believers, in surrendering this charge of God, this deposit of faith! How must every camel, every servant, every ox, as it passed before his eyes, with the stamp of Pharaoh’s kindness upon it, have smitten Abram’s heart with the thought, “But where is my wife, I have sold my wife for this!” Did he not know that she was so? Had his feeble falsehood to others dimmed his own thoughts and feelings? Had he forgotten in his love of sheep, and oxen, etc., that the wife given him of the Lord was sold for their sake? Could he persuade himself that she was his sister, and might be Pharaoh’s wife, and not his?

Where was his trust in God? where the integrity of his way? Bitter was that time to Abram, or sad the forgetfulness of an unrighteous heart. The lie must have lain heavy on his heart, but he must receive his sheep and the oxen; cutting as it might be, he had involved himself in the circumstances, he stood upon his own declaration that she was his sister. Had Abram intended this? No! it was an unlooked-for circumstance; it was unbelief, which continually produces in judgment the evil which it seeks to avoid. The sons of men would build

a tower lest they should be scattered abroad, and the Lord scattered them because they built it. Abram, fearing lest Pharaoh should take his wife, says she is his sister (as if God would not preserve him), and therefore Pharaoh takes her into his house. But it was the first step that was wrong—Abram went down into Egypt. He went down without God out of the land of faith and promise, and he could not expect (for God could not bless unbelief, though He might judge sin that acted in it unrighteously) to meet God there; his heart knew Him not in power there; and as he must act on something, he acts on his own resources prudently; but as he had departed from faith in God, so was faithfulness in the position of his wife with her true husband departed from: and he was blessed in the world (yea, and by the prince of this world) for his unfaithfulness.

If Satan gets the church, in its state and condition, into his own house (however mercifully God may preserve it), he will bless the faithless instruments of the betrayal with the things of the world. Such, then, is the history (not of the calling, but) of the practical conduct of the church: not of the calling of God, which we saw in its sure infallibility before, together with Sarai and all he had, but of the acting of men in the place to which they are called—in their departure from it, not acting in faith; and such are the results. The end is not that Abram is honoured, but that the Lord vindicates Himself in plaguing Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai Abram’s wife. He asserts and maintains the title, and judges and will judge the world for thus taking another man’s wife. The church is the King’s daughter, and is taken in the lust of its own dominion by the world. And this the Lord would, and was entitled to,

visit. But still the sin was Abram's, his blessings all this while were curses. And it is worthy of remark, that it was an Egyptian handmaid that typified the fleshly covenant of bondage: the world always genders unto bondage, for it is ever opposed to the Spirit of God; and whenever, therefore, the world comes in, it merely produces, and in result is identified with, bondage (where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty). For the world in its results is developed by bringing an expectation and an endeavour to procure the inheritance by a covenant of works. Such has been the actual fact in the church, and will be, because the Spirit is opposed to the world; and, that being grieved and absent, the other takes its place, with the indulgence of lusts, resting on works, and union with the world. But while this was an ultimate result, I would now rest merely upon the picture which is actually presented to us in this chapter, of the cause, character, and consequence of the working of the spirit of unbelief in the church, called out indeed, but looked at as in the hands of man. In the early part of the chapter we have its calling of God, and its results as well as character. The latter part shews its conduct in man, the shame, worldly comfort, unbelief, and sorrow; but also the merciful interposition of that God, who, when we have wearied Him with our sins, acts and delivers for His own name's sake, and vindicates, in righteous dealing toward the world, what the unrighteousness of man had plunged unfaithfully into its power.

I feel that I have very feebly drawn out what is here presented to our view; but if I have drawn the attention of the children of God to the application of the plain typical principles here set before us (as applied to the

history of the church of God in this brief account, as that of the world had previously been given), so as to lead them by the Spirit to judge from the Lord, and not from anything else, whether the world or expediency, I shall be content; and I pray the Lord to bless it.

History Of Abram

I have been particularly interested latterly in the history of Abram; and I send you a brief outline of what has struck me in this history as a picture of many interesting elements of the life of faith. There is a difference between public worship and personal communion brought out in this history, and the intimacy of the latter, and the ground on which it is built, which have especially occupied me. But I can, on account of other occupations, only give the outline.

His life, in as far as it is presented to us as a life of faith, begins by his calling, when in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan. The God of glory appeared to him, says Stephen. In a word, it was God's revelation of Himself to him, by which he was called into the path of life. Object of divine election, Jehovah's revelation of Himself to him calls him out of darkness and subjection to the power of Satan (for his family worshipped other gods beyond the flood out of the land of promise), and gives to him the promises, in connection with a faith which set out, on the simple word of God, to be led where God Himself should shew him his country and his home. He was to quit all for the word and promise of God. This is the first element and character of the life of faith. The Lord gives sufficient of the details of this history to shew that, till Abram had fully broken with all God called upon him to leave, he could not, though he had left much, and might plead the best claims of nature for the rest, attain the end for which he had left all the rest. He had left Ur, come to Charan, and dwelt there. However, after Terah's death, he left Charan, as the Lord had said to him, and

now comes to Canaan. This begins the second part of the life of faith: that which passes in the place of promise.

In that life we are called on to set out, trusting God towards the place of promise and hope, called by the blessed revelation of God to our souls. And we are called to walk with God in this place of blessing and communion into which we are entered in spirit. This is the second part of our christian life. It is found here (chap. 12:6-8). Abram walks up and down in the place of promise—to us heavenly places. The Canaanite, the hostile power of evil, is still in the land. Joshua will, in time, root them out; but for Abram's walk of faith, they are still in the land, while he walks there in hope. How true it is, and how far we are from always sufficiently bearing it in mind.

The Lord appears to Abram; this is the ground of worship, as well as of walk. He does not evidently appear to him to cause him to set out, leaving all; for He appears to him when he is, though a stranger there, in the land to which God has brought him. But He appears to draw out to Himself the affections of him whom He has brought there. But it is not in that condition Abram is to possess or inherit it. He would have lost much by such a possession, his being a stranger there led his heart and hope, through grace, to a city which had foundations—a better country, that is, a heavenly. We can surely say, it was expedient for us that Christ went away. Oh, how sweet the heavenly associations and hopes to which He has drawn us, and into which He has introduced us by the Spirit He has sent down on His going up on high. How truly He has set man in heavenly places with God. How far better than the establishment

of an earthly kingdom, however glorious it may be. There is something peculiarly excellent and blessed in a life of faith, dependent on God for enjoyment in what is not seen. A man of the world, one, at least, whose life was passed as such, a sage of their own, has said, “Whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, exalts man in the scale of intellectual being.” How much more so when it is God who fills it all up, and that in the creating and unfolding of affections, which are awakened and formed by Christ and have Him, and the divine perfectness which is in Him, for their object and their source.

But to return to the history we are studying. The Lord appeared—made Abram feel practically that he was not to have the land—God, and confidence in Him was his portion— he was a stranger there; promise as to this, was his proper portion, but in his seed he should inherit it. There was a settled purpose of God, and this purpose he was thus to know. How blessed, thus, to rest in God, our heart founded on communications from Himself, and that He can bless us in teaching us to trust Him enough to live the life of faith, to be content with Him. The heart of a stranger, who has God with him, is, of all, the best in this world; it was, in the perfectest way and degree, Christ’s. Judgment God will execute to introduce others into actual blessing; we have all with Him, and now, and indeed for ever, in Himself. We have no need of judgment to enjoy our portion, though we know judgment will issue and work deliverance for all else.3 This is the church’s place, and it is a very blessed one—she suffers with Christ. This position in Abram’s case drew out worship. It is its true and real power for us. It was to the God who appeared to him that he raised his

altar: the revelation of Himself by God in the place of promise, draws out worship; as the revelation of Himself, when we are far from it, sets us in the way to the place of rest that God is to shew us. It is this blessed revelation of Himself by God putting us into conscious relationship with Himself, flowing from what is known to faith only, which forms the ground of worship. It is His favour, direct interest in us, His having brought us by His revelation into connection with Himself, which in and by this confidence creates worship. Our worship answers to the revelation we thus have, while it is founded on the grace of it. The revelation of His purpose, and of the way of the accomplishment of His promise, accompanies and makes part of the revelation on which it is founded. But this puts the soul into permanent intercourse with God of this kind. The worship, to Abram, realizes the various parts of the home promised to faith, to be possessed when pilgrimage is over; and when he realizes the enjoyment of it, his pilgrimage, his altar, is renewed. He goes around the place of promise and hope, where he is yet a stranger; but when he pitches his tent in the enjoyment of it, then he raises his altar too. This is a sweet and happy picture of the life and occupation of faith. These two elements —the setting out on the journey towards the place of promise, and the happy acknowledgement of God in it, form the two parts of the life of faith.

The rest of this chapter, on which I do not enlarge, shews the failure of the believer, who is apt, if the place of promise does not afford him all for present need which he wants, instead of consulting God, to go down to the world for help. This, though accompanied by outward prosperity—as it has been with the church—

leads to further unfaithfulness. Abram has no altar here, nor till he returns to the altar he made at the beginning, where he had last had one—no new communion— no further acquaintance with the place of promise. All he can do is through grace to get back to the place he has left.

When Abram had returned to the altar he had left to go southward, he again gets into worship. Here, though perhaps the prosperity of Egypt had given occasion to the strife and sorrow, the conduct of Abram is beautiful and characteristic of one having the heavenly portion. If Egypt had betrayed him, it had at least taught him a lesson. Returned with this experience into communion with God, he has enough in this to give up all the rest in grace. There is a moment when our own faith is put to the test: often we walk by that of others; but our own state must be tried. Lot, a believer, chooses the world (and contrary to every right feeling), and vexes his righteous soul in the midst of what was the very object of coming judgment. As soon as the worldly-minded believer and his portion are together, the distinction, made by faith and faithfulness in the disinterestedness of heavenly happiness and grace, where God was a sufficient portion, was given effect to by the worldly wish of Lot. Abram is told to go over the whole place of promise, and know its length and breadth; northward, southward, eastward, and westward, all its extent— it all was his. That is, when once the heart has left all that selfishness would have of what might seem within the limits of the land, but was taken by the carnal heart to please itself, the full extent and blessed details of what we are to enjoy with God is made known to us—and experimentally. We have here, then, after the general

character of the life of faith, and failure in it, an important experimental element of it: after failure and restoration to communion by grace, and complete victory over, and renunciation of the world, such a sense of the value of the heavenly and unseen things, as frees from the influence of the world. The consequence is, an escape from being entangled in what is the scene and object of judgment, and a full experimental knowledge of the inheritance of faith. Note, Abram escapes, and gets the increased privilege by walking in the path of faith, where there is no perception of the consequences. Abram had yielded through weakness and want of faith in trial; but his heart was right, and after the trouble his fault had occasioned, and his restoration, the very effect of this humbling experience is to give the superiority to all worldly influence which saves him entirely from the fatal mistake of Lot.4 Here the Lord, though He does not appear as when He called, or revealed Himself in the land of promise, speaks to Abram. And Abram, after removing his tent, builds an altar where he comes to sojourn. For our worship is in the measure in which we enter into the details of our portion from God.

We have here three, in a certain sense four, of these altars, in what we have hitherto read. Firstly, the one built on the Lord’s revelation of Himself in the land, which gives the general character of the worship of faith. Secondly, one shewing the permanent abiding character of worship in his strangership. In Egypt, out of the place of promise and faith, none; then (what made me say, in a certain sense a fourth), the return to the place of strangership and worship in the place of promise; and, lastly, when his exercised heart had renounced all but God, and God (the worldly-minded

believer having chosen the well-watered plain) had made him realize all the extent of the scene of promise, he builds an altar there to worship the God who had bestowed all on him, assured him in the possession of it, and given him the present knowledge of and enjoyment of it in hope.

But renouncing the world is the path to victory over it; the choosing of it is captive subjection to its power. Lot is carried away captive by the powerful ones of the earth, along with those among whom his worldly propensities had led him. Abram, free and walking in the faith of God, has more force from Him than all the kings, conquerors or conquered, and delivers Lot and the kings who could not help themselves. The full victory of faith is here presented—ours is not with carnal weapons, when it is gained; and what is figured will only be fully accomplished in connection with the Jews. This brings Abram under Melchizedek blessing, God taking the character, which is properly millennial, of possessor of heaven and earth. Praise and blessing constitute the priestly work of Melchizedek. This is the victory of faith, and the full blessing of Christ (priest and king over God's universal dominion) being established—all enemies being overcome. But it historically gives occasion, not merely to renouncing the world completely, but to the refusal of the least dependence on it. Abram depends on God for wealth and everything. In such a relationship receiving from the world, depending on it, for advantage as its debtor, is pollution. Thus closes this part of Abram's history, and the worship which belongs to it.

Details of the most interesting kind are given in what follows; but they are the development of his personal

relationship with God. What we have examined is, in its general characters, the public life of faith. What follows enters into the private and personal communion which belongs to the life of faith, through the divine grace which visits it. We do not find worship, but what we may be allowed reverently to call intercourse. In one place we are told God talked with Abram. Abram, no doubt, fell on his face, the fitting position in such intercourse; and even when he, in all liberty, pleaded with Jehovah for others, when Jehovah appeared to him in the form of a man, it was with the fullest recognition of the divine glory of Him with whom he spoke. Still it was not worship, but communications from Jehovah to Abram, and in return Abram's with Him.

This has evidently a peculiar character of blessing and privilege—a grace, an intimacy to which our highest and most adoring attention is due. And if we have the lovely picture here of this gracious familiarity of God with the earliest and, so to speak, infant movings of faith, surely in the riper knowledge of all His ways, and of all His grace, which we have by redemption, and through the gift of His Holy Spirit, this privilege is not lost. It may have a deeper character—a more reverent one, as filled with a deeper knowledge of God—more confiding, because His love is better known—less familiar, but more intimate; still it exists, and the gracious picture of it in Abram's case is not lost for our instruction. It has a christian, not a patriarchal character; but the same God who loves us, and the same faith that trusts Him, meet through His grace to receive the gracious communications of that love, and to tell our wants and the feelings of our hearts, and the wants of others too, to One on whom we know how to count. These

communications have a very different character, both on the side of the Lord, and (in consequence of that) on the side of Abram, but they were all what I may call personal.

The first occasion of these communications from God was Abram's definite refusal to take anything from the world, even where he had rendered it the greatest possible service. He would have nothing to say to it from a thread to a shoe-latchet. His faith had got the victory over its power. His value for his own relationship with God refused its proffered reward. God meets this in Abram, and says, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. His defence in battle had been God; his abundant reward, not the poor and perishing gifts of a world, to which its debtor after all always owes something —at least, acknowledges that he will receive from it—but the Lord Himself. Such, in general, is the blessed announcement made by the word of the Lord to Abram.

There is a difference between the communications of chapter 15 and chapter 17. God does not, so to speak, personally visit Abram in chapter 15. He communicates to him what He is for him in a vision, a great and special blessing, but evidently different from the personal revelation of chapters 17 and 18. The two communications have this essential difference: in chapter 15 God declares what He is for Abram, in chapter 17 what He is: and this last leads to much deeper communion, and a larger unfolding of grace and imbuedness with the mind of God, than the revelation of chapter 15. This latter makes Abram's wants and desires the measure of His blessings, or, at least, they characterise these latter. Hence Abram is thrown back

upon himself. God meets him there in full grace, but meets his wants and wishes. Now this is most precious. God shews His most tender condescension. He inspires us with confidence: we can tell Him our wants, open our hearts to Him, in consequence; and all the communication that results, while it makes us know God better, leads us up to that knowledge of Him which makes us see our own littleness in what we have presented to Him as the object of our desires, and gives us to find our joy in Himself, and draw our feelings towards others from Himself, and our assimilating enjoyment of what He is for ourselves.

Thus, when God had spoken to Abram of His being his shield, and his reward, Abram says, “What wilt thou give me? “The first want of his heart is presented to God. God had told Abram He Himself was his reward; but where our feelings and need are referred to, if God presents Himself as our portion, the human heart will turn, by the very confidence that is produced in it, to its own thoughts and its own desire^. AbranCs reward led Abram to Abram’s wants and feelings and wishes. Though God, and even because God, had said He was his reward, the love and goodness was felt, but did not put aside, nor lead Abram, beyond, what Abram desired to have from that goodness, if it was there. God knew all this, and used it for the occasion of bringing out His own thoughts and purposes. This is the grace, then, that comes down to the heart of man himself, and draws it out in confidence towards God, but thereby leaves it in the circle of its own wants and feelings; but its wants and feelings, such as they can exist in connection with God; but then, remark, not going beyond this world,

beyond what man wants as conscious of his position here.

The interference of God in goodness to us in this sphere is full of sweetness, but it is not in its object heavenly. As a man upon this earth, Abram wanted a son to continue his name, and posterity to inherit and enjoy the promises. God was fully minded to give this. The natural wish and desire of Abram, Abram connects with the testimony of divine favour. God had, in the revelation which Abram had received when in the land, promised a seed to Abram connected with the inheritance of the land. Abram naturally wished to associate the promised blessing and glory with his own descendants. If his desire had been merely to enjoy God in heaven, such a wish had had no place; the moment his thoughts rested on earth, and God had promised him blessing there, such wish came in. It fell in with God's purposes, but took, necessarily, if the blessing was to be made precise, an earthly character. Our wants, whatever character they may have, necessarily have their place on earth. We may bring God into them, but it is into them we bring Him, and there indeed He is gracious enough to come.

I have said, that the answer of God when making His promise precise, necessarily took an earthly character. The fifteenth chapter of Genesis makes this evident. The numerous seed and limits of the land are given. Some principles are also given full of blessing, but which characterise the position of Abram; most blessed in themselves, but still meeting man's need and weakness, not properly communion in the truest and highest sense. God was communicating with Abram, and Abram speaking with Him; but it was not communion in the sense of the enjoyment of God Himself, and in

conformity to His nature. Righteousness is imputed to Abraham; blessed truth! How could he stand before God, or be the blessed one of God, without it? He believes in the power of resurrection in God, and in His faithfulness to perform His promise, and it is counted to him for righteousness. It is the first time this great and all-important truth is taught in Scripture, or even the word for it found; and, I doubt not, intentionally so, though we know there were believers before. But now, in the great root of the tree of promise, this fundamental truth was to be brought out. The very ground of man's blessing was laid here, but it was still meeting man's need. He could not be before God or inherit the promise without it. He had it not in himself. God counts his faith to him as such.

Next, to assure the feeble heart of man, God binds Himself by covenant. Most gracious condescension, indeed; but what does it meet in this wondrously condescending grace?— "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" God then, while nature and man pass through the dark shadow of the power of death (and this Christ as man has done for us), passes between the pieces, and binds Himself in a covenant of death to accomplish this desire of the believer's heart, according to His own thoughts; and promise lays the sure foundation of it in Christ. The very limits of the land are pointed out, the power of those that held them is naught. In this very remarkable passage, we learn the blessed and perfect assuring of man in the righteousness of faith, and the immutability of the covenant; only it is not communion in life, but earthly, and meeting need, though the thing given was pure grace. God has a people, and He gives them a law.

Chapter 16 I pass over. It is not the life of faith, but the effort of flesh to obtain the blessing in its own way; the promised blessing, but under law. It is, typically, legal Israel. (Compare Gal. 4.)

In chapter 17 we have the revelation of God Himself to Abram. Jehovah appears, but He does not appear as formerly, to call on him to leave all, and come to the land; nor merely to communicate promises. He reveals Himself in what was to be His own name of relationship with Abram—Himself under this name—and gives Abram a name in connection with Himself. This is the highest way of revelation. To us it is the communication of a still better name, a far nearer relationship. The Father's name is revealed to us by the Son, and we are called sons. This is the best and highest possible revelation of God in relationship, for it is that of the Father to Christ the Son Himself. Still we have, as to Abram, this kind of revelation. God does not here reveal what He is for Abram, but what He is. Abram was to walk before Him, known in that character. "I am the Almighty God—walk before me." Hence Abram falls on his face, and does not ask for anything to meet the desires of his own heart. God talks with him. Such is the character of this wondrous interview. Jehovah reveals His intentions, and gives Abram a name in connection with them. God does not bind Himself through sacrifice, He only assures to Abraham the various blessings. But He puts Abraham into the condition of intercourse with Himself, as belonging to Himself, by the sign of the death of the flesh (there, of course, in figure, still he is thus placed in the enjoyment of the relationship). Thus God is revealed to Abraham, and Abraham brought into personal relationship with God. He knows Him as none else does.

God is about to judge the world (chap. 18), and He now appears to Abraham to give him the immediate promise of the son as about to come. He comes in human form, with two others, angels also in human form. These latter went on to Sodom to execute judgment on it, and at the same time deliver Lot. But Abraham saw at once who approached, and would detail Him awhile. With exquisite propriety, he does not (while shewing unfeigned reverence) break through the disguise which hid from others the presence of Jehovah. The angels were there, Sarah was there, it may be others. He deals with the mysterious guest as He presents Himself, only with the utmost attention and reverence. However, promises belong but to One, and He it is who speaks to the patriarch. But, the word of present accomplishment being given, they rise up to go on their way; and now Jehovah will deal with Abraham as a man deals with his friend. He speaks with Abraham, of what concerned not himself but the world. It is not Abraham's wants, or even Abraham's walk, but the intention of God which He would have him know, opening His thoughts and counsels to him. (Compare Eph. 1:10, 11.) The two men go on towards Sodom; and Abraham and the Lord remain together. What a place of privilege and blessing! It is not worship. It is not a call to follow when the Lord led. This had all had its place. It is communion, personal intercourse with God about what concerns Himself and His ways; intercourse founded on God's revelation of Himself, and on personal acquaintance with His character, grace working on the heart, and producing intercession.

The whole scene is instructive. His son and heir is promised as a present thing. That is our own hope. It is

a settled one, independent of all that happens to the world; our own peculiar hope. We are in communion with God, on the ground of His special revelation of Himself to us, and the expected heir is revealed as coming. God then deals with us in the intimacy of friends, and tells us His purpose and plans, awakening in us, by the grace He exercises towards us and the confidence it imparts, the spirit of grace and intercession founded on what He is, on our knowledge of Him.

Abraham does not ask anything for himself here; he pleads for others. Indeed, what could he ask, when enjoying converse with God, and the certain and present promises of the son? He is in the place of blessing, and walking in the spirit of communion, and of the God he now knows. This began with the revelation of Himself by God. Now that Abraham is alone with Him all is boldness, though reverence, with one well known. The very silence of Abraham when others were there, and Jehovah had hid Himself, belonged to a knowledge of Him which none else had. Jehovah surely had clearer judgment, and even surer ways of deliverance and mercy than even Abraham knew; but we speak of the terms on which Abraham was with Him. It closed this wondrous conference; and when Abraham's words were exhausted, and the Lord had answered him to the end, He went His way, when He had done communing with Abraham. What a place for the child of faith to be in!

And such is our place. God has revealed Himself, yet more fully and nearly. He tells us the good pleasure of His will, according to the good pleasure He has purposed in Himself. He tells us of the soon-coming Son. He tells us, though but as a part of His will and

counsels, of the coming judgment of the world. Our place is in grace with Him who communes with us.

3 Note how this brings out in its true character the rapture of the church. If my portion is in any way in this world, evil must be removed by judgment in order to enjoy it. But if I am entirely a stranger and a pilgrim, having no portion here, evidently there is no need of such judgment for my enjoyment of my portion. God Himself is this portion, for I have renounced all here. He has only to take me up to enjoy when the time is come in His counsels to do so.

4 We have failure in each of these features of divine life. He does not quit his father’s house, and therefore stops half-way, and is no way in the place of promise; and he goes down into Egypt. In the third case, Lot represents the failure, and Abram maintains his heavenly ground.

Lot’s Choice A Word On Present Advantage

Genesis 19.

There is much profitable instruction in tracing, in contrast, the characters of Lot and Abram. Both were saints of God, yet how different as to their walk! how different also as to their personal experiences in regard of peace, joy, and nearness to God! And there is ever this difference between a worldly-minded believer and one, through the grace of God, true-hearted. In the scriptural sense of the term (2 Pet. 2:8), a “righteous man,” Lot was “vexing his righteous soul from day to day.” Abram walked before God.

The Lord cannot but be faithful to His people, still He does mark in their path that which is of faith and that which is not of faith, and Lot’s trials are the consequences of his unbelief. There is one thing very marked in his course throughout— great uncertainty and obscurity as to his path, and as to the judgment of God, because of not realizing that security in God which would have enabled him to walk straightforward, whilst there is no hesitation in things connected with this world. And it is thus with ourselves if we have not taken Christ for our portion heartily. Abram’s was a thoroughly happy life—he had God for his portion.

Lot is seen rather as the companion in the walk of faith of those who have faith, than as one having and acting in the energy of faith himself. This characterizes his path from the beginning. Therefore, when put to the test, there is only weakness. In how many things do we act

with those who have faith, before having it for ourselves! It was thus with the disciples of the Lord, and the moment they were put to the test there was weakness and failure. The soul will not stand, when sifted through temptation, if walking in the light of another.

God's personal call of Abram at the first is mixed with a sort of unbelief in Abram, much like the reply in the gospel, "Lord, suffer me first to go home and bury my father." He sets out, but he takes Terah, his father, with him, and goes and lodges in Haran (he could not carry Terah with him into the land of Canaan). Now God had called Abram, but not Terah. He left everything except Terah, and entered into possession of nothing. But he tried to carry something with him which was not of God, and he could not. It is not until after Terah's death that he removes into Canaan, to where God had called him. (Compare chap. 12:1 and Acts 7:4.) "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him … they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

Lot (though having faith) goes in the path he treads as the companion of Abram. As to actual position, he stands with Abram. He is truly a saint of God, though afterwards we find him treading the crooked path of the world's policy.

God blesses them. The land is not able to bear them so that they may dwell together (chap. 13). They have flocks, and herds, and much cattle, and there is not room for them both—they must separate. Circumstances, no matter what (here it is God's blessings), reveal this.

They are in the place of strangers, that is clear (“the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land”). They have nothing in possession, “not so much as to put a foot upon”; all rests on their valuing the promises (Heb. 11:9). They have just two things, the altar and the tent. Journeying about, and worshipping God, they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Abram confesses that he is such; he declares plainly that he seeks a country,5 “wherefore,” we are told, “God is not ashamed to be called their God.” (He is never called “the God of Lot.”) This acts upon the whole spirit and character of Abram.

The land is not able to bear them that they may dwell together, there is a strife between their herdsmen, they must separate. Abram says, “Is not the whole land before thee?” take what thou wilt, do not let us quarrel “if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left”—the promise is my portion; I am a thorough stranger, the city of God is open in glory before me. His heart is upon the promises of God, and everything else is as nothing in comparison. It might seem a foolish thing to let Lot choose—to give up to Lot the right to do so is certainly his own; but his heart is elsewhere, his faith goes entirely free from earthly advantage.

Not so Lot; he lifts up his eyes6—the plain of Jordan is well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, and he chooses it. There is nothing gross or wrong in itself in his choosing a well-watered plain, but it just distinctly proves that his whole heart is not set upon the promises of God. Thus is he put to the test; and thus, in the way of the accomplishment of God’s purposes, character is displayed. Abram’s conduct has for its

spring a simplicity of faith which embraces God's promises (Heb. 11:13), and wants nothing besides. Faith can give up. The spirit of a carnal mind takes all it can get. Lot acts upon the present sense of what is pleasant and desirable; why should he not? what harm is there in the plains of Jordan?7 His heart is not on the promises.

The companion of Abram, he is brought to the level of his own faith.

But he will dwell in the cities of the plain if he chooses the rivers of the plain. It is not his intention to go into the city, but he will get there step by step. (He must find trouble in the place he has taken pleasure in.) There is not the power of faith to keep him from temptation. When there is not the faith that keeps the soul on the promises, there is not the faith to keep it out of sin. It is not insincerity, but people's souls are in that condition, and God proves them.

Abram's path all the way through is characterized by personal intimacy with God, constant intercourse with God, visits from God, the Lord comes to him, and explains His purposes, so that he is called the "friend of God" (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23); and this not only as to his own portion, but as to what God is going to do with Sodom—the judgment He is about to bring on Sodom, though personally he has nothing to do with it, and the promise is his hope (chap. 18). So now He tells His people what He is going to do about the world. Though their hope is connected with their own views, with the promises, and the heavenly Canaan, He takes them into His confidence as to what is to happen where they are not to be.

Lot the while is vexing his righteous soul—does he know anything about the purposes of God? Not a word. He is saved, yet so as by fire; though a "righteous soul," his is a vexed soul, instead of a soul in communion with God—vexed "from day to day" (there is, so far, right-mindedness that it is a vexed soul). He is there before the judgment comes with his soul vexed (whilst happy Abraham is on the mount holding conversation with God); and when it does come, how does it find him? with his soul vexed, and totally unprepared for it, instead of in communion with God about it.

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation," and He delivers "just Lot." But whilst thus vexing his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds, the men of the city have a right to say to him, 'What business have you here? ("this one came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge," v. 9)—you are quarrelling with sin in the place of sin.' They have a perfect right to judge thus. All power of testimony is lost by reason of association with the world, when he ought to be witnessing to his total separation from it; there is vexation of spirit, but not power. When Abram got down into Egypt, he had nothing to do but to go right back to the place of the altar he had built at the first. Lot testifies, but he cannot get out of the place he is in; the energy that ought to have thrown him out is neutralized and lost by his getting into it; his daughters have married there; he has ties where his unbelief has led him. It is far more difficult to tread the up-hill road than the down-hill road.

Whenever the counsels of God are revealed to faith, it brings out the spirit of intercession. The word to the prophet, "Make the heart of this people fat" (Isa. 6), at

once brings out, “O Lord, how long! “So here Abraham pleads with the Lord to spare the city. (But there are not ten—there is not one righteous man in Sodom, with the exception of Lot.) As regards his own position, he is looking down upon the place of judgment. And in the morning, when the cities are in flames, he finds himself in quietness and peace on the spot where he “stood before the Lord” (v. 27), not at all in the place where the judgment had come, solemnized, indeed, by the scene before him, but calm and happy with the Lord.

The Lord sends Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. Angels warn him, and faith makes him listen. But his heart is there still. There are connections that bind him to Sodom, and he would fain take them with him. But you cannot take anything with you for God out of Sodom, you must leave it all behind. The Lord must put the pain where you find the pleasure, “While he yet lingered”; there is hesitation and lingering in the place of judgment, when the judgment has been pronounced; he ought to have left it at once; but the place, and path, and spirit of unbelief, enervate the heart— “the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters” —the Lord being merciful unto him— “and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.” And now it is, “Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed,” v. 17. As for the goods, the sheep, and the much cattle, he must leave them all behind. If the Lord’s faithfulness is shewn in saving Lot, it is shewn also in breaking the links that bind him to the place. His mind is all distraction; he says, “Oh, not so, my Lord. I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I

die.” He has lost the sense of security in the path of faith. Such is ever the consequence of the path of unbelief in a saint of God, he thinks the path of faith the most dangerous path in the world. Lot has become used to the plain, and the mountain (the place where Abraham is enjoying perfect security and peace) is a mountain. The Lord spares Zoar at his request, and lets him flee thither, but on seeing the judgment, he flees to the mountain, forced to take refuge there in the end.

This is an extreme case; we shall find the same thing true in various degrees. Abraham could give up (that sacrifice always belongs to faith); but there are trials to the believer because of unbelief—because he is a believer, but in a wrong place. Lot was a “righteous man”; but when he did not walk in the path of faith, he had vexation of soul and trouble— a righteous soul, but where a righteous soul ought not to be. Observe his incapacity simply to follow the Lord. Observe also his uncertainty. So will it be with us, if we are walking in the path of unbelief, there will be trouble which is not our proper portion, but which comes upon us because we are in a wrong worldly place, the trial that belongs to unbelief. We may be seeking the compassion of the church of God, when we are only suffering, like Lot, the fruit of our own unbelief— the simple path of faith having been departed from, because we had not learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Giving up is our proper position, simple sacrifice, in the knowledge and present consciousness that “all things are ours.” But the promise is “a hundredfold more in this present world,” and that is not vexation of spirit.

5 In chapter 12 Abram goes down into Egypt. This is evidently a mistake; for he comes back again to the place of the altar which he built at the first. He had no altar in Egypt.

6 “And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee I give it, and to thy seed after thee,” etc.

7 A man says, What harm is there in the well-watered plains of Jordan? are they not the gift of Providence? I answer, The devil has planted Sodom in the midst of them.

Outline Of The Book Of Genesis

Chapter 1.

Creation—which seems a simple thing, but is not, and is only apprehended by faith; it is the first element of faith, spoken of in Hebrews 11. Then the formation of the earth, where God put the responsible man, the centre and lord of it, and in which all the principles of man's relationships with God are to be developed.

Chapter 2.

The responsible man in the relationship in which God has set him to Himself, the world, the creatures, to his wife—Eve, in whom the church is typified. At the beginning of it is the rest of God, into which man never entered.

Chapter 3.

Man's responsibility is tried by temptation, and his total failure. The judgment on Satan, and the promise of and to the seed of the woman; but the first man is driven out from the presence of God.

Chapter 4.

Adam becoming the head of a fallen race, though Eve hopes to get the promise through the flesh, man completes sin by killing his brother, and the "world "is set up without God. God gives an appointed seed in lieu of the slayer and the slain.

Chapter 5.

The genealogy of the race of Seth—the Lord being called upon; and in the midst of it one is seen walking with God, and translated to heaven.

Chapters 6-9.

The total corruption and wickedness of man, and the flood closing the history of the first world. Noah is preserved through it, and the animals. He founds the relationships of the new world by sacrifice, but fails entirely himself as governor. He gives in prophecy the history of the world in his three sons: his own history closes.

Chapters 10, 11.

The settling out of the world in nations and families, in these three sons, and that happening by the judgment of God on their setting up themselves independently of Him, to make themselves a name—Babel.

Abram is brought in, through Shem's genealogy, as a "peg to hang it on." An elect one is called out, and the promises given to him, to be the head of God's race upon the earth.

Chapter 12.

He, having followed the call of God eventually, is in the place of promise, a stranger and a worshipper. But through pressure of circumstances he gets out of it, and into the power of the world, denies his wife, and has no worship.

Chapter 13.

His entire abnegation as to the world, and the full revelation to him of the sphere of promise.

Chapter 14.

His victory over the world, and the revelation of Melchisedec as priest, and millennial blessing brought in, after his conquering the kings, and God possessor of heaven and earth. This closes that part of the history.

Chapter 15.

The promise of the seed, with the covenant founded on death, and of the land. Righteousness is connected with faith; this, as the seed, has come in in any sense.

Chapter 16.

The attempt to get the promised seed by the efforts of the flesh.

Chapter 17.

The seed according to promise. God reveals Himself to Abraham by His dispensational name, and gives him the promise of the seed, with the seal of circumcision also. Abraham is to be the father of many nations, and the heir of the world.

Chapters 18, 19.

God visits Abraham, and confirms the promise as an immediate thing. Abraham on high in communion with God, and the world judged below in connection with Lot in Sodom, and the righteous one saved out of it. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished,” 2 Pet. 2:9. [We had Enoch, the heavenly man, and Noah, the earthly remnant. Now we have had Abraham, the heavenly, and Lot, the earthly.]

Chapter 20.

Abraham failing in respect of faith, as to those who were externally within the place of promise—Abimelech and the Philistines—is delivered, and as prophet intercedes for them. (The church could not go on with these mixtures.) Then, having denied his wife, the rebuke is put upon Sarah—the church; or Israel, as the vessel of promise, as the case may be. The world knows very well what the church ought to be for Christ, and how to reprove her.

Chapter 21.

The son of promise is born, and the law cast out (Gal. 3, 4) —Hagar and Ishmael. And further, Abimelech and those Philistines who were in the place of promise—the son being born—become subservient to Abraham, who figuratively takes possession of the place of promise, planting a grove, and worships. He was only in a tent before.

Chapter 22.

Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac upon Mount Moriah; thereupon the promise is confirmed, not to Abraham, but to the seed, as before given in chapter 12. This leads to another principle: he had given up the promises according to life here; he gets them in resurrection, on the ground of the complete sacrifice offered to God.

Chapter 23.

As the heir died, so the old vessel of promise (Sarah) dies; thus Israel is set aside.

Chapter 24.

Abraham sends down Eliezer (who represents the Holy Ghost) to get a wife for the risen Isaac, who is in no condition to go back to his old country, all things being

given to him as son and heir. The bride is taken out of the old land, gifts conferred upon her: she is brought to Isaac, and into the place of the vessel of promise—Sarah's tent. The Jew had been the vessel of promise, the church now is. This closes Isaac's history as the risen one.

Chapter 25.

We have now done with the first great principles of faith and the risen one—Isaac, and we come down to the earth and the heir of the earthly promises—Jacob, the Jew, who goes down and gets a wife there. Jacob, who values the promises that Esau despised who had the title to them, comes in by grace and election without title (Rom. 9). In point of fact it came by the profanity of Esau, but the means of getting it were evil; still God secures the result. We find the immense principle, that we have only to take care that the means employed are right in possessing ourselves of all that God has promised. God might have made Isaac cross his hands in the blessing, or the like, to secure the promises to Jacob.

Chapter 26.

The renewal of the promises to Isaac: he is forbidden to go down into Egypt—the world; he is to have nothing to do with it in his Isaac position. Follows his father's example in denying his wife; but Abraham did it in the place of promise, Isaac on lower ground (decay in the place of promise). He has "contention "and "hatred "in the place of the world; but when he gives up the wells, and gets into his own limits— Beersheba—then he is owned by those who were there.

Chapters 27-31.

Esau and Jacob. Jacob gets the blessing as he had got the birthright, by deceit. He goes down to what represents the world to get his wife. Not as Isaac, who got a wife sent up. He looks for blessings and earthly promises, and vows tithes to God if God will take care of him. However, God does so. This is very low ground, but still there is faith. He uses duplicity towards man, and he is cheated himself— “paid in his own coin,” so to speak.

He gets Leah instead of Rachel. He has got the Gentiles looked at as on earth; still the Jews are loved—Rachel. He represents the Lord in His ways, not in his conduct: he loves Rachel. The Gentile, Leah, never loved like the Jews upon earth; but God blesses Leah.

God brings back Israel with his children, after having been a slave for twenty-one years, to his land.

The instruction we get is this: the Lord takes care of the believer, but he is cheated, and worried, and slaved, and reaps in discipline the fruit of his own ways. We mark a wretched state of faith in him: there was faith, but his was a dismal, earthly history—attempting to get his object in a carnal way, and he is chastened all through.

Chapters 32-34.

Esau comes, and again we find lies. God sends a host of angels, and he sees His hand, but nothing raises his faith, and we see the utter weakness of fleshly ways, and the spirit in which he walks—low and earthly. The Lord will not allow Esau to touch him, but takes him in hand Himself, and wrestles with him at Jabbok when he had sent all over. He will not reveal Himself, but makes him halt for life, giving him faith to overcome. You get a great deal more experience in one that walks badly than

in a person that walks well. The man that walks with God has very little experience, but all he has is with God. “Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him “; that is all about him. Abraham has no wrestling, but is up on high, interceding calmly with God for others, in communion; Jacob is below, interceding for himself, and God wrestling with him, not he with God, who gives him power for the conflict, but will not reveal Himself. Jacob had asked Him, but He would not tell him His name.

Then he makes another blunder. He buys land (not a sepulchre, like Abraham), settles in the place, and builds an altar there, calling it El-elohe-Israel. He was this, but no revelation. Marriage proposed with his family there.

Chapter 35.

Now God says, Go up to Bethel; there He would appear to him. The moment he is to go and meet God he thinks of the idols, which he knew all about quite well before. There is no putting away of idols until we get into God’s presence; then they are put away. The first thing God now does, when the idols are buried, is to tell His name, which He did not at Penuel. The intercourse is short: no intercession for others; not the same bright blessing as with Abraham, but intercourse, talking with him. God goes up from him at this place.

This has brought us back to Rachel, Israel’s history in fact. She dies. She had had Joseph; now she has Benjamin. She calls him Ben-oni, the son of my sorrow; Jacob calls him Benjamin, the son of my right hand. This points to Christ at God’s right hand, who was the son of affliction also.

Chapter 36.

The world set up in power before God's people are; Esau, with kings and dukes. This closes the history of Jacob.

Chapters 37-48.

Now the history of Joseph begins, with his dreams, and so on. He is despised, but he has the wisdom of God, as soon after the power of God. Rejected by his brethren, and sold to the Gentiles, he shews himself all through as the godly one in patience and lowliness. Then he passes to the right hand of power, and receives back his repentant brethren in that character, and puts them in the best of the world—Goshen.

[In the midst of this history Judah is going on in wickedness (chap. 38). Yet it is the Lord's genealogy.]

Jacob could bless Pharaoh: the less is blessed of the better. He looks still to the land and asks to be buried there. Joseph gets the birthright. Jacob crosses his hands, and puts things in their place. (No one type runs into another.) Joseph thus steps into the place of the first-born; in Chronicles it is said so in terms. The birthright was his, and he gets the double portion.

Chapter 49.

Then you have the blessing of the tribes of Israel in a general view, prophetically, of their history. Reuben, Israel's firstborn, fails; Simeon and Levi, corruption and violence, failure of those who seek to maintain their rights by nature's force; Judah, strength and honour, but all goes on till failure is complete; then all is judgment till you come to Dan, in which you get the power of evil —apostasy—the serpent. (The Jews have a tradition that Antichrist will come of this tribe.) When Israel joins with

the world, you get the serpent. Then there is turning to the Lord for salvation, and all is changed. “I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah.” Faith waits until God interferes. Gad, he is overcome, but overcomes at the last. In Asher we see blessings flow; in Naphtali, goodly words; in Joseph, a rejected Christ exalted. Benjamin is the son of God’s right hand, in victory over all His enemies.

chapter 50.

Whatever power and magnificence Joseph had, his heart was in Israel, and he gives commands concerning his bones— they were to be carried to Canaan. He has faith as to Israel’s hope and portion.

The Passover And The Red Sea

Exodus 12-14.

We always find in the deliverances of God's people that God is also going to punish the world. He bears testimony against it, a universal testimony, without excepting anybody. The law distinguishes men according to their acts, but the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, because they have not believed on Him whom God has sent. Hence the gospel begins with treating the world as already condemned. God has made trial, in every way, of the human heart. The gospel supposes that this probation is closed, and declares all the world lost. Souls often desire, and therefore need, to prove what their own strength is, and find they have none; even converted souls sometimes try to commend themselves thus to God. But it is to dishonour Jesus, and to deny their own condition as judged of God.

In Egypt God was content with the first-born of each house as a manifestation of His judgment. Pharaoh would not let the people of God go. When God demanded as a right that they should serve Him, the world—Pharaoh its prince—would not yield. Signs and plagues were then wrought to arrest their attention, and enforce the rights of God, but Egypt would not listen. Pharaoh was hard, then hardened, and at last becomes a monument of judgment for the instruction of all men. So it was in the days of Noah, and so it is now that the world once more is warned of the approaching judgments of God. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and on them that obey not the gospel.

Meanwhile God demands a complete submission to His revealed will. He demands that the world should submit to Jesus: all those who will not shall be forced to do so when judgment comes, and then to their own confusion and endless sorrow. God presents His Son in humiliation, in order to save the world; but without submission to Jesus all is useless, because this is what God requires and values. To believe in the Son is eternal life, is salvation; to reject the Son of God is judgment. God will have a surrender of the heart to Jesus, as Saviour and Lord, a surrender to His own grace in Him. Thus is the heart and everything else changed, and all question as to good works is set aside. All here turns on receiving or rejecting Jesus. God passes over everything. Zaccheus may speak of what he has been in the habit of doing, but that is not the point now: “This day is salvation come to this house.” If Jesus is welcomed, there is life; if Jesus is refused, there must be vengeance by-and-by for those who do not submit. How happy for the poor convicted sinner that he has not to search in himself for something to present to God! If the heart is open, Christ is the grace and glory and perfection that is needed, and the moral effects soon and surely follow.

Still, the word of God presents the certainty of judgment. Satan has possession practically of the world, but God retains His rights. The unconverted are deceived by the enemy, and are in his power. Satan does all he can to make the world believe that they are free and happy, that they are, or may be, righteous and good enough. But God has His rights. The world will not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hopes to escape judgment. Satan, too, takes advantage of all that God would employ to awaken and bless the soul. Thus, with

the unconverted in Christendom, natural conscience is ashamed of that which the heathen do even in their religion. But this is used of Satan to persuade men that they can present themselves before God, and worship Him in private or public, because there is nothing in these lands so gross as among Pagans. But God holds to His rights, and nothing is well if Jesus be not received in faith.

In Jesus all that is perfect in God and man is presented to the conscience. The holiness of God is there, not condemning, but in perfect grace; but God will have an entire submission to Jesus. Nobody that comes is cast out. He is God in all His goodness to attract hearts, He is man in all His lowliness to exercise no will, no choice, but to receive every one that comes to Him, for such is the will of Him that sent Him; but God desires submission to Jesus. If Jesus is rejected, tins is the conclusive proof that the heart will not have God in any way that He takes in presenting Himself to man. It is the evidence of man's heart, of his pride, his hardness, and his levity. Nothing like these can stand in the presence of God, and Jesus manifested His presence in love. Pride is ashamed of the cross. Vanity cannot go on before Jesus, despised and rejected of man. God searches the heart in this way, and man does not like it. He is bound to own himself a sinner, to submit his conscience, and give up his will; but he will not. It is the joy of Jesus to seek the wanderer; but to return in his rags, to shew bis wretchedness, is most distasteful to man's nature: grace alone can make him do so. His pride therefore hates grace more even than law. The heart cannot endure to be laid completely bare; but if man is to be blessed, God must search the heart, and He saves the soul for ever.

God acts according to what He is, not according to our thoughts. If man will not believe in Jesus, God will manifest what He is by judgment.

Egypt must be smitten. But first we have the security of such as submit to God, confiding in the sprinkled blood of the Lamb. Israel was well aware of the judgment about to be executed upon the land of Egypt. It should always be thus with renewed souls. They ought to consider the ways of God when He will judge the world in righteousness.

When God reveals the judgment, He reveals also the means of escaping it. The soul which has the fear of God keeps close to His word, and the question is raised between God and Israel. Could Israel stand if God came in judgment? The Egyptians were sinners, and would surely be judged; but if God came down to judge, what were the children of Israel? Where were their sins? God directs Moses that they should take of the blood of the slain lamb, and strike it on the two sideposts and on the upper door-post of their houses. “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” To the mind of man it was folly, but the simplicity of faith honours the word of God, and acts upon it. The destroying angel of Jehovah passed through the land, and if there had been Israelites ever so honest, but without the blood on their door-posts, he must enter and slay. For God was under this sign judging sin, and sin levels all distinctions; and where the blood was not, there sin was in all its hatefulness to a holy God —sin unatoned for and unjudged.

So now it is, Christ and salvation, or no Christ and no salvation. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. There is the utmost certainty for those within the blood-sprinkled doors. It is the Lord who executes the judgment by His angel. It is impossible for Him to be deceived, and impossible for man to escape: but He says, “when I see the blood I will pass over you.” There need not be a doubt, whatever the judgment.

It is not said, when you see the blood, but “when I see “it. The soul of an awakened person often rests, not on its own righteousness, but on the way in which it sees the blood. Now, precious as it is to have the heart impressed with it, this is not the ground of peace. Peace is founded on God’s seeing it. He cannot fail to estimate it at its full and perfect value as putting away sin. It is He that abhors and has been offended by sin; He sees the value of the blood as putting it away. It may be said, But must I not have faith in its value? This is faith in its value, seeing that God looks at it as putting away sin. Your value for it looks at it as a question of the measure of your feelings. Faith looks at God’s thoughts.

God, then, sees the blood: on that we rest to escape judgment, not upon our own view either of sin or of the blood of the Lamb. God Himself estimates the blood of His own Son, as He it is who fully hates our sin: we feel both most when we enter into this, and rest on it in faith. Faith lays hold of His judgment of sin, and feels the need of His value for the blood of Christ.

This is the first great question—a question between a holy God and a sinful people. God appears as judge. The

expiatory blood of redemption bars to Him the way as judge, and it secures the people infallibly; but God does not enter within— its value is to secure from judgment.

The people, having eaten in haste with the bitter herbs of repentance, begin their journey; but they do so in Egypt; yet now God can be, and he is, with them. The more we know Christ, and enjoy His purity, the more gravely shall we feel our sins. It was then that the Israelites ate the Lamb, but they ate it in security. It would have been sin to have thought that God could fail in His word or His deliverance: and it is sin now to doubt that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.

Israel may be in Egypt, but they are no longer slaves there. Their loins are girded that night, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in hand. Such, too, is our position in the world. Israel begin their journey with the question of sin settled. They had been secured, and they knew it, even in the midst of God's judgment of sin. When the revelation of God enters the heart, one cannot find peace till the revelation of His grace is as clear to us as that of His dealing with sin. The Christian finds his judgment fallen on Christ Himself; he begins with submitting to the righteousness of God, who condemns our nature and acts, root and branch, but shews us the condemnation borne by the Lord Jesus.

Have you submitted to Jesus? God demands it. He asks for no other offering nor sacrifice; He presents Jesus, and shews you what you are. The worst sinners in the world may be received in grace by Jesus. "Behold now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation."

When Israel went forth, the rage of Satan knew no bounds. Pharaoh made ready all the chariots of Egypt, and his horsemen and his army, and pursued after. Never had Israel been so sad as they were on the eve of their new deliverance. But now that sin in their case was settled, it was a question solely between God and the enemy. “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel* that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.”

It is well to distinguish the judgment of the first-born from that of the Red Sea. The one was the firstfruits of the other, and ought to have deterred Pharaoh from his rash pursuits. But the blood, which kept the people from the judgment of God, meant something far deeper and far more serious than even the Red Sea, though judgment was executed there too. What happened at the Red Sea was, it is true, the manifestation of the illustrious power of God, who destroyed, with the breath of His mouth, the enemy that stood in rebellion against Him. It was final and destructive judgment which effected the deliverance of His people by His power. But the blood of the paschal lamb signified the moral judgment of God, and the full and entire satisfaction of

all that was in His being. God, such as He was, in His justice, His holiness, and His truth, could not touch those who were sheltered by that blood. Was there sin? His love towards His people had found the means of satisfying the requirements of His justice; and at the sight of that blood, which answered everything that was perfect in His being, He passed over it consistently with His justice, and even His truth. Nevertheless, God, even in passing over, is seen as Judge. Hence, likewise, so long as the soul is on this ground, its peace is uncertain, its way in Egypt, even though all the while truly converted; because God has still the character of Judge to it, and the power of the enemy is still there.

At the Red Sea, God acts in power according to the purposes of His love. Consequently the enemy, who was closely pursuing the people, is destroyed without resource. This is what will happen to the people at the last day, already, in reality—to the eye of God—sheltered through the blood. As to the moral type, the Red Sea is evidently the death and resurrection of Jesus, and of His people in Him; God acting in it, in order to bring them out of death, where He had brought them in Christy and consequently beyond the possibility of being reached by the enemy. We are made partakers of it already through faith. Sheltered from the judgment of God by the blood, we are delivered by His power that acts for us from the power of Satan, the prince of this world. The blood keeping us from the judgment of God was the beginning; the power which raised us up with Christ made us free from the whole power of Satan who followed us, and from all his attacks and accusations.

The world who will follow that way is swallowed up in the waters. This is a solemn warning; for the world who

call themselves Christians do take the ground of a judgment to come, and the need of righteousness; but not according to God. The Christian goes through it in Christ, knowing himself otherwise lost and hopeless—the worldling in his own strength, and is swallowed up. Israel saw the Red Sea in its strength, and thought escape was impossible. So an awakened conscience dreads death and judgment. But Christ has died and borne judgment for us, and we are secured and delivered by that which in itself we dreaded. The worldling, seeing this, adopts the truth in his own strength, as if there were no danger, and is lost in his false confidence. To the believer, what was the subject of his fear—death and judgment—gives him joy, now that he knows the results, in God's hand, of the death of Christ. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Honey is taken out of the lion's carcase. The resurrection of Christ is the standing witness that the Christian's judgment is past, and that the world's judgment is coming (Rom. 4; Acts 17). Christ is risen, and therefore we are justified in Him; so is the world to be judged by Him.

The Red Sea And The Wilderness

Exodus 15.

It is easy to understand Israel's distress,—the sea before, shutting them in, and Pharaoh and his host pursuing, so that they were sore afraid, and cried unto the Lord, and said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" Although, as we see, they had cried to the Lord, they had not in their hearts reckoned on His delivering them. It must, therefore, have been a wondrous thing to them when God was so publicly manifested to be on their side. And so is it with our hearts, when thus tested with trial on every side; shut in, as it were, with trouble of one sort or another, our hearts are often found buried under the circumstances, instead of calculating upon the God who is above them either to sustain us under them or deliver from them.

Israel, we can see, was dealt with in unqualified grace, whatever might be their murmurings, etc., till they reached Sinai, that they might know how entirely God was for them. Afterwards, through their folly in putting themselves under the law, which they ought to have known they could not keep, they brought upon themselves a different line of treatment. In the sixteenth chapter, when they murmured for food, God gave them quails (as well as manna) without any reproach, that Israel might know that God was feeding them on the ground of perfect grace. But afterwards, when they again murmured for flesh (being then under law), we read that, while it was yet in their mouths, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord

smote them with a very great plague. But God would first have them know how entirely bent He was on doing them good, bad as they might be.

It is well to distinguish, for our souls' profit, the difference between the Passover and the Red Sea. For a person may hear the gospel and receive it with joy, and be rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins; he may see the loveliness of Christ, and have his affections drawn out towards Himself; but if full redemption is not known, as typified by the Red Sea, if he does not know himself to be risen with Christ on the other side of death and judgment, he is almost sure to lose his joy when temptation comes and he feels his own weakness. The joy of chapter 15 is that God has absolutely redeemed them out of Egypt and brought them in His strength to His holy habitation. A very different thing from the joy of the Passover—being delivered from just and deserved judgment. In the Passover Jehovah had made Himself known to them as the God of judgment. The blood on the door-posts screened them from judgment; it kept Him out, and He did not come into their houses to destroy. Had He come in, it must have been in judgment. At the Red Sea it was another thing—even God coming in strength as their salvation. The Passover delivered them from His judgment, the Red Sea from their enemies. The moment His people are in danger from Pharaoh, He comes in. The very sea they dreaded, and which appeared to throw them into Pharaoh's hands, becomes the means of their salvation. Thus through death God delivered them from death; like as Christ went down into the stronghold of Satan, went down under the power of death, and, rising again from the dead, delivered us from death. Thus was there an end of

Pharaoh and Egypt to them for ever. The Red Sea is redemption out of Egypt; God Himself is their salvation. He whom they had feared, and justly, as a Judge, is become their salvation. They are redeemed; no longer were hoping for mercy, but able to rejoice that judgment was past, and to sing His praises for having brought them to His holy habitation—to God Himself; in the light as He is in the light; and brought there before they had taken one step in the wilderness, or fought one battle with their enemies.

There is no conflict properly till redemption is known. They did not attempt to fight with Pharaoh, but only to get away from him. They groaned under his yoke, but did not combat against him. How could they? They must be brought to God first—be the Lord's host before they can fight His enemies or their own. And so it is with an individual soul. I have no power to combat Satan while I am still his slave. I may groan under his yoke, and sigh to be delivered from it; but before my arm can be raised against him, I must have a complete and known redemption. The Israelites are not only happy in escaping the pursuer: it is a full conscious redemption from Egypt and Pharaoh; and they can count on God's power for all the rest. "The people shall hear and be afraid, … the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away," v. 14, 15. Their joy does not arise from having no enemies, but from God's own divine power taking them up, and putting them in His own presence.

"Thou shalt plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance," v. 17. This was yet to be done; but they were already with Him in His holy habitation—not theirs but His. And thus are we in His presence, brought to God, though not yet in the place prepared for us on high.

So, in Ephesians 1, the apostle prays “that-they may know what is the hope of His calling, and the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” It was God’s land they were to dwell in—the Father’s house in which our home shall be. It is His glory, and He will bring us into it. No fear of the enemies by the way: to faith they are powerless. Full confidence belongs to redemption. Is it then, as men would say, all plain sailing now? In no wise. It is the wilderness, and there is no water; and, mark, it was by the Lord’s command they pitched in Rephidim.

Does this make redemption uncertain? Not at all. Yet it is a dreadful thing to have no water; it was certain death in those countries. Had He then brought them through the Red Sea and unto Himself to kill them with thirst? When at length they did come to water, it was bitter. But this was to prove them, and bring out what was in their hearts. The bitter water did not shew what was in God’s heart (redemption had shewn that);. but in their hearts lay much that had to be manifested and corrected. They must drink into the power of death. Being redeemed for ever, they must learn that there is nothing for them in the wilderness. All supply must be from God Himself. This is the very effect of redemption, and there is so much in us to be brought out and corrected. But He makes the waters sweet.

We must all learn death (being redeemed we have life) and it cannot be learnt in Egypt. They had no Marah in Egypt. It is wilderness experience. Redemption must be known first, and the effect will be death to sin, to selfishness, to one’s own will; and all this is very trying. A person might be tempted to say, All this trial comes upon me because I have not redemption. Not so; it is just because you are redeemed. We may seek to avoid

the bitter waters of Marah, but God will bring us to them. He must break down all that is of the old man, and then, in His own good time, He will put in that which sweetens all. But because God has brought me to Himself, He is putting His finger on everything (be it love of the world, setting up self, my own will, or whatever it may be) that hinders complete dependence on Him, or my soul's full enjoyment of Himself, But count it not strange, though it be a fiery trial which is to try you; for as surely as you are redeemed, so will He break down your own will. Yes, beloved, God will make you drink of the very thing (death) that redeemed you.

And now Israel is going on with God, and He is dealing with them. He gave them statutes, etc. He did not do so before He had redeemed them. They had been troubled before by Pharaoh, but now it was from God. This was the effect of having to do with God, and now they learn God in a new character— "the Lord that healeth." A different thing from His promise, that if obedient He would bring none of the diseases of Egypt upon them. They are exercised by God, but it is that they may know Him as the Healer: it is for this that the whole heart has to be brought out before God. We cannot escape it. He will so order circumstances as to bring it about. Sometimes we are humbled before men: this is very trying and bitter water; but then what a wretched thing it was to be seeking to magnify oneself! As soon as the tree (the cross) is in the waters, they refresh the soul. This is joy in tribulation—joy in redemption first, but now in the healing. First, God makes us to sing in the knowledge of redemption; and then, if we are to have the practical effect of redemption, which is the enjoyment of God Himself in our souls, the flesh, which

would always hinder this, must be broken down in whatever form it works. It was to prove them. God knew what was in their hearts; but they did not, and they must learn it.

After this they come to Elim. Now they experience the natural consequence of being with God—the full streams of refreshment—as soon as they were really broken down. Had Elim come first, there would have been no sense of their dependence on the Lord for everything, and nature would have been unbroken. But trial produces dependence, and dependence, communion. It is only for this that He delays, for He delights in blessing His people. The numbers 12 and 70 are different figures of perfection: perfect refreshment, perfect shelter, and all this in the wilderness, and rest then.

They must be exercised at Marah, that they may truly know and enjoy Him at Elim. Redemption brought them indeed to God, but now it is joy in God. And so it is with us. Although we are redeemed, we cannot have these springs from God Himself, flowing through our souls, with unbroken flesh. But whatever trial we are in, however deeply we may have to drink into death, there is resurrection as well as death: and when we see God's hand in it, when we see the cross of Christ in the bitter waters, we understand God's mind and purpose in them, and they become sweet to us. We cannot walk in the way of faith without faith, so we must be put to the test. Not that, for the present, tribulation seems joyous, but grievous; but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits unto them that are exercised thereby.

Flesh is not faith. If I lose my trust in God for one minute, that very minute the flesh comes in, under some

form or other. Whenever I feel perplexed or at a loss, the eye is not single: it shews I am out of communion, otherwise I should know what to do. If the eye were single, the whole body would be full of light. Or there is something yet to be detected in us, something we have not yet found out in our own hearts. It may not be wilful sin; but there is something He will exercise our hearts about, something as to which He will manifest Himself as Jehovah the Healer. Thus we learn to rejoice in tribulation also, and then to rejoice in God—finding springs of joy, refreshings in the wilderness in that God who brought us there. Let us, then, not count trial a strange thing; for we know its purpose, even that we may joy in God Himself.

Priesthood

Exodus 28.

The apostle says, Moses made all things according to the patterns shewed to him in the mount; and again, these “things were patterns of the heavenly things.” The doctrines themselves are in the New Testament; the details of things connected with them are in the types.

Priesthood supposes accomplished redemption: not to bring us in, but what we get when brought in. “See how I have borne you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to myself,” the Lord says to Israel. As a people, they were brought to God; but, a feeble and infirm people, they needed this help by the way. We are brought by redemption into the light as God is in the light; but down here we want His priesthood to maintain our walk before Him in the light. The priest is clothed in special garments. These garments are merely figures of that which is real in Christ in the exercise of His priesthood. That which was peculiarly the priest’s garment was the ephod. “Doeg turned and fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons who did wear a linen ephod.” David with the ephod “inquired of Jehovah.” The ephod was made of two pieces: one before and one behind. There were two shoulder pieces, joined at the two edges; a girdle wound round the body to confine it; above that, a foursquare-double, to be a breastplate, containing the names of the children of Israel. There was to be a holy mitre on the head, and upon the skirt of the ephod the bell and the pomegranate.

All was connected with His people in the priests' garments. If it is the breastplate, the names are engraved in it. If it is the shoulder pieces, the names of the children of Israel are there. If it is the Urim and Thummim, the names of the children of Israel are there. Again I say, it was not to acquire righteousness, but to maintain their cause before God. He is there, acting before God on the people's behalf.

It is not true, then, that we have to get some one to go to God for us who believe. Christ is there for us; and grace is exercised, not because we return, but to bring us back. It is not said, "If any man repent," but, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." The love Christ exercises about us springs directly from Himself. With Peter, it was not after he had fallen that Christ says to him, "I have prayed for thee," but before. His intercession for Peter was going on all the time; and it is because of our getting wrong, not because we are right, that it is exercised. Our feebleness and failure become the occasion for the exercise of this grace. When the intercession of Christ answers in the way of warning, chastening is not needed. Christ looked upon Peter, and it was before Peter wept. The look was just at the right moment. We know not what Peter might have done next, but the look causes him to weep.

The priest goes to God for us, not we to the priest. Righteousness and propitiation are there already, and by virtue of His being there, and being what He is there, He can set them right.

Priesthood is Christ undertaking the cause of His people, through the wilderness, maintaining us in the presence of God; keeping us in God's memory, so to

speak— “for a memorial.” This is a different thing from His shepherd character, strengthening the sheep down here; but it is sustaining them according to the power of inward grace before God. He bears them all in a detailed way, each by name, engraved. As a shepherd He calls His sheep: but also, according to our particular individuality, He bears us on His heart and shoulders. God looks upon us according to the favour He has for Christ Himself. If a person sends his child to me, I receive it according to the affection I have for the father. The priest was there in the garments proper to his office.

When we think of Christ as a priest, we should have in remembrance our individual imperfectness. In one sense we are perfect, but that is in our membership with Him —union with Him our Head.

The breastplate was never to be separate from the ephod, v. 28. “That the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod.” Whenever the high priest went into the presence of God, it was in his garments. He could not go without representing the people. It is impossible for Christ to stand there in the presence of God without us.

The girdle was a sign of service; it is the characteristic of a person in service. Christ is a servant for ever. When He became a man, He took upon Him the form of a servant. He might have asked for twelve legions of angels, and gone out free; but then He would have gone out alone. No! He says, I have got my work to do, my wife to care for. And thus He chose to be a servant for ever. He became a servant when incarnate, but He was bound a servant for ever when He gave up His life (Exod. 21). Yes, and He will be the servant; for “He shall

gird Himself, and will make them sit down to meat, and come forth to serve them." His divine glory never changes, of course; but He will never give up this character of servant: for ever and ever we shall have this "First-born of many brethren," this new Adam head of the family.

Verse 29, "Aaron shall bear the names," etc. Whatever value the Priest has in God's sight, He brings it down upon them. He bears them on His heart. All the love that Christ has for them, He bears them before God, according to this love. Then in answer they get whatever they need: it may be chastening, it may be strength. He obtains for us all the blessing we need, according to the favour that God bears Him. There is not only the personal favour, but the Urim and Thummim, the ground of their favour, which is in God Himself. The blessing is given according to the light and perfections of God (the meaning of the words being lights and perfections). He bears our judgment according to the light and perfections of God. That is where we are as regards daily judgment. We walk in the light as God is in the light: and as we want cleansing, there is the blood. If I commit a fault, what then; am I condemned? No, because Christ the righteous One is there; but then God must deal with an individual according to this light and perfection. He deals with us according to our need and weakness. He will make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear, because Christ is there. He deals with us just where we are, taking into His account our standing as to grace of course. When they have to learn things of God, it is by the Urim and Thummim also. It is according to the light and perfections of God that He instructs and guides me.

The feebleness, failings, and infirmities, instead of being the occasion of condemnation to me, are the occasion of instruction. The names He is bearing are those for whom there is no wrath. Christ bears Peter on His breast, and He does not pray that he should not be sifted, because He saw the self-sufficiency of Peter needed to be broken down; but He bore him on His heart, and obtained for him the thing he needed, that his faith fail not. His priesthood is exercised for me in putting my heart in a right position before God (not on account of wrath), and He bears us continually before the Lord.

There is reference here to another thing we have in virtue of Christ having gone up on high—the Holy Ghost. He received of the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost. He received it alone; but we, the skirts of His garments, get it shed upon us in virtue of His finished work—His accepted work (Psalm 133). The bell and the pomegranate may signify the gifts, testimony and fruit of the Holy Ghost, when Christ went into heaven, and when He will come forth again. “And his sound shall be heard when he goeth into the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.” The mitre is “holiness unto the Lord,” and it was to be always upon his forehead.

It is not only when I have failed that Christ intercedes for me, but in holy things; when I go up to worship God, there comes in something that cannot suit the holiness of God—something that has not a bit of sanctified feeling in it; a distracting thought, admiration of fine music, etc., and this for want of habitual communion with the Lord. Well, then, can I say, I have failed, and let it go? There is holiness in Christ for our worship. True, we

ought not to be satisfied without the full tide of affection going up to Him from us; but we are accepted because of His work. The iniquity cannot be accepted, but it never goes up. The Christian is always accepted, because in Christ. I may always go to God, because of the continual priesthood exercised. Christ bears my failures that they may be judged; my weakness, that I may get strength; but His heart is always engaged for us. Not merely the abstract love of God for us, which is always true, but this love of Christ ever ready for our necessities. There is evil that wants correction, but He will not put us out of His sight for it: but because you are accepted, He will remedy it.

The object of it all is that our soul should be up there with Christ, walking according to the perfectness of God Himself. When we see Christ for us there, we can venture to apply this light and perfection to our ways. How He has provided for us in love and holiness, for holiness we see stamped in great letters upon it! He is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. The sinner wants the Apostle, the message from God about acceptance. The saint wants the High Priest.

Exodus 29.

There is a desire at all times in the people of God, whether in Jewish ignorance or Christian life, that they should always have God dwelling with them. Thus, in Exodus 15, as soon as Moses had come out of Egypt, he said, “He is my God; I will prepare him a habitation.” So we are “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

We do look to God’s dwelling amongst us; yet we have much more thought of dwelling with Him. This was not

the case with Israel. We have boldness to enter into the holiest, Christ having passed through the heavens for us, as Aaron passed through the tabernacle for them. Israel could not enter within the veil; but Christ has rent it, and opened a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us. God having, in the cross of Christ, put sin away, we can stand in the light of His presence. Here we find the presence of God among them. This is not redemption, the object of which is that we should be with God. We could not meet God without redemption. Christ suffered, the "just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

We learn in this chapter how we can thus be in the presence of God constantly and abidingly. We are really, in title, made "kings and priests to God and His Father "; our provision and character being this, provision is made in Christ for us, so that we can be continually in the presence of God. There was to be the burnt-offering continually at the door of the tabernacle, the place where the Lord met with the people. We are consecrated to God to be priests. Christ has not yet taken upon Him His office as King; but He has taken the priesthood, and therefore we have got, even now, our priesthood. He exercises in heaven continually a perpetual priesthood, filling up in this respect the figure of Aaron, though the order be of Melchisedec.

We see here how we are put in the place of priests, and yet Christ is personally distinguished. Aaron goes first (v. 5-7) alone, to represent Christ; then the sons (v. 8) to represent the whole Church, the priests. In referring to the cleansing of the leper, we have the way a sinner is cleansed from the evil that is in him. It is the same ordinance as regards the leper and the priest; but the

leper wants to get cleansed as a sinner, the priest that he may be consecrated to God. If not cleansed in every respect we could not stand before God at all. There was sprinkling of blood on the leper, on the right ear, the right hand, the right toe: his thoughts, his acts, his walk, must be all cleansed, by being brought under the “blood of sprinkling.” So in this chapter we are consecrated in the same way. In verse 4, “Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle,” etc. You do not find Aaron washed by himself, because Christ did not need it. They are washed together as a figure of the christian body. Christ as a man identifies Himself with the Church (1 Cor. 12:12). Aaron was anointed (v. 17). The Holy Ghost descended upon Christ when He had been baptized.

But before unction we need to be cleansed. The word of God applied to the heart and conscience with power by the Spirit is called washing with the word. “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” This is not habitation but washing. Christ came not by water only, but by water and blood. The blood was for expiation, the water for washing, in order to meet God. In anything of Christ’s work, it is not a question merely of atonement, but of meeting God. If I think of meeting God, it is what God requires. There must be perfect cleansing. It turns the eye on God Himself. I shall always know evil in myself; but if God is satisfied, so may I be. It is wholesome to look within and judge myself; but I shall not get the blessed peace that flows from faith, if I am looking for it into my own heart. When we see God is satisfied with Christ, then comes in peace; it gives the highest standard of right and wrong, but peace, because

God is satisfied with Christ. Washing by water is repeated, not by blood.

Moses clothes him with the priest's robe, and there is no sacrifice here, because Christ required none. He was a perfect man in obedience and love. As man, Christ identifies Himself with His people. He comes into the same place as regards the walk of holiness. He was anointed with the Spirit and with power. All He did was in the power of the Spirit (v. 7, 20,21; Acts 10:38). Christ was anointed as man. When He ascended on high, there He received the promise of the Father, and sent down the Spirit to the saints, so constituting them the Church.

Next, we come to the sons of Aaron (v. 8, 9). We are going to get them introduced into the priesthood, and now comes the sacrifice. Aaron needed none (v. 10-13, 14). There is no sweet savour in the sin-offering or trespass-offering. It must be burnt without the camp. Here it is a sin-offering— sin must be totally put away before our consecration. It is the nature judged before God. Christ is made sin for us, that we may be made priests. We have these two aspects of the value of Christ's work. First, the sin is charged upon Him. In the Hebrew there is no difference between "sin" and "sin-offering." Here He is the sin-offering; He who "knew no sin, made sin for us," etc. Secondly, the other character was offering Himself up to God, all the devotedness of a life of obedience offered up; this was a sweet savour to God. "Therefore hath my Father loved me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again," John 10.

In verses 15-18 we find Aaron and his sons not merely having sin taken away, but accepted of God in all the perfection of Christ. If I am looked at as a sinner in

myself, the sin is put away, but this is not all. Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the sin-offering; they also identified themselves with the burnt-offering. All the savour of everything that Christ has done, we are in: everything was consumed (v. 18), and put to the test; nothing failed; it is all gone up, and we are in it before God. Here we get our blessed position, previous to consecration as priests. For this, it is not a question of what I think of myself; but the measure of my acceptance is what Christ is in God's presence and estimate. We cannot measure grace by anything that is fitted for us, but by what is fitted for God.

Verses 19, 21. We come now to the proper character of those persons that are cleansed and accepted. Now it is to consecrate, and, as in cleansing the leper, the blood is put on the right ear, right hand, and right foot—the acts, thoughts, and walks. We are now consecrated to God in all these. We have to render unto the Lord our bodies as well as our spirits; for we are not our own, but bought with a price. Every act that Christ did was as perfect as His sacrifice, but every step made it increasingly difficult. So we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Christ's conduct and Christ's devotedness are the measure of our walk before God. There is not so much as to set one's foot on left for self-will. Christ did not come to do His own will. Even to death He went, the death of the cross. So with us, if the eye is single, the whole body is full of light. If the heart is right, it makes the aim right. The apostle says, "Not that I have already attained … but this one thing I do," etc. He exercised himself day and night "to have a conscience void of offence." Then it is real liberty. If the heart be right, it will be joy; if not, it will be terrible, because there is not

the smallest liberty given to self-will. In many things we fail; but if we feel what sin is and the claim God has on us, it will be our privilege to do His will. It is not a pretence that we are set up as something wonderful. No, it is faith in the blood of Christ that has cleansed us as to purpose and thought according to the perfectness of Christ; and now we are consecrated to serve God. It is simple Christianity.

Verse 21 shews them consecrated by the blood put upon their persons; but not only so, for there is the anointing with the Spirit of God to give power and energy for action. It was put on the “sons’ garments with him.” I have got the power of Christ in heaven, and the power of the Spirit that comes down from Christ for garments (that is, for all that I appear in before the world). It is “with Him” a thorough, complete association by the power of the Spirit with a crucified Christ who is now in heaven. Thus we get real thorough joy and gladness of heart. The first fruits are with God, the result are in what we shew to men. If peace and joy are in my heart, let me go in that, and it produces joy and gladness in my ways. The beginning of all practical fruits is from what we have with God, and then there is a testimony to men. What we really are with God shews itself out. It is, or should be, the effect of the consciousness of union with Christ.

This anointing of the Spirit can be put on us, because the blood is on us. Aaron had no blood put on him. The Spirit is the seal. The least relic of sin would prevent Him from sealing; but when the blood has cleansed from sin, then the seal is applied. The presence of the Spirit is the witness of the blood-shedding; the fruits are the witness of the Spirit. We thus get a wonderful power,

stamp, and measure of holiness. If we believe in Christ, we are so cleansed that the Spirit can come and dwell in us. The Spirit is the seal to the value of Christ's work, not to what He is going to produce. Now He can fill Aaron's hands (v. 23, 24). What is produced by the Spirit is Christ's after all. I can come with an object now that I know God delights in it. Suppose I praise Christ's name, I know God's delight rests on it; it may be imperfectly done, but I know what the thing is to God, not the manner of my presenting it. It is the sweet savour of Christ to God.

We feed on Christ (v. 31, 32), now that He has given us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. We gather strength and grace, and comfort, the perfectness of Christ Himself, as our souls' food. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." We come so to think of Christ, so to realize in our hearts and spirits what He is, that we live Christ. What a man thinks is what he is, more than what he does. A man may think of sin, and love it, and desire to do it, but will not because of his character; he may be a hypocrite. If I realize Christ in my heart, I am a Christian.

Verse 42 shews a continual burnt-offering at the place where God meets the people. Christ is before God day by day continually, a sweet savour. I cannot go to God without finding the savour of Christ there, in the perfect sweetness of His offering.

The reason (we hear in Genesis 8) God gave for not cursing is that He looks to Noah's sacrifice, not to the sin. God deals with us in virtue of what the Mediator is, instead of what we are. It ought to be always in our hearts, but it is always before God. When the daily

sacrifice was taken away, the Jew could not go to God; there was no savour; see Dan. 8:11.

In verses 42, 43, it is “I will meet you to speak there to thee.” It is through Christ we gain everything. Finally, God says (v. 45, 46), “I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.” It is by the Spirit He does so now. The whole Church is His dwelling-place. He is not merely a Redeemer, but a constant dweller with the people; as verse 46 shews, it was not to do an act and then leave them. So it is with the Church in a still more blessed way.

But let us never forget that sin is put away first; then there is the continual savour where God meets us; and we are consecrated to His service. It supposes that the heart is right’, for I cannot wish to be consecrated to God and have my own will. The death of Christ will never find its intelligent value in our hearts, if we want to escape the consequences of consecration. If we are consecrated, the motive of every action should be that Christ may be glorified. You cannot be happy unless Christ be everything. We may have to condemn ourselves daily; but when we think what a savour is before God, we go on with confidence.

“Shew Me Now Thy Way”

Exodus 33, 34.

The study of this passage brings out very clearly the position in which grace sets us with God, and the blessed confidence it gives us in God; and at the same time the effect of a mixture of grace with law, leaving us really under the latter, at any rate as to our state of mind, where the atonement is not applied, though really all exercise of grace depends on it.

To arrive at a clear understanding of both these states, as depicted to us in the passage, we must carefully distinguish between Moses and Israel. Of Moses it is said, “I know thee by name, and thou hast found grace in my sight.” He stood in grace. The effect of this I will consider further oh; I turn first to Israel. Israel had just made the golden calf. As a formal institution they never came under strict and absolute law. God had spoken to them out of the midst of the fire, and they had undertaken obedience. But before Moses had come down from the mount, they had made the golden calf, and broken that first link of all, “Thou shalt have none other gods but me.” Moses consequently never brought the two tables of the law given of God into the camp—how could he place them beside a golden calf?—but broke them at the foot of the mount, and left the camp, setting up anticipatively a tabernacle of the congregation outside the camp; and there God met with Moses, and talked with him face to face, as a man talks with his friend.

But he is told to go up to God again in the mount; and here we may look at the state of Israel. He had told

them, “Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.” He does so, “and Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.” They were put fully under law, each man responsible for his sin, which is most righteous, of course, as law and judgment; but atonement was not made, but personal responsibility left everything on the individual. Blessed be God, Christ has not said, “I will go up … peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin”; He has made a perfect atonement (and thus gone down), and sat down on the right hand of God. But this was not so here. Who indeed could do it but He?

However, the people are, through the mediation of Moses, in a measure, as to present dealings, put under grace. The people humbled themselves, and they are spared, and God’s presence goes with them. God retreats into His own sovereignty to be gracious, and shew mercy. So surely it always is. As Jehovah He then declares His name: not the gospel, founded on accomplished redemption, full forgiveness, and acceptance in Christ, who has wrought it; but the terms of God’s forbearing mercy in His government of Israel.8 “Jehovah, Jehovah Elohirn, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty (just what God does through Christ by the

atonement); visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Such are the terms of God's dealing with Israel, on Moses' intercession, while they were put back under law, and the latter and commandments renewed. It was, as I have said, a mixture of grace and law. Grace that spared and, as a present thing, forgave, but put back under law again, under which, as a strict and absolute rule, Israel had wholly failed.

And such is a vast part of current Christianity: admitted failure under a broken law; mercy that has spared and, as a present thing, forgiven; and then men put back under law as a rule of life to keep it.

But Moses could not make atonement, and Israel was put back under law, though spared in mercy. But Christ has made atonement, we all blessedly know; and "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." There was no "peradventure" here. He finished the work His Father gave Him to do, and is glorified as Man at the right hand of God, in a glory He had with the Father before the world was. Hence the gospel is a ministration of righteousness—the righteousness of God is revealed in it to faith. Men are not under law, but under grace.

Remark here that it is the law, here as then added to grace in the ways of God, which the apostle calls the ministration of death and condemnation. The first time Moses came down from the mountain, his face (the circumstance the apostle alludes to) did not shine. When he had all God's goodness pass before him, and came down the second time, it did.

Still, as we have seen, and as is evident, the people, though spared by grace, were put back under law; and this was the ministration of death and condemnation of which the apostle speaks. For, in fact, if atonement be not made, grace only makes transgression worse, at any rate in the revelation of God; even in partial glory, with law it must be condemnation to a sinner. Law after grace, in a word, is what the apostle teaches us is condemnation; law after atonement is worse than absurd. It is putting away the sin, and then putting under it, or making the law of no authority and no effect. But vague grace-sparing, and then law, is the state of multitudes of souls; and that is what the apostle tells us is death and condemnation in its nature, and indeed the veil is soon over the reflection of grace to the soul (that is, the perception that exists of grace is soon lost).

The difference between Moses and Israel is touchingly alluded to in 2 Corinthians 3, where it is said, “When it shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away.” For Moses, when he went into the sanctuary, took it off. But it is done away in Christ.

The people, then, were under law.

Let us now turn to Moses, who had found grace in God’s sight. First we find single-eyed desire towards God and His way. It was not, a safe way across the wilderness, but, “Shew me now thy way,” and that, “that I might know thee.” This is single-eyed and beautiful “(chap. 33:12, 13), and this is the way, as in John 14, of finding practically grace or favour in our walk, as Enoch did. But then he can intercede, “This nation is thy people “: for he did not separate himself at all from their interests, and wanted God’s presence with them. God

meets what is in his heart: “My presence shall go, and I will give thee rest.” He will not call the people, indeed, “My people,” but there will be His presence (through Moses’ faith), and then in the way rest.

Moses at once presses on the manifested grace, “If thy presence go not, take us not up hence.” He must have God’s presence, and he brings the people in. This only (v. 16) separates evidently a people to God, a notable point. Thus it is known that favour rests upon them, for Moses is emboldened by grace, yet just in word and thought in the place of faith, “I and thy people have found grace.” It is by his mediation, for that was the true exercise of faith with a heart for God’s people; but the same faith will say “Thy people,” and that is granted too.

Then (for he cannot see the face of God, that for sinners was in atonement, and Christ, the blessed One, alone could do it) the goodness is passed before him, when the glory of his face had passed by, and sovereign mercy, as we have seen, spares. This is the blessed confidence of grace: only we have to say that now we can look at the glory in the unveiled face of Christ, because atonement is made, and the glory is the witness of acceptance and of sin put away.

But there is more as to this grace. We have seen how God is with us in grace in His own way, and knowing Him. But, we shall see, it meets the evil of our nature. This is shewn in the most striking way in this passage. First, God had said, “I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee,” “for thou art a stiff-necked people.” He could not tolerate sin in His presence, and He would not go at all, though He would not let them go up as spared. This gave occasion to the

pleading of Moses, which we have considered, who felt the value of God's presence. It was everything to him in holy desire; he could not do without it: and holy boldness through the grace shewn him (for he had found grace, and was told so)—he claims and obtains it. And now he stood in grace and known goodness; and when all the goodness had passed before him, he says, bowing his head to the earth, "If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord (Adonai, not Jehovah), let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people," the very ground God had given for cutting them off! And could we go? could we get the better of our stiff neck, of our flesh, and get safely through the wilderness, if God were not with us?

But, oh, what a change grace has made! Here is the very reason for consuming in just judgment, the motive for asking God to be with us. How complete this grace! God, in whose present grace we stand, is our resource against the evil in us, which was the just ground in itself of cutting us off. How very perfect and complete this grace is, and the ground of God's relationship with us! Here, too, though it rests on the Mediator, as we know it does, yet Moses brings the people fully in— "go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin; and take us for thine inheritance." His faith is very beautiful here, and faith knows God and indeed it only.

8 I do not doubt all three, as every mercy is founded on an atonement. See Romans 3:25.

Hints On The Tabernacle

Exodus 25-34.

Exodus 25 begins the instructions for the tabernacle. First, they were to bring all the different materials, and then “according to all that I shew thee after the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.” And again, “after the pattern of all that was shewed thee in the mount.” These were the “patterns of things in the heavens,” or antitypes of things in the heavens. We must not bring in the highest relationships here; that is, connected with what has been said about priesthood; as “Father “is the highest name for us, so here you find all judicial questions settled. Such matters as cleansing, and all that was responsible down here, are dealt with, and so on: but no relationships save Jewish ones. It is this that makes the Psalms, beautiful as they are, mischievous in the use men make of them, because souls get into a false relationship with them. You never see the Father’s relationship to the child in the entire body of Psalms. It is referred to as an analogy, but not the relationship itself. There are instructions how to walk in faith in this world, but they never put a person in heaven; the christian class of relationships could not be, for it was not revealed; but many beautiful expressions of faith, confidence, and piety which apply to us all.

To me it is a remarkable thing that we have here the shadow of good things to come, not the very image of them. There is a most wonderful exhibition of what is divine, and yet it contains in it provision for a connection or relationship with what is fallen. Thus what is an altar

for? In heaven you get an altar, and on earth pictured out the heavenly things themselves where Christ is gone; still it secretly kept in redemption, and, by sacrifice upon it, all was provided for, and a certain connection with heaven by means of what is earthly.

The existence of an altar and a laver supposed impurity, yet the third heavens are figured there and the throne of God, but along with that an unrent veil. There was a holiest, but no way into it; so that it all has a certain character of revelation of God, and yet of a hidden God after all. Thus we see in it mere connection with heaven before anybody could enter there, and this comes from foreshewing Christ—the perfect— by what is imperfect.

The first thing described (in chapter 25) is the ark, made of shittim wood, and covered all over with pure gold inside and out; and it is said, “thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee,” that is the law. Now you could not put law in the Father’s house; but you could put it where God was in a relationship with man which regarded him in a judicial manner, as I said. Take the Hebrews, where you have the highest christian expression of all this; and there we have boldness to enter into the holiest, but we are not sitting in heavenly places. No person ever thought of dwelling in the tabernacle; that is another set of ideas. God dwelt there, but nobody else. The moment man dwells there, I must get the Father, and also complete freedom of relationship to Him as such. The moment God revealed Himself as Father, you get the ground on which the relationship was founded, and then comes priesthood, and also adoption, and heirship of the glory. This is what frightened the disciples on the mount of transfiguration (I mean the “excellent glory,” that is, the cloud, or the

Shechinah); “and they feared as they entered into the cloud,” that is, as Moses and Elias entered; it was a new thing altogether to the disciples, a new idea, and a fact before them that produced the fear.

Was not Moses in the cloud before? The cloud came down, and God talked with Moses, but Moses did not enter the cloud; the cloud was more than the holiest. Moses went up, but he never went into the cloud to talk with God, though the cloud covered God from the people. It was the sign of God’s presence as when Miriam talked against Moses (Num. 12). But when you have the cloud on the mount, it was pure law, until Moses interceded with God for mercy; so in itself it was accompanied with thunderings and lightnings—not grace at all. Until Moses got the mercy (the second time he went up), he did not go in with God. If Moses went into the tabernacle, that was approaching God; but still it was not like being children in a house, it was approaching a God who will estimate whether you have a right to approach Him or not.

God was here in a certain character, and if man was not fit, he could not go there, for there was moral estimate of what man was. Now the Father has sent the Son; but then it was nothing of the kind, it was purely a question of whether man could approach God. The contrast is brought out in Hebrews, taking Hebrews in the highest way. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus: this is what makes us competent; but still for us God is a consuming fire, estimating everything. The temple was the Lord’s house, Jehovah’s, and Jehovah was His Father. We were noticing in Corinthians the three names of God in the passage, “I will be a

Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord (Jehovah) Almighty."

Christ revealed the Father's name, for He was Son. It was not that man could go to God, but God was revealed to man; it was not sitting in righteousness to see if man could go near, but God was coming out in grace to take man in to Himself. Thus you can see what is so terrible in confounding the Old Testament condition with ours; that was only the shadow of good things to come. Evidently it is a solemn truth, whether we can go to God or not; it is a difference in the starting-point of the whole being. And more still, it is the Father's eternal love that is thinking of me, though I am a sinner, and that means to give me such a blessing.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is more contrast than comparison; you have a veil, but it is rent; priests dying because they could not continue, and One who cannot die; sacrifices that were memorials of sins, and a sacrifice which is such as to be proof that sins are no more remembered. The Epistle is not the old system christianized, so to speak, but another bearing of things altogether.

You have the blood put upon the ark or mercy-seat. The mercy-seat itself is of pure gold. There you see what is absolutely divine. You see something as to man when the law is put in the ark, because that applies to man, and shittim wood too is in the ark; but the covering is divine righteousness absolutely.

Shittim wood, they say, was a kind of acacia, and figurative, in general, of the human side of things, as gold was of the divine. For when you have a covenant in

the law, man is brought in; but the covering was of gold only, and this was divine alone.

There is a physical reason in it too, for they could not have carried it else. There was no appearance of wood, all was gold that was seen, but the covering is pure gold altogether. Then you have the cherubim, and the whole a throne: “he sitteth between the cherubim.” The cherubim seem to be symbols always of judicial power. The seraphim are only in fact named in Isaiah, and there they say, “Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.” It was judgment looked at in connection with holiness more than with authority and government. In the Revelation the four living ones are both cherubs and seraphs. They have six wings and cry, “holy, holy, holy,” having the likeness of a man, calf, lion, and flying eagle. Here the cherubim are connected with the judicial throne.

The four faces are the attributes of God in a way. The ox was called a cherub sometimes, though I do not know why. In it is the permanence and stability of judgment; the power of it in a lion; the rapidity of it in the eagle; and the intelligence in a man.

There was another thing in this divine throne—the covenant was there; the terms of the covenant were the law. You have no seraphim here, but it is the throne of judgment just as much. And there is this fact: the cherubim were of gold beaten out of one piece with the mercy-seat. They were divine. And they were together, with their wings stretched out, looking at the covenant, all the attributes of God securing the covenant and judging righteously.

Remarkably enough our rationalists in their researches have found in Nineveh winged things, bulls and lions, and images of cherubim, and so on. It just shews the utter folly of their system, for when Ezekiel has the cherubim, he has these animals sure enough; but they are merely to support the throne. For God is above; they are mere attributes, and God over them.

Here in the tabernacle they were not fully manifested in that way. It is the throne of God, and the cherubim are of one piece with it, look towards one another but downwards fixedly at the covenant, with their wings stretched out to cover the mercy-seat. When Solomon puts his cherubim in the temple, they stood up with the tip of one wing touching one wall, then two tips met in the middle of the house, and the other tip of the fourth wing touched the wall on the opposite side, and they looked outwards, because all the attributes of God were going out to man.

The reason the ark is mentioned as carried then into the temple is because the tabernacle was in ruin. Once men carried it into Dagon's house (this being an idol, part man and part fish), and when the ark went in, the man fell down, and the fish only was left in place. This had its meaning. Now Shiloh was all pulled to pieces when Solomon took the ark and set it in the temple. The Philistines had taken it, but God maintained His own glory (all else must go for nothing); and He watched over it step by step wherever they led it about, and finally took it from them.

It was a cherub at each end and all gold, simply divine, a sign of God Himself, as it were. "And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt

put the testimony that I shall give thee." This is first of all, and chief; but no Father sending the Son here. There is the meeting God in righteousness in a certain way, but it is God dealing with man, responsible man, and setting up His own throne in righteousness.

Then you find the table of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, and upon it the shewbread always. Then the candlestick of pure gold with beaten work and seven lamps for burning oil. These were on the two sides, and in the same place outside the veil.

But the altar of incense is not described yet, because this is for approach and not for display. The description of the vessels is broken in the middle here by the appointing of the priesthood. First the things that are from God coming out, and then, after the priests are appointed, the things which are wanted for man to go in. So, in the holy place, there is a table and a candlestick. The table is "before Jehovah," the number twelve in the loaves on the table, and seven in the lamps (the one being the sign of government in the creature, and the other, of what is divine light in the Spirit); and this is simply divine in its nature. Twelve is government on earth, as constantly one gets it so. Seven is what is spiritual, bad or good, but commonly good. Hence, as to these two numbers, they are both perfection; but one is perfection in a spiritual way, and the other is perfection in a human way. Seven is the highest prime number, absolutely indivisible, nine may be divided though not by two. Whereas twelve is the most divisible of the numbers, divisible by all below its half, except five. Their use (seven or twelve) is a matter of fact, and there is a kind of moral reason why they should be used; twelve apostles, twelve foundations to the city, twelve thrones,

twelve patriarchs, twelve tribes, and so on. Thus there is the divine light on the one side, and the human order according to God, or God's order in man, if you please, on the other side, in the holy place; not in the holiest of all.

The church ought to give out the light now that is true in the power of the Spirit.

The golden altar follows, because we are not yet going in; the altar is for going to God, and so the priesthood comes first before you can have the golden altar.

Afterwards come the glory itself and the court of the tabernacle. There are three unities in the tabernacle. It is Christ Himself; then the church, "whose house are we"; and then it is the heavens. He was the tabernacle, and the veil was His flesh; and we are His house; and then He went "through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14). God dwelt in Christ, "the Father dwelleth in me"; in the house the church, God's habitation; and in the heavens. All we have had was inside the tabernacle.

The loaves have nothing to do with the church; they are the perfection of administrative order in man. Of course these are all mere images, just like the city, which is a cube. Now a cube is perfection, but finite perfection measurable every way and equal; but you can find no end to a circle, or corner anywhere, to measure from, and which is not finite but infinite rather. Of a cube I come regularly to the end each way. Perhaps Christ answers more to the most holy place, because you get "the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Then we read, "he that built all things is God," and Christ went through all—the court—the holy place, and the most holy place. It is from

this earth, up; this earth is the point of departure, for Christ went up from the earth through all the heavens.

Inside was where nobody could go in; there was neither display nor approach. Outside, the incense altar was approach, and the table and the candlestick were display. So until the rent veil nobody went in, “the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was standing.”

In the ark I have God Himself sitting on the throne of judgment; and in it, as Christ, all that God could require from man was absolutely there, and God was there too. There is divine judgment, but it is there put into connection with man’s responsibility; that is, God’s measure of man’s righteousness, if you please, not what it is of course, but what it ought to be. You notice in the Hebrews it is not the temple but the tabernacle that is always referred to. Scripture says we have “boldness to enter into the holiest”; and so we do in spirit. The veil is rent; so that, when we go to worship, we go into God’s own presence, we go beyond the veil—inside the veil. Our position is, that the veil was rent from top to bottom, and we go inside where God is. What God is shewing under the law, was that man could not go in; “the Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.” Whereas now the Holy Ghost shews that it is, all Hebrews being contrast in that way between what was and what is. The rending of the veil in Christ’s death has let us into God’s own presence. It did two things, the rending of the veil—it put away all sins for us totally; and also it opened up the way for us to God; so that now, through the work of Christ, we have all opened up for us into God’s own

presence, and we are without sin when we get there. There are other and higher things, even than this, in the Father and common truth; but all this is necessary for us to go to God.

“Moses was faithful in all his house,” God’s house, for the tabernacle was not Moses’, but God’s house. The house is all one now in that sense, though Hebrews omits notice of the rending of the veil. Perhaps the omission is on purpose. It supposes a rent veil, though it is not stated in so many words. It would have to be rent for the Jews in the millennium; but it is not rent to them, as I believe. The Jews get all the good of the veil being rent, looked at as Christ’s death; but, Christ being then on earth, they have not to look through into heaven to see Him.

The court has its place, it was only where the tabernacle was; and it is not the earth exactly nor is it the heaven; if you take it merely as a figure, it is the created heavens.

The “heavenly places” of Daniel do not correspond, “heavenly places” being taken as a general term both in Daniel and in Ephesians.

When Christ was cast out of the world, He was put upon the brazen altar, so that the court is like the heaven as being out of the earth where man was; but scarcely heaven either, for man could not put Him there.

Then you get the court of the tabernacle made, but not the laver here. The camp is earthly or fleshly religion, and, when Christ’s death proves that man cannot be in relationship with God, at least in that way, and therefore the blood goes into heaven so as to take my title there, I must have done with human religiousness; and then

having an inside place with God, I must have an outside place from the world. Morally, Christianity is turned into a camp again, and, to carry it fairly out, there must be a sacrifice and priest too; this is just what popery has done, and they have given that old character to what Christianity is; sacrifices on earth, and priests on earth going to God for you because you cannot.

But when I get sacrifice carried outside, it is revealed that there cannot be such a thing; and the law is but a shadow in itself, though in it you find certain elements which are very instructive in going to God. But the moment you apply these things to Christianity, every element is in contrast. Christ has gone through the heavens, the veil is rent, and there is positive access to the holiest. All now is just the opposite to what then was. When we have heaven, we have done with a worldly religion and are outside the camp. And this is the very thing that now characterizes an intelligent Christian; he cannot be adapting the world to God, or God to man. Taking the system as such is to set aside the truth of Christianity. We have the altar, but not that of incense, and no laver.

The highest point that Judaism reached was that the priest could go to the veil, but not the people. The priest could have the external display of God amongst men in a priestly way; but there was no going to God Himself. As a rule the veil was on them, but this varies with their spiritual apprehension. Moses might have understood some things. God says of him, “thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.” But he stood all alone, he took the veil off his face when he went in to God; but what characterized Israel was the veil on.

The veil is the Word made flesh—Christ—fine twined linen, the positive purity of the nature; and then all the graces embroidered upon it. You get the same here in the first covering of the tabernacle; it is made of the same thing as the veil; it is Christ's human nature. God had no interest in putting colours there without a meaning. If you compare one scripture with another, you may learn what they mean. It is the same with the heavenly Jerusalem, certain things are clear, but you must be careful; there is no temple in it, for if a temple is glorious about God, it hides God; but there it is God's own glory seen.

Then you get the dress of the high priest (more for Israel than for us, and therefore I do not go into it minutely); but there is the beautiful expression of Christ's care for His people, only the immediate reference is to Israel. A coat, a blue robe, an ephod (and in the ephod gold or divine righteousness), and with that, a stone on each shoulder that clasped together the back and front parts of the ephod; and then the breastplate (the breastplate and ephod being essentially the priestly robe). Then we have all the names of the children of Israel, six on one onyx stone and six on the other, on the two shoulders of the priest, and so he carries, as it were, the weight of the people: then in the breastplate again, the twelve names on his heart and the Urim and Thummim were there too, lights and perfections, the judgment of the children of Israel. The Jews' idea of it was that the divine glory lit up the particular letters that gave the answer to an inquiry. In all is a complete picture of the way that Christ cares for His people. He bore the judgment of His people, not here atonement, but the iniquity of their holy things.

This only takes up their lowest condition. It does not testify of Christianity. In a priest, I get one from whom I am separated, for he has to act for me; but when I look at my proper condition as a Christian, I am member of Christ's body, and of His flesh and of His bones. I am also walking on the earth and have failures and difficulties; and these all have their needs, and to them priesthood refers. In Hebrews you never get sins referred to as the subject of priesthood, save on the great day of atonement. The priesthood of Christ is continual help in whatever we need as we walk on here. In Hebrews it is first a question of access to God as such. How can this be? The answer is, I am perfected for ever by the one offering, and have no more conscience of sins, and so we can go in even boldly. I do not know what place priesthood can have now as to that; it is done already; and then, inasmuch as we are perfected in that respect, we have priesthood provided. The frequent common use of priesthood now—the ordinary idea—is a mistake altogether.. But when I look at my other character in communion with the Father and Son, it is not that my righteousness is altered; but if I have let in an evil thought, my communion is blasted and then the priesthood is to restore my soul; for I cannot think of God having communion with evil in any way. I remember this question being raised twenty-five years ago.

These then are the priestly garments; but Aaron never went into the most holy place in them; he should have gone in whenever he liked, or at least it was the Lord's will. Nadab and Abihu failed at once with their strange fire, and then the high priest was prohibited going in. But having got the priest with a mitre also—holiness to Jehovah—he bore the iniquity of their most holy things. I

think he wore that mitre even on the great day of atonement when he put off the other garments of glory and beauty. It says he was to bear their names continually before Jehovah.

The words “crowned with glory and honour,” in Hebrews 2, are the same as in the Septuagint. (Cf. Exodus 28:2 of the LXX with Hebrews 2:7, 9.) There is another thing which is interesting, and which I believe has its truth in Christ; there was a golden bell and a pomegranate alternately on the hem of the robe of blue; it is testimony and fruit; it was that his sound might be “heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.” There was fruit-bearing and testimony, like the early and the latter rain, I should think. It is the two characters of the Holy Ghost’s action, testimony and fruit-bearing, the sounding bell and the pomegranate.

Their consecration is seen in chapter 29, and all the sacrifices are together there. Then, the moment we have Aaron consecrated, in chapter 30 you have an altar to burn incense upon.

You may notice too that Aaron is anointed with oil by himself all alone, because he represented Christ. I mean without blood at all; and this is a point of importance. He and bis sons were to come together, and they were all washed. I have no washing of this character save the partaking of the divine nature— “which thing is true in Him and in you.” But the distinctive point is, when you come to the consecrating: Aaron is first anointed with oil without blood; and then, when the sons are taken, he is brought in with them to identify us with Christ. And blood is put on the tip of the right ear and thumb and

toe, giving complete consecration to God in thought, act, and walk: the same as in the case of the leper, only in the leper there is a question of cleansing a sinner. It makes a great difference that Christ was consecrated without blood-shedding; of course He did not want any, whereas we do.

The priest being there, we have the altar of incense. The things we have had were the manifestation of God coming out; now we have approach to Him. The burning of the incense is at the golden altar; it is intercession. Incense was to go up regularly, continuously, as the lamps were to be kept burning, constantly in use. This was the time of service to God, and it was renewed. The lamps were dressed for day and for night.

Then the ransom money comes in, and remarkably there is all the people for whom Moses intercedes: they must be identified with this service. If you number them, you seem to make something of God's people. It is not by blood here, but rather the fact of their giving atonement-money; and He did make them of some importance, even by the fact that they had to be ransomed, though man is a poor sinner if he is ransomed. It comes here because the priest is coming to God, and he cannot go to God except for a ransomed people. Christ is Priest or Advocate, not for the world, and not for the elect either, but for other believers, who must get their place those who are given to Him out of the world, and believe in His name.

Then comes another thing, the laver; this is not washing the body to be made a priest, but here the priest washes his hands and feet; it was not the washing of consecration; but, when consecrated, he must be

perfectly pure for God, and he must wash his hands and feet. Only in our case it is walk, not work, and so it is feet only for us. He was to wash every time he did any service whatever.

The washing of regeneration is not priestly washing; but after that I come inside as a priest, and get the full place of a priest, then follows priestly washing of hands and feet, a washing for those who are within.

The water is the word in its own purity from God; but the place in which I get it is the point. The sinner must have the new nature in order to come in; but then when he says, I must be with God every day, this wants a washing of hands and feet. Until the priest was consecrated, he could not go to the altar or laver at all. Then what is the water of the first washing in chapter 29? That washing is the washing of water by the word—born of water and of the Spirit—and this is never repeated; whereas every time they served, they washed their hands and feet.

Then, as regards the anointing oil, it was not to be poured on man's flesh; a man must be a priest to have it. You cannot give a nature; and the anointing can only be of a nature that is of God. "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God, who also sealed us," 2 Cor. 1:22. No human flesh could have that. And no one was to imitate the anointing oil either. On mere human nature you cannot put anointing; you cannot anoint man, looked at as man, nor put the Holy Ghost upon him. As to mere power, He can make a dumb ass speak, but this is not anointing.

So with the perfume, it was that which was to go up to God. If I do a gracious thing, it is acceptable, and these

sweet spices give us the graces in Christ, etc., at the altar, His intercession, a sweet savour used in that way.

As you look at all this, of course, it is quite imperfect as regards our condition; but the provision is clear; and it is most interesting to see God coming out, by table and candlestick and brazen altar, and then man going in to God, with laver arid altar of incense..

From verse 34 to the end of the chapter is the incense. The incense-altar was the ordinary place. Frankincense was put upon the meat-offering, but it is not this point here.

In the millennium the Jews will have the true sabbath again, and all the sacrifices will be repeated too, and the feasts, save Pentecost—which belongs to us. The sin-offering, peace-offering, burnt-offering, meat-offering, and the trespass-offering too, are all named in Ezekiel for that day.

Next they made a golden calf. Moses was getting all these things for them, and they in his absence make the calf. It is afflicting, but withal exceedingly beautiful, the intercourse of God with Moses, consequent upon the people making the golden calf—how, in the midst of all the ruin, faith, under grace, can have closer intercourse than when there was no ruin. Moses never had so close intercourse with God, as now when the people had made the calf; and it was while the calf was in the camp. And the way in which God meets Moses is beautiful, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” And then Moses grows bolder still, and says, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”

There is another thought: the ground that God gives for destroying the people is precisely what Moses takes for

God's going with them, when once grace has come in. In chapter 32:9, 10, the Lord says "it is a stiff-necked people, now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." And then, in chapter 34:9, Moses says "Let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people." So God's reason for consuming me would be my sin; and my reason for asking God to be with me, now that grace has come in, is that sin is in me. What infinite mercy!

Another thing note, beside the way that God answers: God will not call them His people any more. The people had said, "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him," chap. 32:1. And God says, "This people" (v. 7), "which though broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." So in verse 11 Moses says, "which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt," and in chapter 33:1 the Lord says, "The people which thou [Moses] hast brought up out of the land of Egypt," and in chapter 34:10, God again calls them "thy [Moses'] people."

Hints On The Sacrifices In Leviticus

Chapters 1-3.

Notice in the first place that the tabernacle has been set up. It is out of the tabernacle of the congregation that this instruction is given. It supposes God is there, and it is a question of approach to Him.

There are two classes of sacrifices: those made by fire for a sweet savour; and the sin and trespass offerings (pretty much the same thing), which were not for a sweet savour, though the fat of them was burnt on the altar. The three sacrifices of sweet savour are—the burnt-offering, the meat (or meal) offering, and the peace-offering. “Peace-offering” is a bad name: “sacrifices de prosperite” they are called in French.

As to the offerings, they are here given as from Jehovah in their order; they are for men, but still from the Lord, just as Christ was; whereas, when men came to offer, they came, not with the burnt-offering, but with the sin-offering first. Here the divine statement of them is made, and the sin-offering is last because this is what Christ became when He had offered up Himself. It is first when persons come by them, and the order in a measure shews the character.

We first come in Leviticus 1 to the burnt-offering. “If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd,” and so on. Sometimes a bullock, and sometimes a goat, or a sheep, but a “male without blemish,” representing Christ in His perfection.

“Of his own voluntary will” should rather be, “for his acceptance.” There is one passage made me question it rather, but I believe that is what it should be. In chapter 22 you may make a difference; in verse 19 it means “free-will,” but in verse 29 it should be “for his acceptance.”

The offerer puts his hand on the head of the victim. “And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him, and he shall kill the bullock before the Lord.” Then the priest was to bring the blood, and deal with that; this is the priest’s first act—to bring the blood.

The special character of the burnt-offering is, that it was not for a committed sin; on the contrary, what is to me a most wonderful thing is, that not only the question of our sins is elsewhere met, but in the burnt-offering it is the question of glorifying God in the place of sin itself—Christ “made sin.” And He who knew no sin was made sin, and stood in the place of sin (at the cross) before God, so as to glorify God there; “made sin,” which, except in a divine way of wisdom, is impossible. But Christ was made sin of His own voluntary will, and yet it was in obedience: these are combined; the two things are together. God “hath made him to be sin.” God put Him in the place of sin, and He offered Himself for sin (and He is our passover), freely and entirely for it.

This is what we may see in John 18, “if ye seek me, let these go their way.” Christ put Himself forward, “offered himself without spot to God”; but at the same time He is “made sin” —it is obedience too. The thing was, to unite this fact of sin being under God’s eye, and so to have it there as that God should be perfectly glorified about it. And only in a victim could this be. And there was

perfectness in bringing it, for it was the giving up of Himself. Besides the fact of our sins put away there, you get nothing like the atonement. It is all for us all the while; yet Christ is there “made sin,” in absolute obedience and self-sacrifice, but making good the righteousness, and love, and majesty, and honour, and truth of God, and everything else that is in God. Now it is by this we come; and therefore it is not only that the sin-offering has been there, but in coming by this I come in all the value of that which has glorified God in the very place where I was; I come to God in all the value of this, and get the acceptance of it before God, like Abel. Nowhere else at all is anything seen like this.

Until the man lays his hand upon the victim, it is not a sacrifice properly. Christ, “through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God”; but now when I lay my hand upon the victim, that is the application of it, more than part of it.

We hardly get the “made sin” in the verses here. A man’s bringing a burnt-offering is as good as coming to the Lord and saying, “I have no devotedness to bring; but all is due to the Lord, and I bring it in the person of my sacrifice,” which in principle would be Christ. This is our coming by it: but one must come as having undevotedness, and not only everything wanting, but enmity against God—all that is bad. And then I am accepted in all the value of what Christ has done. Christ has been perfect in obedience and devoted-ness unto death, and He glorifies God, giving Himself up to God altogether, for this is the character offering Himself has, and He is made sin, and dealt with as such, and in this shews His absolute devotedness to God. He is sinless too of course, for He is without blerfiish. You will get the

perfectness of Christ looked at in all His thoughts and will, as attested in the meat-offering; but here more, He is given up as a victim, made sin: there is the blood and atonement here. In the meatoffering you get what Christ was Himself; here it is His offering Himself in the place of sin, that is, “made sin.” If I say “instead of,” I must say “sins,” here not “instead of,” but “made sin.” We have sin brought in, which is more than saying we have sinned.

Just look round about, and always, and see what has come of God! He created everything good, and what state is it in? It is all corruption and defilement, and, if you could have the devil gay, it is here. Where was God’s glory, and all that He had made blessed? and where was His power? It was all utter dishonour done to God. Therefore there was Jehovah’s lot on the day of atonement. The whole thing was God’s character. Suppose God cut all off: it would have set aside wickedness, but there could be no love in that, though it would have shewn how man had failed. It would have looked like, “I have not made the thing well, and I am obliged to smash it up.” But the moment Christ comes in, you get perfect love, complete righteousness against sin, all that God is, looked at as against sin in itself; you get in the cross perfect love to the sinner, God’s majesty maintained. “It became him, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” You get the truth of God carried out even against His own Son; that everything God is, the most opposite things, righteousness and love (which would have been so without sin, but) all brought out here in the person of Him who offered Himself in obedience and love; “that the world may know that I

love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Every moral element, even that which seemed incompatible, all that God is, was displayed. And this is the place where God has been dishonoured. Thus, where all evil was, everything that was base and degrading, there the opposite was brought out when Christ was made sin.

The burnt-offering has more to do, then, with the nature, the sin and trespass-offering with acts, of sin. The one, the burnt-offering, is where the moral nature of God was in question; and the other, the sin-offering, where ordinances were. The burnt-offering has to do with the perfect nature of God. The great thing is that it meets God really, and in the place of sin. You might say, perhaps, it deals with our state rather than nature on our side.

It is the "Where art thou?" not "What hast thou done?" "Where art thou?" and Christ was the forsaken of God; there is grace for us. Thus the burnt-offering goes wider than the state of the world, and this is why I say in the place where sin was. But I am not speaking of Satan to include him at all.

The expression in verse 4, "to make atonement," is the Piel (intensive active) form of the Hebrew verb Kaphar. It is all a question what Kaphar means. What led me to that was, it is the same word which is usually translated "to make atonement for," which means "to cover." If I am putting away sin I cover it, but then I find the Hebrew word which means "upon "(or with), and if you cover upon, you put out of sight. Thus I find this word Kaphar used about the scapegoat, Kaphar with the altar, the incense altar, as well as with the scapegoat. I get

into some abstract way of thinking about it, and, if you look in a dictionary, you find no great help.

The scapegoat is an instance of the perfect nonsense of speculation. Some make the scapegoat a demon, and then sent away; some that it was sent away to appease the demon, lest he should do mischief to Israel; and one makes out that, while Azazel was a demon, they sent the sins all back to him.

Well, it is as to sin in the sin and trespass-offering, but here it is sin. It is the same Hebrew form in Leviticus 1:4; 16:10, “to make atonement for him,” and “with him,” in our Bibles.

There is “atonement about,” and another case, two or three times of “cover over,” and “from.”

The entire burnt-offering was wholly burnt to God; it was Jehovah’s lot, in a way, on that one point—sin. The skin—as in the case of Adam and Eve—was given to the priest, but the whole carcase went up burnt to God. It was Christ’s offering Godward, so to speak, but as a man, and made sin.

The wrath of God against sin was here, yet there came up a sweet savour. Such is the very fact. Instead of His being disobedient unto death, death was there, and sin was there, and He was obedient unto it; it was the perfection of the opposite of sin. Here Christ does God’s will perfectly, and that is the mystery. In the very place and condition of sin you find this; when He offers Himself, and says, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me; but that the world may know that I love the Father,” that is perfectness on one side; “and as the Father gave me commandment,” that is the other

side: and, being made sin, He has to drink the cup, and He says," My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Is the priest's having the skin the satisfaction of Christ in His own work? Perhaps so. Christ is covered with the glory of it anyway, only He had nothing like nakedness to cover. Abel's offering had this character in its nature. There is no sin-offering until the law, though sins were there. The law brought out the definite transgressions, and therefore the sin-offering then got its place in an intelligent way. Abel had no sin actually named. It was the "where," and not the "what," in his case.

The Epistle to the Romans is the broad fact of the "what" to chapter 5:11: afterwards the "where" is followed out. What we call the nature is practically identified with the "where"; but in the burnt-offering we look more on God's side, at the fact rather than at the nature that is active. Now, in order to get rid of the nature, I die with Christ: this is another element brought in. For when I look at the condition, I say, there is Christ the victim that died between me and God because of sin.

Then you get details. They washed the parts of the animal, that they should be ostensibly clean, to keep the idea of absolute cleanness.

Being made sin is not the idea of imputation. With imputation I could not have a sweet savour. This sacrifice is not for remission, but for glorifying God. The end of 2 Corinthians 5 is not remission. That is where I take up the difference between God's righteousness and righteousness under law. Men make Christ's righteousness in life under law to be our righteousness. All that was necessary in Him first. But in my righteousness now I get all the perfection of what Christ

is. It is not what He did as a living man, but God's own character was glorified in it, and my positive righteousness is according to what God's nature is. That is why I felt the importance of what was said about it. My objection was that it kept saints back from the infinite acceptance they have in Christ in this way. It was not the mere putting away of sins, as in Romans 3, 4, which is only forgiveness; but the burnt-offering has its own infinite value and character. The result shews it: Christ is now in the glory, and I am accepted in the Beloved.

It has been thought that the grades were to enable a poor man to bring an offering, which some have thought shewed the estimate of the offerer. It was not killed before the altar, that is, between the gate and the altar, but northward. It might shew a certain intelligence, at any rate it was not simply the man's coming up as he pleased. One entered the gate at the east of the court, and the north was to the right hand. He must do God's will.

In the meat-offering we get a picture of Christ's person fully tested by the righteousness of God.

Fire is testing judgment, not death at all. If there be only a little dross, fire purges it out: if there be only evil, it is consumed.

In the meat-offering the points are, the perfect humanity, and the Holy Ghost, which was the oil, but employed in different ways. The frankincense is the perfect grace that goes up to God. The burning on the altar is the thing that gives the sufferings of Christ. There are other variations: the oil kneaded in the flour gives Christ born by the Holy Ghost; the anointing with

oil is what Christ was after His baptism. There is another character: it was broken to bits, and they were all anointed with oil to shew that every part of Christ was in the power of the Spirit of God.

Its simple existence as a cake was sinless humanity, and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is baked, but not baked meal by itself: when it was a meal-offering, “baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil, thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon.” There it is a kind of cake common among the Hebrews, then “baken in the oven,” or “in the frying-pan,” that is, in every possible way. When it was offered, it was taken out. Parted in pieces means in every detail, words, works, everything. There were two things that could not be in it, honey and leaven, save in two exceptional cases. But there must always be salt. It is said, both of sin-offering and meat-offering, that they are “most holy.”

Next they were eaten by the priests; it was a priestly thing, not to be eaten by the priests’ daughters, as was allowed in some of the peace-offerings.

Leaven is corruption, or sin; and honey is not allowed either, for it represents the sweetness of nature, which may be a very pleasant thing sometimes, but cannot go into a sacrifice: salt must— “the salt of the covenant of thy God,” which is the separative power of holiness. “Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.” Everybody will get judgment; wicked and good will get fire, but it is only sacrifices offered to God that really have the power which separates from evil, and keeps evil away.

Honey is pleasant and good in its place sometimes. I was thinking of Jonathan. The Lord does refresh us with outward mercies, kind things, the friendship of brethren, but with caution as to the use of them. “Hast thou found honey? Eat as much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it,” and too much even here does do so.

The Lord Jesus had no honey, not a bit—He had divine kindness. Honey would have taken Him up to Mary and Martha when Lazarus was sick, if I may use such a figure, but salt kept Him away. There could be no honey in a sacrifice, nor in a meat-offering, “for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire.”

The honeycomb in Luke 24,1 suppose, was good in its place. It is not meant that honey in itself is bad naturally. The moment He became the cake after the baptism of John, there was no honey. There should be our answer to it, “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” Fire being the perfect testing of God’s judgment, we have Christ here, not merely looked at as making atonement, but also as tested by the fire on the cross. This is true of everyone: everyone shall be salted with fire. The fire burns out dross, if there is any to burn. This is the testing of Him who was made sin, but there is no bloodshedding here. It answers to the Lord’s death in Luke, and this character is in the garden there. John is the burnt-offering rather, in which He offers Himself. There were some meat-offerings in which leaven was bound to be put. On the day of Pentecost, when the church was offered, brought to God, leaven was put in; and in the offering of the firstfruits—not in the first of the first-fruits, there was leaven. The moment

you bring us in, you have it, but not in anything for a sweet savour.

As to “green ears” of corn dried by the fire, Christ was a green tree, as a living one, and He says, as it were, If I come to this, what will come to Israel that is dead? Here, took green is full of life, and then dried by fire. So Christ, and He was a sweet savour. “Thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn, dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears.” They were to be full, as Christ was. The rest was most holy, when the memorial and the frankincense had been burnt; this all went up to God. You have both meal-cakes and firstfruits as meat-offerings; and there was always oil upon it, except in the case of meal for a poor person’s sin-offering. And also in the offering of anything with leaven there was a sin-offering with it which meets our leaven, so to speak.

There are beautiful details of Christ—what you see in His life: somewhat Uke a great picture full of people, where they give you a little outline of the heads of them all, to say who they are. For these sacrifices are very like that.

Then in the peace-offering we have the great facts of atonement for sin, no less than of His death, as well as the bread come down from heaven. It is not the same thought, but the two things; and the result. We have had Christ in perfectness as dying for us, and in the perfectness of His person, and then we come to talk of communion.

The force of the offering is communion, no doubt, because the people eat of it; but the name has nothing to do with that. It is a prosperity-offering, either a

thanksgiving, or for vows. The man brought his animal, laid his hand upon its head, killed it at the door of the tabernacle, and the priest took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the altar. The fat went to Jehovah, to be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savour. You cannot separate that from Christ offering Himself as a burnt offering.

The word is merely to make a fire. I do not know of any distinct meaning. It may be mentioned like the unjust judge in the parable: God is not an unjust judge, but the judge is introduced to make the picture complete. In the meat-offering there is all Christ's life before He was offered. A peace-offering could not be offered by itself; it is not to be separated from the burnt-offering (chap. 3:5). In point of fact the meat-offering was offered with the burnt-offering; they are two aspects of the same Christ. "The priest "does not mean "the high priest." It is said, "the priests, Aaron's sons, shall do" so and so.

When we arrive at the law of the peace-offering, a portion is for Jehovah, for the priest that offers it, for the priests in general, and for the company. There is God's joy; Christ's own joy; the priests generally, as such, rejoice, and the company of the faithful.

Fowls were allowed for a burnt-offering, as a perfection of grace, if a man was poor; whereas, for a peace-offering, if he could not bring an animal, he might stay at home, and take it quietly. No matter how poor my thoughts are, I cannot do without a burnt-offering.

These were all the offerings of a sweet savour. The fat and the blood were not to be eaten; the spring of life—the fat was the expression of that; and all that was in Christ was offered to God. "Jeshurun waxed fat and

kicked." Fat is used there for a certain energy of life, and so elsewhere.

The family ate the peace-offering, so, if a man asked a company to dinner, he had to make a peace-offering of it, and part was offered to Jehovah, and part to the priests, and the company made their feast of the rest. If a man killed an animal in the wilderness, and did not bring it for an offering to the Lord, that soul was to be cut off from his people (Lev. 17:3, 4, 5; Deut. 12:21). And you notice, his own hand is to bring the offering made by fire (chap. 7:30). "The fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord." "And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for a heave-offering of the sacrifices of your peace-offerings."

First is the offering in itself, and then the directions for all the circumstances connected with it.

In reality, when you come to the peace-offering, it was a festival. All that concerns sin comes first, and then other things afterwards.

Chapters 4 To 6:1-7

There was no forgiveness for sins done with a high hand under the law. It is said distinctly, "if a soul shall sin through ignorance." Paul says mercy was shewn him "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." So of old, if a man sinned haughtily, as in blasphemy, he was stoned. There is forgiveness for such sins now; but not if done after full knowledge of Christ so as to give Him up. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

Nothing is excluded from forgiveness now except blaspheming the Holy Ghost in apostasy from Christ, that is, denying Him in nature. One may go to Christ as a wretched guilty man (“such were some of you”), and yet be forgiven.

In Israel there was a priest, by whom those who sinned had to approach; but the priest could not come within the veil except on the day of atonement. Suppose the people sinned, they were cut off from God; and if the priest sinned, the people were cut off, because they could only come to God by the priest.

The blood was not carried in for a single person, because this would have said that the whole thing was wrong, which was not the case; it was for the high priest or for all the people.

All is changed as to this now. It is what the apostle means by “the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image”: which could not go on when Christ died and went to heaven. The priest, in chapter 4:2, is supposed to be the high priest. I do not think Aaron’s sons would come under the expression in verse 3. They did not represent all the people: only the high priest did so. The “priest that is anointed” always means the high priest. He was not to defile himself for father or mother, or for dead body, and the reason given is, “upon whose head the anointing oil is poured.” The high priest was anointed in a totally different way from the others, without blood; but the others had oil and blood mixed put upon them, and then, with Aaron, they were to put it upon them and their clothes, with him, not with them; they are brought in by the bye, as it were. He was first anointed without blood at all, and then they are brought

with him and sprinkled with blood, and after that oil was taken with some blood and put on them. But there was no regular anointing for them; so that properly he was the anointed priest, and when they were in their way anointed, it was with him, their garments, and this and that, with him. So it is given in chapter 8:30: “and Moses took of the anointing oil and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons’ garments with him, and sanctified Aaron, and his garments and his sons’ garments with him,” not with them but with him. It is identifying them all with him; he had the anointing already. And the son is then with the priest that is anointed, which is very natural. This gives the place of the church with Christ. Looked at strictly, the sons of Aaron represent us. The remnant after we go, as regards the world, will be priests; but they are not partakers of the heavenly calling. I have no doubt the epistle to the Hebrews is like the reaching over the wall; in a way it is blessing in provision for a coming time as well as for the present. We do not see the saints, Christians, on the highest ground at all in Hebrews; but Christ is in heaven looked at as there instead of and for them. I believe He preserves Israel at this moment by being inside, for He “died for that nation.”

There was this peculiarity in the sacrifice for the people as a whole that the blood was brought inside, as the body was burnt outside the camp. The blood was carried in, as far as possible, into what was heavenly; on the great day of atonement it went right in, and Israel are reconciled on the ground of what is heavenly, though they do not get things heavenly; but they are reconciled on the ground of the blood being presented to God in

heaven, and the day of atonement has this character in measure. The difference between that and the common person's offering is very important; for, if an individual sinned, the people were still in communion, and it is merely a restoring of the person himself; but if the priest or the congregation sinned, the breach was total, and all the people were upon the same ground as the sinner. Reconciliation in the main must be as regards God, and blood must go in to Him: we are wholly upon this ground.

I do not think you could say, to or of Israel, If we walk in the light as God is in the light. But the atonement for them had been presented to God in the light. The difference in our case is, that we are called into the place where the atonement has been offered. Israel will have to stand on the ground of mere fleshly religion being set aside. They cannot have their own blessing even without the blood having been offered to God, and therefore without their giving up all fleshly religion. Law was religion in flesh, or religion for a people in flesh, and it was to prove totally wanting. No provisional sacrifices would do. The whole system was to demonstrate the failure of such a ground. They were put there with appliances for occasional restoration, but it was evidently all of no use, and this from the very beginning itself. They made a golden calf at once. God went on to shew whether a people could go on, mixing grace with law, and grace as it were to help them out; but they could not. So the sacrifices took that ground of fleshly religion for a time.

In the millennium when it comes, the sacrifices will be figures in a measure as they used to be. The people will not go into heavenly places then; but the sacrifices had

to go into the figures of the heavenly places, and the blood was carried in to the mercy-seat in the holiest of all and sprinkled there. The camp was fleshly religion, and the veil was there; but the blood must be in the holiest, and the body be burnt outside the camp even for Israel to get a blessing. It must be effectual with God; this is what is wanted. So the apostle reasons for us, that “the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” We have now got heavenly things, and we must go outside the camp. In the millennium neither have they heavenly things nor will they go outside the camp. The blessing depends on Christ having gone outside the camp originally, and He in virtue of His blood is gone into the heavenlies; but when He comes again, the blessing on earth will be made good. Meanwhile we must go outside the camp and have, too, the privilege of going into the holiest; but if I take this world, I say there is no camp now. There is a professing church, we know, but it is all an untrue thing. Whether for us or for the millennium, Christ must go in either case within the veil; but it is only we who go there now. There will be a veil in Ezekiel’s temple in that way, but unrent. Israel will not go within. The difference is evident and great.

In another image Moses went and pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, and those who sought Jehovah came out to that tent of meeting outside; and Moses goes back, Joshua stays outside: that is, the Spirit of Christ graciously goes inside to see what He could do

with them, while the heavenly Christ stays outside. It is beautiful in Moses again, where he says, when up in the mountain, ‘ If you do not forgive the people, blot me out! What will you do with your glory? You brought this people out of Egypt.* Thus he identifies the people with God’s glory. When he is with God, he insists on their being spared at any cost, for the reason that he did identify the people with the glory of God. And then he comes down, and, seeing the calf, he says “kill every man his brother, and companion, and neighbour,” because to him the people were identified with God’s glory. His faith says, “spare them”—his faithfulness says, “kill them,”—on the same ground of God’s glory.

Here, in the offering, it is the great principle of Christ laying the basis of it all. But there is in the mercy-seat and altar this difference (though grace is in both): the blood was put upon the altar for the individual; the altar —the measure of it all—was the place of man’s responsibility according to the law; whereas when the blood was carried inside, this was where God sat, it was responsibility before Him, and so, except to give a figure of Christ, the priest never went in at all. Judaism could not bring there. I know it was not so ordained at first; but as soon as the priests failed, then He says even of Aaron the high priest, “Come not at all times unto the holy place within the veil”; for really it was all a failed thing, and man could not have to say to God on that ground.

The gold shews righteousness according to God’s nature. Righteousness is the girdle of Messiah’s loins. So the high priest had a golden girdle, divine righteousness. The brazen altar was God’s perfect judgment of the responsibility of man, which made a

difference of measure. God requiring of me according to my responsibility is a different thing from requiring in His own character.

At the brazen altar the nature of God is not brought in. Every sin does touch God's nature, but that is not considered under the law. But on the great day of atonement the work had to be done according to God's nature, or they could not have had to say to God at all.

The blood on the great day of atonement answered for the people's sins for the whole year (and now for us for ever); and then it was begun again. The people never went in at all: the blood had to go in (or there could be no reconciliation as a whole) once a year, "the Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." There is never anything about the people going in; only when it was a reconciliation for the whole, the ground must be as Christ laid it, or it would be no reconciliation with God.

The sprinkling of the blood of the others—the ruler's and the common person's sin-offering—was upon the brazen altar. But the priest's was on the golden altar; for how could a priest go and offer incense if he had sinned? And if he could not do this, there was no intercourse with God. The people never went beyond the brazen altar at all, where the burnt and peace offerings were offered, the place of ordinary intercourse. They were all individual cases.

On the great day of atonement everything is done. The sins of the people are dealt with; the nature of God is met, before and on the mercy-seat: the defilement of the tabernacle removed (that is, of the heavens itself, and of

the altar); and the people’s sins are confessed on the head of the scape-goat.

Had there not been sin in the priests, Nadab and Abihu, etc., would have gone in and out as Moses did; but as it was, they were prohibited.

The veil is not rent for the Jew by-and-by, unless it be in the sense of the putting away of sin, but not for him to go in.

God could not bless definitely, without being glorified as to sin: but in the two first sin-offerings in Leviticus 4, the priest did not actually go in, but only where he was accustomed to go, to the altar of incense. But when we come to the real thing done, the blood is upon the mercy-seat, it goes upon the pure gold. The sprinkling of the blood before the veil and sprinkling it upon the horns of the golden altar presents a similar aspect of things. With us the censer belongs inside, but the altar of incense was outside the veil; it is when its use is interrupted, as it were, by sin, that blood has to be put there. It was sprinkled seven times, this being the perfectness which we constantly find in scripture. The altar itself had been defiled by the sin, and therefore it had to be sprinkled. Then “outside the camp “is most important here, and on the day of atonement too; because, if we bring in the nature and character of God, the thing is a reproach to the world and it must go outside. There is plenty of religiousness inside the camp, but we cannot have death in the presence of God, nor bring together before God things that do not suit.

Suppose you have a number of worldly people round you, you can ask God to bless them j but you cannot go on with a priestly prayer, less so than you could even

with the animals around you. But if the individual sinned, there was failure in his individual responsibility, but no interruption between God and the people. The person had got astray, and it was a question of his responsibility, and one that he could so far estimate, so that there is no taking the body outside the camp. Every man knows that sin cannot do for God. So it was then in a worldly religion, the brazen altar being the estimate of the evil according to man's responsibility. But there it came within the limits of man and of the world. Go and say to a worldly-minded man, You must be partaker of God's holiness; or talk to him about a nature that cannot sin because born of God! He either hates it, or thinks you raving; but he would perfectly understand that he is not to steal, kill, and so on. Such was the case with the brazen altar for the Israelite, the law being only a shadow of good things to come. Now, we must walk in the light as God is in the light; for the veil is rent. It is not now merely that I must have the sins put away, of which I am guilty in the earth, so as to go on with God in ordinary intercourse, but the claims of God on me are according to the light in which He is revealed in Christ. So scripture shews distinctly that, though the Christian has a consciousness of failure, he has, when once purged, no more conscience of sins; as typically in Israel the great day of atonement, when the blood was put on the mercy-seat, was the basis of all that went on through the year. God's character must be met, even to go on with His material government in patience and mercy.

If all the people sinned, all were shut out, and so, if a priest sinned, in effect it was the same; but if one of the common people sinned, all the rest are not put out, and then the altar of incense needs not to be restored.

Thus, wherever the blood was carried in, the bullock had to be carried outside and burnt: but in other cases the priests ate the sin-offering. Christ enters into our sins and sorrows, identifying Himself with them in grace, all spotless as He was Himself.

The moment you get sin, it is dealt with before God. Man has no idea of the effect of the judgment of sin in the divine presence. If a man may take away your character, you might take him away if you could; but if he takes away God's character, nobody cares for that! In the world fleshly religion can take up man's responsibility, and say that he ought to do so and so, and there must be this and that, if he does not. But now ours is priestly intercourse, and such intercourse with God must be according to what God is: we must be in His presence to intercede after His mind.

The fat was burnt upon the altar, and the blood was sprinkled there; it was not brought in for the common person, for the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. The thing God was teaching was, in Israel, the impossibility of having man in His presence. He could not have Israel near Him. There was man's rule (under the law) just and perfect, with certain types of Christ; but God never came out, and man never could go in. In Christianity God has come out in grace to man, and man is gone in to the glory of God: so we see and have it in the person of Christ.

The trespass-offering is in the main identical with the sin-offering, but it is not sin in some positive evil done against any of the commandments of Jehovah, but a thing that natural conscience can take cognizance of.

Achan's was positive disobedience: there was no atonement at all for that under the law.

The last three sin-offerings having "and it shall be forgiven him," but the first not, lead us to suppose that it is dropped purposely as pointing to Christ, the high priest. As any special application, it would be this, I suppose. In his standing as representing the people, there might be that in it. The difference is plain. The distinction between sin and sins as in Romans may be in the burnt-offering distinguished from the sin-ofFering to a certain extent; but here nature is hardly dealt with specifically. It is exceptional, if we have anything directly referring to sin in the nature. One of the things at times to be met is that some, like Wesley, define sin as the wilful transgression of a known law, while others have said that a lust is no sin until it comes into an open act. As i John 3 teaches, sin is lawlessness.

In the beginning of chapter 5 (v. 1), there is the kind of oath that is different from voluntary swearing: "And if a soul sin and hear the voice of an oath "(that is, administered by the magistrate), "and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it, if he do not utter it" (i.e., give his evidence), "then he shall bear his iniquity."

The Lord Himself said, "Swear not at all": so we should not voluntarily take an oath, that is, of our own choice and will. But the Lord Himself when He stood before the high priest, the moment He was adjured, took the oath and answered when He had been silent before. It is not evil before a magistrate to swear, but good; it comes of evil otherwise. I should deny God in the magistrate if I did not answer when he adjured me. But to take an oath

of my own will is to bring in God for nothing at all, that is, profanely. So the sin here in this verse is not uttering, that is, withholding evidence. In Exodus 21:6 (and twice in chapter 22:9, and once in chapter 22:8), “judges” is “elohim” —God, and this because the magistrate is for God: “the powers that be are ordained by God.” We are to submit to them.

As for the manner of taking an oath, the king holds up his hand to take the oath: it is the commonest way of taking it. You are bound by that as much as by anything else. Whatever binds is enough. Only I am adjured by God, because the magistrate represents God. There are questions of swearing which present more difficulty; as for instance going into court and swearing to recover a debt for yourself. This is just a case of conscience; but I make no rules for anybody: people are not entitled to do so.

There is a double figure in these chapters, not only one of Christ’s sacrifice, but also of failure in the assembly, that is, of the saints now. Our whole position is changed now. We have no more conscience of sins, but we see the way in which the value of what these prefigure is applied as in Numbers 19, where they are passing through the wilderness or world. There the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times before the door of the tabernacle; it was (for us) settled there once for all. But when a man had touched a dead thing, he was not in a fit state to go into the camp and enjoy his place there, he was unclean and the water of purification must be applied to him. The water, the Holy Ghost by the word, was the witness of what Christ has done. This makes all the difference. Christianity asserts for believers the non-

imputation of sins. What we see of old was a sacrifice that worked like a priest's absolution now.

In verses 2, 3 we see the person unclean without knowing it. Yet he is guilty, but he cannot act as guilty until he knows it. God cannot look at sin. If I have a spot on my back, God cannot have me with that spot on. Some one may help me to get rid of it, but I am unclean with it. In Numbers 15 there is a difference; in verse 27 it is mercy, but in verse 30 the man is to be cut off. What is cutting off? He is put out from God's people altogether. Occasionally God did it; sometimes the people stoned the man themselves. It means death of course.

Chapter 6:8—Chapter 8.

In chapter 6:9, the point is (and a very important one it is) that the fire was to be burning always. As in Isaiah 6 all was from the brazen altar. There is no real prayer or praise, or anything of the kind, save in connection with the sacrifice of Christ; so in Revelation 8. He takes the fire from the brazen altar in verse 5. The altar in verse 3 seems to me to be the altar of incense. Take it as a rule: no fire is used save off the brazen altar.

Continuous burning gives no cessation of the judgment by God according to a holy nature. It is burning all night, and, in a certain sense, for Israel, who are kept by Christ now, kept through His sacrifice which is perpetual in value.

One other point: in the meat offering the frankincense went up to God entirely. The priests ate of the flour, but all the grace goes up to God. It was holy; and when the priests offered a meat-offering, it was all burnt. It is

Christ Himself: there He is offerer and offering; and it was for no one save God Himself so to speak.

Israel really took up little of these things. Even the instructions of Deuteronomy are very different. All this is written for us. I doubt very much if any offerings, save the official offerings, were offered in the wilderness at all. Stephen in Acts 7 quotes Amos, and asks, “Have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.”

Before the strange fire there was more freedom for access, but it was not made use of.

So in the peace-offering; they were iniquities if they went beyond the second or third day, because they were not connected with the sacrifice (chap. 7:15-18). If the sacrifice were a vow, it might be eaten on the next day as well as the first; if a thanksgiving, it must be eaten the first day. If there be more energy in the worship, you may carry it on longer (as here two days instead of one); but if it is practically separated from the victim burnt on the altar, it is unclean altogether and is rejected. You cannot separate praise or worship from the offering of Christ: without this it becomes a positive abomination. A man may be singing a sweet hymn with a thought of Christ in it; but being disconnected from Christ Himself, it is a mere piece of music and offensive to God. It is possible to make requests that the Holy Ghost gives to be asked, and to find that you are losing the sense of the Person to whom you are speaking. Worship must be in spirit and in truth. It is solemn to give out a hymn. Take

Hymn 151: are you speaking truthfully in singing it? ‘ Each thought of Thee doth constant yield, Unchanging, fresh delight’? Perhaps you may be able to go up to it. Suppose I sing “O teach me more of Thy blest ways,” this is very different: what are these “blest ways,” and am I learning them? Then again take “O Lord, how blest our journey”: I may ask, Is this true of myself? I do not say, Is it true? but, Is it true to me?

The waving is presenting before God; and the heaving is a little stronger. It is all owned as Jehovah’s—all for the priests’ eating, and then they eat it.

The drink-offering is universally the joy of God and man. It was thorough action between God and the people.

Hints On The Day Of Atonement

Leviticus 16.

Aaron appears with a bullock for himself and for his house, and then with an offering for the people. Israel, strictly speaking, were represented by the goats. In the sacrifice for Aaron and his house together are the two parts of a sacrifice. When they are together, it is Christ taking our place. When Aaron is taken alone, there is no sacrifice for him. He shall put on the linen garments, and wash in water, and so put them on. He was to have a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. The ram was always for consecration, or in case of desecration, which was the opposite of consecration.

The sin-offering is taken as a whole, the greater including the less; but the detail is wanted. The first idea is meeting God in His absolute holiness. It is Christ "made sin," and we the righteousness of God according to that. As there is a danger of stopping short at the scape-goat, so there is the other danger too. Some do not use the scape-goat enough, others use it too much. Some preach more in connexion with the necessity to go into the presence of God than of getting oneself the value of the scape-goat. Preaching the scape-goat shews sins put away; preaching the bullock brings us to God.

There is a difference between presenting sins in the light of the law that way, and bowing souls by grace. I never come to God till I get the second part. One hears, "I am here in the world forgiven, and I am very glad of it"; you will sometimes, but not often, hear people say, "lam before God as white as snow in His presence." Too

often they take other ground altogether and say, “If I am to be saved, I am; and if I am to be damned, I am,” and so evade the real question whether they honestly thought they were lost. If you really felt in your present state that you were going to be damned, you would not take it so quietly. The fact is, it is all dogma, and not conscience. Supposing I put the question and say, “Which are you now, saved or lost?” there is no “if” in that.

It is not substitution when I say to all, “The blood is on the mercy-seat”; I do not say “your sins are put away,” because I do not know that they are. And coming to detail, I can not only say, “Come and welcome,” but, “God beseeches you to come, for the blood is on the mercy-seat.” The scapegoat goes a step farther; for if the man does come, it declares that it is impossible for God ever to tell you about your sins again, for they are all put away. I do preach this as truth generally; for scripture never says Christ has borne the sins of everybody. You have lost certainty the moment you make that assertion.

I always say “our sins,” which scripture does say, and then they by faith take it for themselves. “Our sins “is strictly for believers. Paul is there (1 Cor. 15) preaching the gospel from his own point, as his experience. The word “our” is on purpose used vaguely there.

The meaning of Azazel is the scape-goat; it is the goat that carries away. There is no limit here.

There is an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and so on. And no man was to be in the tabernacle while the high priest went in with the blood to the mercy-seat. It is done all

alone; the people were all looked at as having denied the place.

First the place is cleansed as to all that referred to God who had been dishonoured. This must be set right first; and Christ has by death perfectly done it. He has "passed through the heaven"; He descended and ascended that He might fill all things. This goes farther, but it refers to the going through.

God dwells in light that no man can approach unto. That is God's nature, it is true; but the heavens are all the things we look at as something under God. It is light inaccessible in itself; neither man nor angel can get there. "Above all heavens" is as in Hzekiel, where we see the cherubim and their surroundings; then the vault which expresses the heavens; and God is at the top of all, though He "humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth."

But here it is a question of defilement, not of guilt; it was unbearable to God; and no man goes in while he is then occupied, nor till he comes out. He first goes in with a censer full of burning coals off the altar; "and he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of the incense cover the mercy-seat, that he die not." And Christ first goes in, in the grace of His person, which is before all the offerings; that is, when you take Himself before He begins any other part, He goes in with sweet incense. It is all "before the Lord "; and this gives Himself as a person absolutely perfect, the person before the work. But when we take Aaron and his house, we must have the bullock: those who are connected with him need that; and then the blood of the bullock is taken and sprinkled on all the unclean places,

he all alone, until he comes out. But after having the incense in the most holy place, he sprinkles with his finger the blood on the mercy-seat and before it. There are two ceremonies, one with the blood of the bullock, and one with the blood of the goat, consecutively; and then, in verse 18, the two are taken together.

“That he die not” is always connected with what is absolutely necessary. If it had been possible for a moment that Christ had not been an absolutely sweet savour, then that must have been the result.

“The altar that is before Jehovah,” verse 18, seems the brazen altar, for it is described in this way. After the blood is sprinkled on the mercy-seat, then atonement is made for the holy place, and next for the tabernacle of the congregation; then “he shall go out unto the altar that is before Jehovah, and make an atonement for it.” On the mercy-seat God Himself was met. In fact that made it a mercy-seat, for it was a throne of judgment but for that. Now it is a throne of government for, instead of a throne of judgment against.

After he has made atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation (which would include, I suppose, what was in it), then he is to go out to “the altar that is before Jehovah.” The golden altar was put “before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony where I will meet with thee.” God met Moses for Himself there before the mercy-seat, and He met Moses for the people at the door of the tabernacle, and therefore the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled outside in Numbers 19. But the brazen altar was “before Jehovah”; in Exodus 29:42 you have the words so used, and in verse 43, “there I will meet with

the children of Israel." In Numbers 7:89 when Moses went into the tabernacle, he heard the voice of one speaking to him from off the mercy-seat. This makes two meeting places clearly. The people had nothing to do with going inside. Moses went in and spoke with God, and put a veil on to come out and speak to the people. Moses went into the holiest of all whenever he liked, but he put his veil off to do so. Individually he went in and had no veil, and came out and put the veil on; but whether the glory on him died away in the wilderness is not said. The object of the Spirit of God was to give this character of the law, which is afterwards contrasted with the gospel; and the veil is upon Israel still; but when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. It was only when Nadab and Abihu sinned that Aaron was prevented from going into the holiest of all; and this chapter is the exceptional time once in the year with blood.

In reading verses 6 and 11, "which is for himself" and "make an atonement for himself and for his house," one sees that it is for himself along with his sons, not alone.

In verse 20 "to reconcile" is the same word as "to make atonement for." It is the act of the application of the blood here; it is the same idea as in Colossians, "to reconcile all things unto himself." The word "atonement" is brought clearly out in what is done in this chapter. "Make reconciliation for the sins of the people," in Hebrews 2, should be "make propitiation" for them; but in Romans 5:10, where the word "atonement "is used, it ought to be reconciliation. "Blotted out" is used of transgressions and means to wipe them out.

Then Aaron was to bring the live goat and lay both his hands upon its head and confess all the transgressions of the people over it, and send it away, by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, to a land not inhabited. That is the other part of sin-offering, substitution evidently. Just as in the blood on the mercy-seat God was met in His nature and character; so in the scape-goat you have substitution for transgressions. Substitution does not include everything, not the full glorifying of God, I mean, but our sins borne by Christ.

If substitution were for the whole world, it would save the whole world. Propitiation was dealing with God's nature and character. There are two things: blood brought to God in respect of God's character, and a scape-goat for the people's sake. One constantly sees two things in this way, a double figure for a whole. There is the wilderness and Canaan; there is Moses and Aaron, and these two are one Christ. So here, in the first part God's nature is met; in the second, the sins are put away. The first goat is called "Jehovah's lot," the people's sins are confessed over the second (as Christ confesses the sins of His people on His own head as His own, and can call them "mine iniquities"). I see what God is in blood on the mercy-seat; but the moment you have substitution, and individual acts of transgression, you have a scapegoat.

"Atonement" occurs but once in the New Testament, and there it should be (Rom. 5:11) reconciliation; and expiation occurs but once in the Bible (Num. 35:33), and that is in the margin, "no expiation for the land": so we may drop that word. Propitiation is towards God. There is the holy and righteous character of God to be met; and this is propitiation. God is not changed by it; but,

being righteous and holy, this is responded to, that His love might go out according to righteousness and holiness, and mercy and righteousness be consistent. Atonement is more when the blood is applied. Blood was sprinkled upon the altar, because sin was there, blood of atonement. It is the actual putting away of sin by the sprinkling of the blood. The idea is, a thing or person is in a state in which they cannot have to say to God, as here “the iniquities of the children of Israel among whom I dwell”; and that condition must be dealt with. You must have the blood where the sin has been, you must have it for God to be in relationship with such. The blood is brought in, and the thing sprinkled, and so the thing is put right. Here reconciliation is the same word.

In the two goats are the two aspects of what Christ did. The twofold view is most interesting; as in Christ the Apostle and High Priest, like Moses and Aaron. Atonement signifies life given and accepted as sacrifice for life forfeited; remission is the deliverance of those who appeal from the sentence of death, and thence it is the forgiveness of the sins that caused their condemnation.

“Atonement” is the greatest blunder in Romans 5: n. We are said to be “reconciled” in verse 10. Then verse 11 speaks of “our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation,” not the atonement, which has nothing to do with the sins on our side; atonement is for God.

When I think of propitiation, I think more of the person propitiated and what is due to him; reconciliation deals with circumstances too. It has nothing to do with our nature in the Old Testament. We have a nature that

always like to break the law; and we learn what that is. When I find I have a nature that cannot be subject, I say, Here is a pretty business; and this all comes out in the New Testament. The remedy is, not merely that Christ has died, and whatever Christ did is mine, but that I am dead with Him (Rom. 6).

Atonement is for guilt. When I look in the Old Testament, I see guilt blotted out, and not a nature judged; that is the thing for which the atonement provides, and I do get the blood put upon the mercy-seat where God Himself sits; and when I know what His nature is, I get the fact that here God's nature is met, not my own dealt with as in the cross of Christ. For nature, my nature, is not known under law to be dealt with. So, if David says, "Create in me a clean heart," would he have spoken thus, if he had known that his heart in the flesh could not be made clean? Again, if Naaman was clean altogether, it is a figure for now. But then there was no flesh lusting against the Spirit, nor even the two natures contrary one to the other, as a state existing and explained to the believer. With the new nature, I have now the privilege of knowing that the old is dead. I have the new man and the old; but the old is condemned in death. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh "; and I not only die daily, but know that I am crucified with Christ.

The atonement is another thing; in it God's nature is met, and this is the point. I have nothing about man's nature; God's nature has been dishonoured by sin, and He is there sitting with things before Him which He will not stand. This is the fact, and therefore the blood is put under His eye; that is, Christ has done it, and God says,

“When I see the blood, I will pass over”; but sin is all considered in the lump, so to speak here. When we find nature and conflict with nature, it is a question of the Holy Ghost. This applies to nature only in the way that it applies to sin at large.

Sending to a land not inhabited means out of sight, remembrance, and everything. “To make an atonement with him” in verse 10 is said of the scape-goat. By the seven times sprinkling constant communion was secured, as well as God’s nature met by the blood upon it. God was looked at as a holy God, if not understood.

Then, when Aaron comes back, he lays aside his linen garments, and takes his ordinary ones again: so Christ will come back from heaven in garments of glory and beauty.

The absolute defilement of sin is shewn. The touch of the carcase of the sin-offering defiled: so, if a man walked over a grave, he was unclean; or if a man died in a tent, it was unclean: indeed it was very hard to avoid being unclean.

The scripture that made the question, whether Christ was a sin-bearer all His life, quite clear to me was, “he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” He must be proved all His life to know no sin, and then He can be made sin. To bear sins in life makes atonement without blood, but “without shedding of blood is no remission.” Why should the Lord be saved from “that hour” if it had been going on all His life? And there is another thing if followed up: it takes a person back and unites him to Christ before He died, which is false.

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Hints On The Feasts Of Jehovah

The feasts of Jehovah are given full in Leviticus 23, and again the chief ones in Deuteronomy 16.

There are two different ways of viewing the seven feasts. We may take the Sabbath day by itself, and then begin again, reckoning the Passover and unleavened bread as two feasts, or we may reckon the Sabbath day first, without separating those two.

The idea of these feasts is the gathering of the people round Jehovah for some cause or other, a “holy convocation.”

The first is the Sabbath; and it will be so when the true rest comes: God will have all His people round about Him.

Then follows the Passover, with the unleavened bread, together but still distinct; that is, along with the sacrifice of Christ, you have sin taken away practically. Really, in verse 5, the Passover stands by itself. First there is a certain definite act, and then seasons.

The Sabbath is the grand rest of all the people, but still it comes in as a holy convocation.

Then the Passover is the lamb slain, and its body eaten. After this, next, we come to the first-fruits. It is not said exactly when this was to be:—when the corn was ripe of course—but on the morrow after the Sabbath it was to be waved. This is Christ’s resurrection; and here notably is no sin-offering.

Then they were to count fifty days, seven Sabbaths complete, and to offer a new meat-offering unto Jehovah,

“two wave loaves baken with leaven”; for now we have, in fact, the church offered to God, but with leaven in the offering, so that it could not be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savour.

The two loaves are an adequate witness, as I take it. The point here is the church; a witness which is presented, an offering to God with leaven, but then along with and because of this, one kid of the goats for a sin-offering. We find no such thing with the first-fruits which represented Christ, but here the leaven is met by the sin-offering. The selfsame day they proclaim a holy convocation.

In verse 22 is a gracious provision: when they reaped their harvest, they were to leave the gleanings for the poor. It is the heavenly calling (but not properly the church), because there are others who are called. This is Daniel’s heavenly calling, which does not form properly the loaves of God. There are others, those who are killed by the beast; and if God did not take them up to heaven, where would they be? So the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to Christians, but may run over to others also. These things were to be done in Israel, although we (Christians) get all the good of them.

Pentecost happens in the space between the Passover and verse 24. For the blowing of the Trumpets we leap on to the seventh month, and then comes the first day of that holy month as the next appointed time.

First the Trumpets are blown and gather Israel; and then, on the tenth day of the same month, Israel enters into the day of Atonement. Not that we do not enter into it long before, but here it is for them. You have had the beginning of Israel again, so to speak, in the Trumpets

and Atonement made, and then follows the feast of Tabernacles, from the fifteenth day of the month, seven days unto Jehovah. The first day is a holy convocation, and the eighth day a holy convocation, that is, an additional day. When the feast of Tabernacles on earth is come, we shall get the heavenly things too. It is a "solemn assembly "when God has a complete thing; that is an expression applied here only to the Tabernacles; it is once used in a peculiar manner of the Passover.

It comes after the harvest and after the vintage, that is, after God's separative judgment, and vengeance judgment or the treading the "winepress of the wrath of God." Then they shall take boughs of goodly trees, and dwell in booths seven days, bearing witness that they had been strangers but now are fully back in the land. That is for Israel to do. We come in between the Passover and the day of Atonement.

Why should the leaven be introduced at Pentecost? Because we are there. There is all the value of Christ and of His sacrifice too; but account of evil in us is taken and provided for by a sin-offering. It is not so where He is typified.

There are only three feasts mentioned in Deuteronomy; because then all the males were to be congregated before God.

The tone and spirit of these things is given in verse 7: "and thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, and thou shalt turn in the morning and go unto thy tents." And he tells them the way in which they are to do it in detail, here calling it a "solemn assembly." In verse 3 the unleavened bread is called "bread of affliction," holiness in affliction, when

you come to it by the sacrifice of Christ; in 1 Corinthians 5 it is called the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” It takes the character of self-judgment, and sorrow before God, and therefore, in that state, I have no fellowship with others; so I turn in the morning and go to my tent. You find bitter herbs as well in Exodus 12.

It is quite different when you come to Pentecost: “seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee; begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn, and thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand.” Here I have the Holy Ghost and I am a free offerer and come up with my gift, and “according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee” —it is in the measure of my spirituality I can come with this offering; “and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that is among you.” You must have grace going out to the poor and the needy, and then come with a freewill offering “according as God hath blessed you.”

The feast of Tabernacles goes farther, after “thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine, thou shalt rejoice in thy feast.” Son, daughter, manservant, maidservant, stranger, fatherless, and widow, seven days keep a solemn feast unto Jehovah their God; “because Jehovah thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.” It is not now, rejoice “according to” the measure, but He will bless you in everything, and so you are to rejoice and all with you. In the booths they were

to say they had been strangers in the wilderness, but now they have got all God's promises.

We are in Pentecost, not merely on Passover ground; but we come when we have got in a certain sense into the land and "according as Jehovah hath blessed us"; and still in another sense we may say we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ, and so we can "surely rejoice." It is joy all the week long—seven days. It is real rejoicing all the time.

Mark another thing connected with Pentecost which struck me; as long as we are here, "thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes." In Tabernacles I do not remember that I was a bondman in Egypt; but here I am obliged to be watchful and obey, and remember that I was a thorough slave of sin and of everything else. And you do not here see the Passover character: the holiness is not "bread of affliction" to me, nor am I eating "bitter herbs." All that has its place and must be; I must enter in that way, and so Iturn to go to my tent. I am a redeemed person (that is all holy and true), but I go off by myself to my tent. It recalls what I was saying about the difference of relationships—between living in a place, and saying, Thank God, I have got in and am saved. I must keep the Passover, or I cannot keep Tabernacles, nor yet Pentecost; but I do not call holiness "bread of affliction" now.

We might turn perhaps to chapter 26 for a little, though it be aside from the course of the Feasts. "And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it and dwellest therein" (there we are, in a certain sense,

in spirit), “that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth which thou shalt bring of thy land, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to place his name there, and thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and shalt say unto him, I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come unto the country” —here I am in heavenly places— which Jehovah “sware unto our fathers for to give to us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt speak and say before Jehovah thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father” (not I am—it was an old thing that was passed by and could not come back), “and he went down into Egypt, and was evil entreated, and Jehovah brought us forth, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey; and now behold I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Jehovah, hast given me. And”— when he has recognized Jehovah, he can go and enjoy all the rest— “thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which Jehovah thy God hath given unto thee.”

Then you have the character of holiness in it. “Thou shalt say before Jehovah thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow, according to all thy commandments, which thou hast commanded me. I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead.” To eat in his mourning was profaning himself. And then

follows not “bless me,” but “bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us.”

I connect this neither with Pentecost nor with Tabernacles; for this is alone. It is the first of the first-fruits. It is not connected with the feast of weeks; but until they had offered the first of the first-fruits, they could not have anything according to God. We may say it is just the same spirit as our joy and remembrance at the Lord’s table.

On The Covering Of The Holy Vessels

Numbers 4.

The character of the thing that was carried had a different effect in the display of its covering, according to the nature of what was covered. If I think of the ark, I shall have a certain character of display; if I think of the table, it will be another; and of the candlestick, another. When Israel set forth, the ark was first covered with the veil, that is, Christ Himself with the veil of His humanity; then came the badgers' skin, and, outside, the cloth of blue. This is the order: Christ's perfect humanity over the ark; then badgers' skins to protect it; and outside that, the cloth of blue. The heavenly man comes out, the special character.

The badgers' skin was inside in this case, because Christ kept His perfection absolutely free of all evil, and so the heavenly came out manifestly. In us it is morally to be realized in the power of the Spirit of God.

There was of course no evil in Christ to come out, but as man here, the perfect One. He uses, for instance, the word to baffle Satan—in that is the badgers' skin—just as I ought to keep Satan off through grace. Thus we need the badgers' skin outside in going through the wilderness.

Then came the table of shewbread, with a cloth of blue on it first, then the dishes, bread, etc., all covered with a scarlet cloth, and badgers' skins outside; the table itself —the gold or the divine part—covered with the blue, the heavenly; then the cloth of scarlet covers the twelve loaves. Scarlet is royalty, and twelve is connected, we

were seeing, with administration on earth. The badgers' skins are outside, because it is a display in a human instrument.

The shewbread is the manifestation of the thing in man, but divine righteousness was under it, the gold. The scarlet will meet the result of that—royalty, though not seen yet; or, rather, scarlet seems to be human glory, purple being proper royalty.

Next the candlestick was to be covered entirely with a cloth of blue, then with badgers' skins, and put on a bar. Here there is no scarlet; because it was the manifestation of the Spirit, and there is no royalty or glory of man to come out in this.

There is on the golden altar a cloth of blue and badgers' skins outside, in the same way as the candlestick; that is, purely the heavenly character, the result of intercession, with the badgers' skins as protection.

On the brazen altar they spread a purple cloth and badgers' skins. The altar met the claim of earthly righteousness. Christ met our failure on it; but there is nothing heavenly in it. This was to meet us on earth. The purple, royalty, is with the altar.

We have three colours; blue or rather bluish purple tekeleth, which was on the table, the candlestick, and the golden altar; tolaath, scarlet or crimson on the loaves; and argaman, reddish purple on the brazen altar. All relate to the person of Christ or the display of what He is. The first appears to be that which was heavenly or the divine in man. The table shews divine righteousness in character, the base of human order and administration; so the candlestick with its spiritual perfection; and the altar giving us intercession within.

All on the journey were thus covered. What we know of them has this character in going through the wilderness. The loaves were covered with scarlet, that is, displayed royalty in perfect administration itself. So over the ark there was first the veil, Christ's human nature, then guarded on the earth in spotlessness, untainted, by the badgers' skin, and the result was the heavenly or divine in man manifested here. The reddish purple answers to the brazen altar of sacrifice, and points to the more heavenly royalty, the One exalted as the consequence of self-sacrifice to God. It is lordship glory or reign, but not so much displayed from heaven, and displaying it as brought there in answer to suffering. It was more as conferred on man than displayed in him, though it will be displayed. The transfiguration displayed it, not the lowly Saviour.

The Feasts

Leviticus 23.

I apprehend that these feasts must be taken to apply entirely to that which is earthly. Other knowledge may enable us to carry our eyes onward to the results of what is here taught, which have their place in the heavenlies; but as addressed to the Jews, they cannot historically, I conceive, be taken beyond that which took place on earth. But this is of infinite value and importance to us, because (whatever the results may be, the heavenly and glorious results) still many of the most important subjects and resting-places of faith were accomplished on the earth historically. The Lord was offered up a sacrifice on earth. The Holy Ghost descended on the disciples on earth. The church, though its glory may not be on earth, has been formed in suffering on earth. And the church itself looks for the deliverance of the creature from the bondage of corruption. And the value and character of what has been done on earth, of which the church is partaker, is here delineated in detail.

There are seven feasts:—the Sabbath; the Passover; that of Unleavened Bread; the Feast of Weeks, or of first-fruits; of Trumpets; of Atonement; and of Tabernacles.

But the first was distinct in character. Before all the history of the transactions which brought in the rest, or preceded it, the great truth, that there was a rest that remained, was made prominent and conspicuous. It was the primary and characterizing truth. Between the three former and the three latter of the six remaining feasts, there is a large gap, a characteristic gap, so that the full

course of the year to the seventh month goes on, before the trumpet is blown for the first of the latter three. This interval had no feast; and one only remark is made as to it, which may be noticed by-and-by.

A similar arrangement we find in the seven parables, in Matthew 13, the prophetic history of the kingdom of heaven, as this is of the earthly dealings in grace with Israel (in many things, we know, by adopting grace with us also): this, the history of what prepared the rest, preceded by the statement of the rest, God's rest, in type; that, of the effects and character of the work, preceded by the generic statement of the workman, and the manner of the reception and result of his labours in principle.

The rest of God is that which distinguishes man from the brute, and from being as a brute with hopes and labour ending only here in that which perishes, to say even the best of it. The promise is left us, says the apostle to the Hebrews, of entering into God's rest. This is the portion of blessing and communion in which God, in the delight of His works of creation or redemption, refreshed Himself; and into which He introduces us in the riches of His grace, and by His work, into fellowship of delight and joy with Him, whether of heavenly communion or of earthly blessing. The rest of God is the great end and beginning of thought and desire into which the renewed creature is brought in fellowship now of hope. Here God and the creature are brought into unity or community of happiness, the creature (even we, by the Spirit) being capacitated for this communion. The creation also has blessing and rest. Faith, and patience, and conflict, are now involved in it, and hence the complex character of

the believer's mind;. for one is sure, is certain, and is his; the other present, and he toiling in it.

The Sabbath then, even the seventh day, was the first great characteristic and repeated feast: the seventh day, because the rest was at the close of labour, and rest not known in the flesh, and under the law, until the end of labour; and the rest of the world and of the earth, creation-rest, was after all the toil and labour that sin had introduced into it had ended and was passed away. This seventh day was God's creation-rest, and it remained when labour and toil came in to man, the pledge and type (as in the flesh, and having earthly things) of the rest that remained to the world and him.

But the saints have nothing in the world; they are crucified to it. To them resurrection is the beginning, and, withal, the substance and end of their hope and life. The first day of the week, in which Jesus rose from the dead, is the living witness to them in joyful service (and remembrance of that through which it was purchased) of the rest that remained to them, which they have now in spirit, and go forth from that to toil yet awhile in the world in which they are conversant. It is not to them creation and earthly rest, but redemption, resurrection, and the hope of heavenly rest, and therefore enjoyed, not on the day of God's rest in creation, but of Jesus (beginning of blessing and glory as head of the church, "the firstborn from the dead") in resurrection, in which He rested, as to work to be done in redemption—rested save as to everlasting blessing and service to His saints, in which they have joy and communion with Him as their Priest—the leader of their praises, in which, as in living strength now in spirit, then in body also, they rest not. Thus in this double type the whole millennial rest is

taken in, heavenly or resurrection, and earthly or rest for the' flesh; of this, however (save in the great general principle), the earthly rest, creation-rest, is only told of here. Of this the law maintained the type, though it proved that man could not attain the rest under it; and therefore when the Lord was accused of breaking the sabbath, He replied," My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," shewing the divine intervention (of the Father and the Son) in grace accomplishing that comfort which the law could not do; in which man, in a word, impotently failed; and therefore God, in sovereignty and in redemption-glory, as Father and Son, had now manifested Himself as having set Himself to work— to do—nor rested; for He was in grace where wretched man found no rest. Hitherto (for yet man was not delivered) they worked.

But to turn to the other feasts. The first three (the feast of weeks has its own distinct character) are leading feasts, in which all the males were to gather at the place where Jehovah set His name. But we must take their order from the text. They are divided into ordinances by the expression, "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying." The first paragraph, or ordinance, closes at the 8th verse, connecting in one continuous train the Sabbath and the Passover, and feast of Unleavened Bread, though distinguished by the 4th verse as beginning the six yearly feasts historically, yet morally in constitution the rest connected and identified with it. For it is by the Passover, and simply so, that the rest is obtained: there may be other conducive workings, but by this the rest is obtained. And this is true also of the church in principle, as well as of the earthly rest; "the Father … has made us fit" for the inheritance with the saints in light, says the

scripture (Col. 1:12). And this is a very important principle.

The Passover of God is the simple single ground of rest and security; upon the blessed value of this the children of God can feed within, the security of the blood being upon their door-posts. That meets the destroying angel, and he goes, and can go, no farther. Within all is peace. Judgment may be around, and conflict and trial before, but the church rests in the security which faith has afforded or enjoys in the Paschal Lamb, eaten within the blood-stricken doors. This is not the work of the Spirit of God, save as revealing it in and to us; the work of the Spirit detects sin, leads into conflict, animates into those exercises which ever bring to light the evil, short-comings, and failure of our own hearts, but is never the ground and warrant of peace. It may be the means, on being charged by the enemy, of proving that the peace we have is not a false one, but is never the proper ground and warrant of peace; for it is ever connected with imperfection; and perfectness somewhere must be the ground of a perfect peace with God. “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” “He has made peace by the blood of his cross.” Nothing can be mixed with this, nothing in us comes up to the measure and expression of holiness which that blood affords, or therefore can make peace as it does. It is the very vindication of perfect holiness against all sin, and therefore the perfect peace of the believer against all sin; for the thing which alone adequately measures it puts it away, cleanses from all sin those that are walking in the light. “But Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” And we have thus definitely the antitype of the Lamb that was slain. It is, moreover, in this character

that Christ at present holds the throne, as regards His work and its worthiness, as it is written (Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:9, 10; Rev. 5:9.)

The secondary feast connected with this was the Unleavened Bread. This was consequent upon the other. As received by the blood, we feed on and apprehend the unleavened perfectness of Christ. It is His intrinsic character as known by faith. There was no “leaven of malice and wickedness” in Him, and in the spirit of His holiness in our new nature we hold communion with, delight in, and feast upon, Him. The spotless sacrifice and unleavened perfectness of Christ, with which we have communion, are the things then presented by this feast—the sure ground of rest, the rest which remaineth to the people of God: this of Christ as in the world; we know Him such here.

At verse 9 a new ordinance begins, which continues to verse 23—the connection of Christ as risen and presented before Jehovah in resurrection, and the church (that is, properly, the Jewish remnant) connected with Him (the Gentile adoption being another thing, though abundantly shewn in scripture, there being neither Jew nor Gentile in the full result), but here confined to resurrection.

On the morrow after the sabbath the unbroken sheaf of first-fruits was waved before Jehovah. On the first day of the week the Lord Jesus, not having seen corruption, rose from the dead, became the first-fruits of them that slept. Thus, as well as of the passover, we have in this case the literal and authenticated fulfilment of the type given. On the same day a lamb for a burnt-offering and a meat-offering was offered to Jehovah. I must shortly

digress here with regard to the offering, the use of which will appear also in the subsequent part of the ordinance we are now treating of. It will be seen (v. 19) that with the first-fruits of the feast of weeks, a sin-offering also was offered, and a peace-offering, but not with the sheaf of first-fruits, typical of Christ's resurrection, on which the church and Jews rest for acceptance, as it is written (v. 11), "to be accepted for you."

The offerings recorded in the book of Leviticus (into the details of which, with the Lord's permission, we may enter on some other opportunity), were these:—The burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the peace-offering, the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering, and in this order. The first two present Christ offering Himself spotless and perfect to God; the next, the communion of the worshipper in it, and with God by it; the two latter the necessity of the worshipper, as a sinner before God, borne for him by the victim vicariously substituted for him, and treated consequently as himself under and responsible for the sin thus taken upon it. These are very distinct things in their character, and all true of the death and offering of Jesus.

The burnt-offering was the complete surrender of life, on which all hung, and this not by virtue of imputed transgression, but His own offering of Himself; not an imposed necessity but of His own voluntary will, as in John 10: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Now the whole life of Jesus was on this principle; His death

was the full accomplishment and exhibition of it—proved all the rest, “He gave himself for us.” Of this, that is, His giving Himself, describing Him especially as the Son of God, the Gospel of John is the especial witness; I speak merely as refers to this subject. There is, besides the quoted passages, no garden of Gethsemane, but, “Arise, let us go hence.” “I am he,” and “they went backward, and fell to the ground.” “If ye seek me, let these go their way; that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which thou hast given me I have lost none;” even of them who all forsook Him and fled. There was no “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” not merely as in Luke 23:46, “he expired,” having said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit”; but having said, “It is finished,” He bowed His head and “delivered up his spirit.”

Here then we have the burnt sacrifice offered to the very utmost of His own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. It was always true in principle, His meat was “to do the will of him that sent him”; but it was wrought to the full effort when the blessed Master and Lord, the free Lord of all, gave up His spirit to the Father. This sacrifice was an offering made by fire, a sweet savour to Jehovah. This was not said of the sin-offering, as such. The fat of the sin-offering, to connect it with the burnt-offering in principle, for both were one in Christ, was burnt on12 the altar, and this was of a sweet savour; but the offering in its differential character was not an offering made by fire, nor of a sweet savour to Jehovah. This the meat-offering was, however, as well as the burnt-offering—one being, it appears to me, the complete offering of the life, the other of all the natural faculties of the Lord as man,

which, being perfect as His will, He was in them all an offering made by fire, a sweet savour to Jehovah. The peace-offering was, as far as the fat burnt upon the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet savour to Jehovah; then the offerers feasted on the flesh, and being the communion of the worshippers, evil was mixed in them, and they were to offer leavened bread therewith. On the sin-offering, sins were confessed; it was burnt without the camp as a vile thing, not an offering made by fire— no sweet savour. It was the vicarious substitute for offences, bearing them on its head and in its body, made sin for the sinner, vile, and treated as such.

With the offering, therefore, of the sheaf of first-fruits there was no sin-offering, no peace-offering, but only accompanying this presenting of Christ to God, waved before Him as risen uncorrupted, the witness of the perfectness of that self-sacrifice in which Jesus had offered Himself living and dying to God— His own perfect offering of Himself. As to leaven, there could be no question of it; the seed sown, and the first risen sheaf, were alike by their nature free from any portion or partaking in it. With this the church is connected, on this it is built; indeed, all hope, I say, upon the resurrection. Sin and death have entered; resurrection is the only way out of it. One alone could provide a spotless sacrifice which should bring others out of it. Resurrection was the witness, the power of the church's acceptance; for its sins, which Jesus, as representing it, had borne in His own body on the tree, were gone, discharged. He rose free from them all in every sense. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification": therefore we have peace. Resurrection was also the spring and source and character of its life,

as well as the power in which Jesus exercised all the functions in which He secured “the sure mercies of David” to the Jew, and glory, by a continuous priesthood, for the church—the sinner called by grace. The church is quickened together with Him, being forgiven all trespasses.

But connected with this, in the communicating energy by which it and all resulting13 from it is enjoyed, is the gift of the Holy Ghost, answering to the gift of the law after the redemption from Egypt. Accordingly, on the morrow after the seventh sabbath, after the former offering of first-fruits (called hence the day of Pentecost), the associate feast was introduced, a new meat-offering was to be offered, the feast of first-fruits. “Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals, they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baken with leaven, they are the first-fruits unto Jehovah.” These, it is to be remarked, were to be baken with leaven. The force of this in such case may be seen (1 Cor. 5:8). The leaven mixed with the cakes of first-fruits is spoken of also in the direction as to the meat-offering (Lev. 2). “No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto Jehovah shall be made with leaven, for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of Jehovah made by fire.” As for the oblation of the first-fruits, “Ye shall offer them unto Jehovah, but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour.”

Now, of this feast subsidiary to the resurrection-sheaf we have also the fulfilment historically afforded in scripture: the history of “the day of Pentecost fully come” is too well known to need the proof of its application. By this the church was first formally gathered; and though the operations of the Spirit were

continued in gathering even till now, still they partook of the same character. “Of his own will begat he them with the word of truth, that they might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.”

As then we had Christ sacrificed as the passover, and raised and waved as the sheaf of first-fruits uncorrupted to God, and the burnt sacrifice and meat-offering in which was no leaven offered therewith, so we have here, consequent thereon and connected therewith, the quickening gathering pperation of the Holy Ghost, but the cake which it made, the first-fruits of the creature, mixed with leaven. There was still in the work which it produced other besides itself: leaven was there; consequently, though offered to Jehovah, it could not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. Here, then, we have the essential difference between the church and Christ: the one in all its parts perfect, and in His offering a sweet savour made by fire, unleavened beauty and perfectness, and fit and able to be presented to God in the holiness of His judgment; the other, under the operation of the Spirit, offered indeed to Jehovah, but let it be ever so blessed, leaven, the leaven of malice and wickedness still there, and incapable of being presented as a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.

Such, then, is the character of the church still, as presented in itself to God. The fruits of the Spirit in it may be most pleasant to the Lord, and are so, and of a sweet savour; the flesh may be subdued and kept down, and these blessed fruits, against which there is no law, most pleasant to God as the offspring in us of the seed of His grace, glorifying Him the rather as produced in such a soil, but as presented in itself to God still such. But for

this there was also characteristic provision: in verses 19, 20, we find a sin-offering offered, waved with the leavened cakes; and as the offering of Christ was in its own purity, and could be a sweet savour, so this was accepted through that which accompanied it—the sin-offering, which met, as it were, and supplied the defect of them, was waved. There was also a peace-offering, because there the joy and communion into which the church was brought by the Spirit.

The whole of this dispensation rests under the character of this feast; the sheaf of first-fruit, with its suited offerings of perfectness, and the leavened cake consequent upon it, with its called-for offering of sin-bearing, and resulting offering of communion, still characterized by accompanying leaven (Lev. 7:13). The work of Christ for rest, and the gathering and state of the church met by the sin-offering, are brought into clear and distinct light; nor does this dispensation pass beyond these things.

Next we find allusion to the harvest, but it is not actually treated of. It embraced heavenly things; the wheat, in that Christ was rejected, risen, and glorified, was to be gathered into His barn. It passed beyond earthly things, for He had. The whole condition and circumstances of the church, though under the energy of God's Spirit brought out on earth, did not belong to them; it was a leavened cake still. The harvest was properly associated with the waved sheaf—with resurrection; it is passed by, because the risen church would be associated with Christ in heavenly glory. But there is allusion to it; no feast nor part of a feast, but a fact connected with it. The harvest did not, and in God's purpose was not meant to, clear the field. The corners were unreaped,

the gleanings ungathered. There was left in the field by the harvest still that which, though not gathered into the barn, was wheat; and of this only is such a thing spoken. We have nothing to do with tares here.

Hereupon we return to the course of earthly things. Long months had passed since the purpose of God had begun to work; and long months ere the full time came round, after the unnoticed period of heavenly things, for returning to purposes properly earthly,14 the first-fruits characterizing the whole period, and only noticing as to the harvest that it did not clear the field.

Verse 23 of the chapter introduces, as accompanying the ushering in of the seventh month, a holy convocation, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a day of joy and holiday. Jehovah was called to mind in it. Such is the character of this feast—it was a memorial. When the moon began afresh to receive its new light from the sun, yet feeble and heretofore waxed dim; when the other thought has passed away, Jehovah memorial takes effect. The trumpets were blown at other times, for a memorial to be remembered before Jehovah. Now it was the feast of remembrance—the trumpets characterized the very object of the feast; only it was upon the reappearance of the moon, not the Sun of righteousness. It had hitherto eclipsed the moon, yet now from it this, renewed, should receive its light; gradually had it waned to be hidden in his splendour, now emerging from it, risen in his light reflected—forgotten in it, to man’s judgment, at least. The trumpet is blown in the new moon, on the solemn feast-day (Ps. 81:3; Isa. 51). For if a woman should forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb, yet if to man forgotten, “she was graven on the palms of his hands,

who fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding." "If he had spoken against them, he earnestly remembered them still." "His servants "were now to "think upon her stones." But the summons was public and loud, though in the new moon; it demanded the attention of the isles—yea, all the inhabitants of the world, and dwellers upon earth, when he blew a trumpet. The circumstances and interpretation of that chapter, Isaiah 18, I do not enter into; but it marks the connection of the period.

The great public summons being now given brings on the day of atonement for Israel (that is, their coming in personal humiliation under it), and this was separative in its character. It was a day for them to afflict their souls, ceasing irrespectively from all worldly employment— "Ye shall do no work." Whatever soul was not afflicted was to be cut off, and so it will be: we find it in Joel 2; we find their character in Zephaniah 3:12; we find the affliction itself in Zechariah 12. Their acknowledgment in terms of the value of that which made peace for the mourners is in Isaiah 53.15 These two are yet to come—ordinances for Israel, whose antitypical accomplishment is yet to be looked for, after the lapse of the period allotted in specific character to the church, gathered by the Spirit as a waved cake of first-fruits with leaven. The day of blowing of trumpets, and the day of atonement, of humbling and afflicting their souls to Israel, was followed in the perfected time of twice seven days, by the great solemn assembly of the feast of Tabernacles, at which all the children of Israel were to appear, "the great congregation." As to this, there are some remarkable circumstances. This alone (save the feast of Passover once in Deuteronomy 16:8,

with, I believe, a similar purpose) is called a solemn assembly, as far as I am aware, or day of restraint. It was the great final feast of the year. It was at this feast that Solomon's temple was dedicated, when "the king turned his face and blessed the whole congregation of Israel"; when the blessed Jehovah God of Israel had with his hands fulfilled that which He had spoken with His mouth to his father David, and the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of God. It was at this feast that the children of Israel found themselves assembled under Nehemiah, on their restoration from Babylon to their own land, after the captivity. It was at this feast that the brethren of Jesus proposed that He should shew Himself to the world; but His time was not yet come, though their time was always ready; and He went not up (then) unto the feast. It was the final assembly of the whole congregation of Israel.

There was, however, another remarkable circumstance in the feast of Tabernacles—there was an eighth day, or, as we should say, a first day of the week, which was not the case with the other feasts. This is noticed, after the regular history of the feasts which we have been tracing, in verse 39; again, and in connection with another feature, that it was after the gathering in the fruit of the land. All born Israelites, moreover, we are told in this second notice of it, were to dwell in booths, in witness that they had been made to dwell as pilgrims in booths under Jehovah shadow, as it were in a houseless, homeless wilderness. It was the feast of ingathering.

Now, this eighth day, as we observed, is the first day of the week—the resurrection day; the whole seven days they were to rejoice before Jehovah: such was their portion in their rest, but the eighth day was the solemn

assembly, “the great day of the feast.” This surely marks the connection and introduction, the extraordinary connection of the resurrection church, with the rest that remained to the people of God. Our Lord’s reference to this “great day of the feast” marks and confirms—indeed, establishes this. Upon the last day, that great day of the feast, at which, though typically present, He declared He would not shew Himself then to the world, He cried and said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and out of his belly shall flow, as the scripture hath said, rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit which they that believed on him should receive.”

In the first place there is the admission of the Gentiles here. “If any man thirst”; and there is the gift of the Holy Ghost, the witness of heavenly things, whence flowed the refreshing streams of divine knowledge and grace, concerning that which was verified in the ascension where Jesus was glorified, of which it was the witness as coming from it. This is doubtless in allusion to the rock in the wilderness, on their coming out of which into the land they were to keep the feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus was not yet manifest to the world, nor would He be till He came in glory. In the meanwhile His thirsting saints would be in the wilderness, “in a barren and dry land, where no water was,” waiting to see the glory which would give them rest—that first day of the new and everlasting week, when Jesus should appear.

But then as to each, out of his belly would be rivers of living water; his own soul, through the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, would be the channel of boundless refreshment; each one that once thirsted would be the

source of refreshment to others. It was not merely he was born of the Spirit; it was not merely that it dwelt in him, as a well springing up in him unto everlasting life; but it should be from his soul as rivers flowing forth of spiritual heavenly things, all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. “Out of his belly,” because it was not merely as to the’ believer a conferred gift, the lowest way in which it would be present—for Jesus might still say, “I never knew you,”—but from the planting and reforming the affections of his soul, capacitating them, through the energy of the Spirit, for the communicative possession and enjoyment, as well as statement, of all these heavenly joys, which should be accomplished when, in the great eighth day of the feast, Jesus, long hidden and doing things secretly, should shew Himself to the world.

This then embraces what we are accustomed to call the Gentile church—the glorified church; of which the indwelling Spirit, in its blessing of all power in the individual soul, had been marked by the Lord as the sign in the wilderness; not merely a rock out of which for all, but out of his belly who believed, should flow rivers of living water. Thus the force of the eighth day is made very distinctly apparent.

The feast of the ingathering properly embraced Israel—the people of God, restored out of the wilderness to the place of God’s rest, to rejoice there, gathered back out of all lands. But it involves with it another scene, dimly marked and given room for, in which indeed Israel and the world too had resulting blessing, but which flowed (as the eye of the believer filled with the Spirit is opened to see) from higher sources, though it might refresh the gladdened plains below—exhaustless boundless sources

of heaven-caught supplies. When to the desires, thus quickened and thus exalted, Jehovah should pour forth His fulness; and Jehovah should “hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.” God would sow her unto Him in the earth, and have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy, and say to them on whom Lo-ammi had been written, “Thou art my people”; and they shall say, “Thou art my God”; a time when the mountains, catching the full rain of blessings from above, shall but distribute them by the valleys which Jehovah has formed; and the wide scene beneath shall be refreshed by goodness and blessing, which its own far distant lowness would have never reached or drawn.

Blessed shall be that day, a full unhindered united time of joy, when all long severed, never properly one in glory (knit only in the misery which he, who had defiled the heavens, and deceived and ruined man upon the earth, had brought in), brought into one fulness in order, and united and suited blessing, in connection with a far higher, even the highest infinite fulness through Him who, being Lord from heaven, descended into the lower parts of the earth, that He might fill all things (gathered together in one, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him; in whom we have received an inheritance), shall be in Him to the praise of His glory, shall minister in perfect unison of various reflective glory to the perfectness of His love whose all the glory is! And the blood of the Lamb, through which it has been accomplished, shall be seen in all its glory, in all its value. They shall declare its excellency in marvelling thankfulness for ever. It has cleansed and redeemed us

for communion with the Highest, and purged the defiled inheritance—the now accomplished rest of God in love and peace.

12 Except in the case of the red heifer, which was altogether characteristically a sin-offering.

13 I say all resulting from it, because, though not brought out in the type as not entering into the heavenlies, in fact (and we know it) the ascension of Christ was necessary to the conference of the gift to the church, letting in the Gentiles, constituting the ground of its knowledge of righteousness (John 16:10), the character of its life (Col. 1:27; Phil. 3:20), and the place of its fellowship (Eph. 2:6, and indeed the whole of the epistle). And I say "necessary," both from its revelation of the mystery, as stated in the passages, and from the Lord's word in John 20:17, rejecting the acknowledgment of Him in worship by the Jew, as seen in resurrection, until the accomplishment of His glory in ascension—the heavens receiving Him till the times of the restitution of all things; and therefore Peter, in preaching upon the gift of the Holy Ghost here typified, says, "He being by the right hand of God exalted, has shed forth this which ye see and hear." But these feasts, being in themselves expressions of what took effect upon earth as being to the Jews, though Gentiles might be brought in, do not enter thus within the veil, though the waving before Jehovah expresses the presenting to Him in a general sense. This was necessary for all.

14 I apprehend therefore, that strictly speaking it is simply Jewish, though other scriptures shew us the introduction of the Gentiles into the blessing and circumstances connected therewith.

15 Applicable, I need not say, in its value to the church, but spoken in terms by the remnant of the Jews in the latter day.

The Pleasant Land Despised

Numbers 13, 14.

Beloved, do our hearts indeed say

“We are on our way to God”?

Do we believe that, with the innumerable throng of the redeemed, we shall soon sing the everlasting anthem of praise to the Lamb? It is astonishing the simplicity of heart there is when we believe that “we are on our way to God.” Whenever the soul has really got hold of this, believing in God, knowing His love, that He has brought us out of Egypt, and that we are on our way to Canaan, there is a spring of heart that surmounts everything. There may be a great many things by the way to exercise our hearts and thoughts; but if this feeling predominates, they only come in by the way. If my mind be fixed on present circumstances and present difficulties, and on God’s helping me in them, there will not at all be the same spring of joy. For then I make God to be simply the servant of my necessities. The heart rests and centres there, and God sinks down into a mere help in time of trouble. It is quite true that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble” (Ps. 46:1); but to bring Him down to be only this changes the whole aspect of things. Himself, as our portion, is infallibly ours. If our hearts are fixed on being with Jesus in His rest and glory, on being in the “Father’s house,” our own present difficulties have the character of difficulties by the way; we can then rise over trouble, however felt. And our thoughts about God are not merely that He will help us in the circumstances in which we are—our hearts being fixed on Him, we live

in the freedom that arises from the constant certainty that all that is Christ's is ours. It is important for us to have our minds fixed on the hope of glory which is set before us.

One form which unbelief takes is the not having this hope fresh on the mind. Supposing I had to live twenty years, the next thing to my heart ought to be the glory. In the children of Israel unbelief took many forms; one character of it was that "they despised the pleasant land," chap. 14:31; Ps. 106:24. Now very often there is in our hearts practically, though not wilfully, the despising of the pleasant land. I am not speaking of any doubtfulness as to the land being ours. If there were something that a friend had given me as a great treasure, and I was sure of its being mine, and yet I looked at it but seldom and cared to think of it but seldom, this would be a proof (not of uncertainty respecting its being mine, but) that I despised the thing, that I had no real value for it. This is very often the way we treat the heavenly glory that belongs to us. We do not question the truth of the promises; but, when our souls are not dwelling upon and delighting in the glory that is set before us, there is a "despising of the pleasant land." It is too much the case with the saints. And no occupation with present things—with present duties even—can make up for the loss of peace and comfort there is to the soul from not dwelling on the things which God has laid up in store for them that love Him (1 Cor. 2:9) as its own things. Instead of God's being the strength and fulness of our present joy in the midst of present tribulation, as it is said, "We joy in God "(Rom. 5:11), we only make Him a help in time of trouble. There is weakness and infirmity instead of rejoicing in God.

The heart being brought down here and kept down, it brings down God after it (so gracious is He, that He will even come down), instead of rising above present circumstances up to God.

Of course this character of unbelief will not be manifested in the hearts of the saints as it was in the children of Israel, but, in measure, it is the same thing.

The “spies” (Num. 13, 14) had been sent by Moses, at the command of Jehovah, to search out the land of Canaan, “which,” Jehovah said, “I give unto the children of Israel,” and to bring of the fruit thereof. The Spirit of God, personally dwelling in present witness in us, takes of the glory of the Lord Jesus, of the things of the land of promise (that true Canaan, of which faith says, My land), and thus shews us of our portion.

“So they went up, and searched the land, from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob… And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it,” v. 23-27. There was no gainsaying the report

of the spies, these grapes told of the goodness of the land. It was a land that produced such fruit. So, when the Holy Ghost brings the earnest to us of our joy and glory, who would gainsay? who does not feel that it is worth anything by the way to get there—the earnest is so sweet?

“Nevertheless,” said the spies, “the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great, and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains,” etc. When the people heard that there were difficulties, there began to be restlessness and uneasiness amongst them.

“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it,” v. 30. He was strong in faith.

“But the men that went up with him, said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight,” v. 31-33. That is, they get hold of the thought of the people in unbelief: and venture to deny all that they had previously said, when they see that their report was not received. The first thing they told Moses was the simple truth, that it was a very good land \ but when they see

this unbelief at work in the minds of the people, their judgment respecting it is quite different, and they say It is a very bad land. The whole sense of the goodness of Jehovah in giving them the land is gone, and consequently they break down in despair when looking at the difficulties by the way. There is not merely distrust about their overcoming these enemies; they lose the sense of the goodness of the land, and then they have no encouragement in their difficulties. Their state becomes weakness. Just so with the Christian; if I lose the joy of the glory, the difficulties I meet with by the way are insurmountable, for my heart does not know what it has to contend for.

This and more will be seen coming out in chapter 14. "And all the congregation lifted up their voices, and cried, and the people wept that night," etc. When, in the first freshness of their setting out, their sin had manifested itself (bad as it was), they did not lay the blame upon God; they said, "This Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt," Ex. 33. But the moment this unbelief gets hold of their hearts, the desert becomes thoroughly and insupportably painful to them, and they say, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in the wilderness! and wherefore hath Jehovah brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make us a captain, and let us return into Egypt," v. 1-4. See what a miserably wicked state of unbelief they had got into, so as to attribute to Jehovah Himself their trials and difficulties. This is a snare to which even Christians are exposed. We are conscious that it is the Lord that

has brought us up out of bondage, and hence when trials come upon us our hearts are apt to say. This comes of my being a Christian,—the Lord has brought me into these difficulties. Now, had Canaan been on the hearts of the children of Israel, they would have said, Thank God that we are thus far on our way to Canaan. Let the difficulties be what they might, if they had felt, By the word of Jehovah we have been brought here, there would have been thanksgiving and not murmuring. But they stopped at the point where they were, instead of looking at it as but a step on the way to the glorious land before them. There was the pretence of thoughtfulness for others—their wives and children, though in reality it was only selfishness.

Verses 6-9. Joshua and Caleb speak of the exceeding goodness of the land, and add, “If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and Jehovah is with us: fear them not.” Their confidence is in Him.

“But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.” The moment that was spoken which should have cheered the people, it brought out positive hostility.

Verses 13-19. The intercession of Moses comes in, based on the testimony Jehovah had given of Himself. (Compare Ex. 34:6, 7.) The principle of it is this, the perfect identification of Jehovah with His people. He presses on Jehovah that His own glory is bound up with the preservation and blessing of His people, is inseparable from them.

Two things result. Jehovah acts according to the faith of Moses, as He ever does according to the faith that is in us (v. 20); but He sends the children of Israel into the desert to remain there until all the men that came up out of Egypt fell.

There is another thing also to notice. When the children of Israel will not go up in faith into the promised land, Jehovah sends them a long way round the desert. Two things accompany this: one as the result of it, the other pure grace. If they have to march round the desert, Jehovah cannot leave them alone; He must go round with them, guiding them by His pillar of fire and of cloud all the way. His grace abounds over sin. Secondly, Caleb and Joshua must go the long way round too. They had not gone with the people in their evil; but as to the pain and trial of the march which the unbelief of the others had caused, they are obliged to go along with the people, and to bear a part of it. This is what we must make up our minds to. If the church has failed, we must make up our minds to accompany it in its course of sorrow, though not in its course of sin. As far as Caleb and Joshua were concerned, there was the exercise of grace, and patience, and love. It was blessed to them, for God was faithful in keeping them, whilst the rest fell in the wilderness. Caleb is able to say, at the end of the forty years, that he is as strong for war as at the beginning, “both to go out, and to come in,” Josh. 14. But the faithful, though they had the consciousness that God was with them, were obliged to accompany the unfaithful in their course of sorrow, arising from the position into which they had brought themselves.

This is our place. In the spirit of love, of patience, and of humiliation, we have always to take the place of those

who have sinned. See Daniel. Though himself personally righteous, Daniel confesses the people's sin as his own, saying, "O Lord … we have sinned, and have committed iniquity… to us belongeth confusion of face," etc. (Dan. 9). The sin and evil of those who have sinned should be confessed by the remnant; who, though not partakers of the sin, must yet be partakers of the consequences of it, suffering in all the affliction with true sympathy and fellowship.

In applying this practically to ourselves, what was it that led to the very need of their having Jehovah with them on the march? The soul not being set on (their not having their affections occupied with) the blessings of the promised land. And that which we have to seek is that our souls may "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost dwelling in us becomes the earnest of those better things in our hearts; and reveals to us that it is Jehovah's land, the land which He has given us, that He is bringing us into. If we are able to say, This is the fruit of the land which Jehovah has given us,—if our hearts affections are dwelling on the land, all the strength of the Anakim is as nothing. No matter, then, as to preventing us from getting there, what may be the trial and difficulty by the way. But the moment we lose the consciousness of what is ours, the moment we forget that Jehovah has given us the land, difficulties and trials occupy our mind, and become too great for us; we fall under the power of them. This results from our losing sight of what belongs to us in hope. We cannot have our hearts fixed on Canaan without being conscious that Jehovah's strength is with us.

If I rest in circumstances I am apt to blame the Lord for bringing me there. Nobody ever thought of the blessedness of being with Jesus in the glory, and of being like Him there, no one ever entered in spirit really there without being conscious that it was Jehovah's strength that would bring him there. Then all in the way is a mere circumstance.

What I desire for you and for myself, beloved, is that we may avoid "despising the pleasant land." And do not let us say that we are not "despising "it if we are not thinking often about it. If we are not thinking of Jesus where He is, and of being with Him there, we are "despising the pleasant land." May we "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

We must not suppose that the scriptures do not supply to the new man the details of the glory that belongs to us. But they are details known only to faith. It is only just so far as we are in present communion with the Lord that we shall understand and enjoy them. Memory will not do. There is no possibility of exercising memory about the objects of hope. We must be filled with the Spirit. That which will fill up our joy is Christ Himself, who fills all things. We find a fund of detail about the glory when we know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, what Christ is for us—Christ glorified. Just as the poor robber (taught of the Holy Ghost) could state the whole life of Christ, though he had never known Him before as if he had been His intimate friend, saying to his companion, "This man has done nothing amiss," so the soul, when taught by the Holy Ghost, has Jesus as the object of its affections, and knows and realizes it. The mind then becomes occupied with the object of its hope

in glory, and the individual is able to say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” All the circumstances which happen to us only come in by the way. Instead of having the thoughts down here in the trouble, bringing God down into it, we are lifted clean out of it into glory. This sets us on our “high places,” when, otherwise, there would be the feeling in the heart, “Why hath Jehovah brought us into this land to fall by the sword,” etc. The Holy Ghost delights to take of the things of Christ and shew them to us (John 16:13-15).

The Lord give us, in realizing the fulness of Jesus, to have our souls in the sweet savour of divine delight in Him, dwelling by faith in the promised land, that we may know what our hope is, as well as what is the ground of our hope. And ever let us remember that it is not by any effort of memory but by the power of communion in the Holy Ghost that we can have the present consciousness and enjoyment of those things “which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Numbers 15

Notes of a Lecture

This chapter comes in in a very peculiar manner.

The children of Israel had despised the pleasant land; they had quarrelled with the manna, the food given to them by God (chap. 11); they had slighted the promises of God concerning the good land, though an earnest was brought to them by the spies (chaps. 13, 14); and in chapter 16 we find them in open rebellion and apostasy, falling away in the gainsaying of Korah. This was not merely failure, which brought on chastisement, but open rebellion, and God cut them off in their sins. It is between these two things this fifteenth chapter comes in.

The Book of Numbers is the putting God's people in their place and the order of their journeys. They had departed from the mount of Jehovah a three days' journey (chap. 10:33). This was the first time of their starting, and then we find Jehovah goes out of His place in grace. The people ought to have been round about, taking care of Jehovah, but "the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them." Moses wished Hobab to be to them "instead of eyes"; but God says, I will be as eyes to you; and "the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting-place for them." In this we see the actings of extraordinary grace. "It came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested he said, Return, O Jehovah, unto the many thousands of Israel."

The next step, as we see in chapter 11, is the working of unbelief. While God is going before them the people complain; and then come out all the various forms and progress of unbelief. In chapter 14 we see they had to wander in the wilderness forty years. Chapter 15 gives what they were to do in the land; and chapter 16 the open rebellion and apostasy closing in the forms of unbelief. But before this apostate character is developed, chapter 15 comes in, full of loveliness. Rebellion had arisen to a great height, for not only had they despised the pleasant land, but the spies had brought up an evil report of the land. Caleb and Joshua proved their faithfulness in remonstrating with the people, telling them that Jehovah could bring them in, when this awful rebellion broke out, and "all the congregation bade stone them with stones." Then, consequently, "the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel." God interfered immediately, and tells Moses, "I will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." Then Moses interferes, and here we seen the devotedness of his character coming out in intercession. And then God says, "I have pardoned according to thy word," but yet I will chastise them; and to the people He says, "as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you." You shall get the thing your wretched flesh desired, for you shall die in this wilderness (chap. 14:28, 29).

But in the midst of all this comes in chapter 15, in which we learn that God goes on in His purpose as calmly and quietly as if there never had been the despising of the land. For, in the second verse, He says, "When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you." His purpose is as settled as if there had been no

rebellion at all. He speaks in the calmness of His own purpose. After telling them of chastisement, He says, Ye shall come into the land; it is settled with Me; I go on in the steadfastness of My own counsels. “I am Jehovah your God.” It is blessed to see, not that Jehovah will not chastise in the way of government, for He says, “As truly as I live, as ye have spoken in mine ears so will I do to you.” But that He never relinquishes His purpose, though He deals with the heart according to its unbelief. We see this in verse 45. The Amalekites and Canaanites discomfited them to Hormah (and Hormah means destruction); but then the heart can always return to the steadfastness of His purpose, which remains in its very nature the same. We see joy shining out in this chapter; a provision for grace and warning. He tells them what to do in the land. “When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you, and will make an offering by fire unto Jehovah, a burnt-offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a freewill-offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto Jehovah, of the herd, or of the flock: then shall he that offereth his offering unto Jehovah bring a meat-offering of a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil. And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb. Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meat offering two tenths deals of flour mingled with the third part of an hm of oil. And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine for a sweet savour unto Jehovah. And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt-offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace-offerings unto Jehovah: then shall he bring with a bullock a meat-offering of three tenths deals of flour mingled with half an hin of

oil. And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half a hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah." 'Your rebellions would have sinned away the land, but I have given it you. It is not a sin-offering you are to bring but a burnt-offering. You are accepted, and are going to worship Me there.'

Christ is represented by the burnt-offering—the voluntary offering up of His life to God as a sweet savour. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." When divine love comes down here, it always returns up in the character of self-sacrifice. God acts in love; Christ walked in love; and divine love acting in man offers itself a sweet savour unto God.

Then they were to bring oil and wine. The oil shewing the joy and gladness, and wine the fellowship in communion. When you have got rest in God, and worship comes out, it must be in joy and gladness of heart and fellowship with God. And He would have us return to Him thus. But we shall not be able to be "followers of God" unless we dwell in this comfort and joy of His thoughts about us.

And further, observe God's actings and givings. "According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number. All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah. And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour

unto Jehovah; as ye do, so he shall do. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you." See how "the branches run over the wall," in God's heart running out, as in verse 14, to the stranger. Christ said He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but when the poor Gentile woman appealed to the nature of God as a giver, He could not deny her, because He could not deny what He was. Here God is saying, I cannot have a person in my land, and not a worshipper, not enjoying God. All must be happy there. If any person is in the land of God, he must know the mind and temper of the God of the land. There is one law for all. God will be Himself, and make Himself known. While this is the case in the land, there would be offering connected with evil and failure, as in verse 22. God says, There may be failure, therefore I will make provision for sin in grace. And here comes in the. sin-offering—that when man fails, God may still maintain and keep him in the place of blessing.

Verse 30. The soul that sinneth presumptuously (the case of one who has no life in him), he shall be cut off—"his iniquity shall be upon him." The presumptuous sinner under the law was to be treated with the rigour of the law. No mercy; but "stone him with stones without the camp." Being brought into this condition provision is made for keeping them mindful of where they were brought. Upon the fringes was to be "a riband of blue," signifying a heavenly character (v. 38). The fringes of the garments reached to the earth, and might come in

contact with defilement. God's precepts and directions alone can keep us walking after Him. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." The precepts of the gospel are like fringes to our garments, attached to those things where sin can touch us. And in this way man does not live by bread alone, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"; living every instant so as not to be touched by Satan. The "riband of blue," the heavenly mind that calls the precepts and words of the Lord to remembrance. If I were spiritual, and walking in fellowship with God, I should not need precepts; but, in my folly and fleshliness, I need God's precepts to keep my soul mindful of Him. Satan said, "Command that these stones be made bread." There was no harm in satisfying hunger; but Jesus came to do the will of His Father; and this would have been doing His own will. If we walk in a godly manner in the details of life, in the character of "blue" that is, heavenly, we shall remember the words of our Lord, and not do our own wills. All this is the provision of grace in the land. It is sweet to find at the close of all this failure, God returning to bless—giving out His own thoughts of peace, and not of evil, as nothing can weaken or enfeeble the blessedness of God's thoughts concerning us: and therefore closes it by saying, "I am Jehovah your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am Jehovah your God."

Law And Priestly Grace

Numbers 17, 20.

Putting these two chapters together, we see the grace of God in priestly government, to bring His redeemed through the wilderness, and also the contrast between law and priestly grace.

This grace is drawn out by Israel's sin; but grace does not, of course, allow sin. Law could not bring the people into the land. Law must have kept the whole nation out, except Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. We see its actings in chapter 16, in the judgment that fell on Korah and his company. If when redeemed, we were put under the law, we should be no better off than before. Still, God cannot allow sin. Neither could He give the people up; for had He not redeemed them? as Moses pleaded with Him (Num. 14:13-16), "And Moses said unto Jehovah, Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them), and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land … saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness." He cannot give them up; He cannot allow sin; and therefore He brings in priestly grace to meet the difficulty. To take away their murmurings, Pie does not use the rod of Moses, but that of Aaron. The rod of Moses could only judge them for their sin, and thus take away their murmurings by judgment. But Aaron's does it by priestly grace.

God makes it very manifest by whom He will act. Aaron's rod is chosen out of the twelve, and the

remarkable sign of its blossoming and yielding fruit, shewed that priesthood was connected with life-giving power, as well as with intercession. Both are needed to uphold them, and to raise them when failing. “The second Adam was made a quickening spirit.” This is the care and authority by which we are led through the wilderness. God will allow no other, and no other would do. The priesthood of Christ alone can carry us through. It is the rod of authority too: for “Christ is a son over his own house.” But we see that unbelief cannot avail itself of this (chap. 17:12, 13). “And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah shall die: shall we be consumed with dying? “God had shewn them that there was this grace, and they ought to have trusted in it, especially as they had seen the power in Aaron’s remaining in among the congregation, and staying the plague. They had ground for full assurance; but unbelief prevailed. They were insensible to the value of the priesthood, and their conscience was still under law. For they did not know God, though at the very moment He was acting for them in priestly grace.

The circumstances of chapter 20 put them to the test: the outward power, too, that had brought them out of Egypt was passing away from their minds. Miriam, the expression of it, had died. When apparent power decays, faith is put to the test. Afterwards Moses passed away too. Unbelief does not get the refreshment that faith does. There is no water. They were in a terrible state of mind—wishing they had shared the judgment that had fallen on their brethren; for there was no confidence in Jehovah. Yet they called themselves the congregation of

Jehovah. They had the pride, but not the comfort, of it. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. There seemed no remedy. But Jehovah appeared. He was the only remedy. And He makes Aaron's rod the means of the application of that remedy. It had already been appointed before the occasion for its exercise occurred. There was real need, and God never denies this. He never says it is not real need; but He will have us go to Christ to meet the need. It was not to be Moses's rod, for then it must be judgment. Nor was the rock to be smitten again. That water could be had now without smiting the rock was the result of its having been smitten before by the rod of judgment.

So it is with us. Everything comes to us through Christ's having been on the cross; and we do not need the cross again, but the priestly work. It was now, "speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water." Speak the word only, and the water shall flow. All things are ours; we draw nigh now, not for acceptance, but to have our need supplied. In verses 9, 10, we see that Moses was vexed, and speaks unadvisedly. He could not rise to the height of God's grace; and that was why he could not enter the land. He was in a better mind the first time Israel murmured. Then he said, "It is not against us ye murmur, but against Jehovah"; now he says, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" setting up Aaron and himself, and using Jehovah's authority to do it. He smites the rock too. There would really have been more glory to Moses if he had spoken instead of smiting, but he did not see this.

God called Aaron's rod "the rod." The other was set aside. They were never under that rod again. It is Christ for us, or nothing. Any other principle must have dealt

with them as with Korah. It is only a word now, and every blessing flows. To smite the rock again would be the same as saying, because we fail Christ must die again. It is denying grace to say that anything is needed now except intercession. To “sanctify him “would be to give Him credit for all that He is, as He has revealed Himself. To “sanctify him in our hearts “is to attach to Him all that He is. But Moses did not do this. He did not count upon God’s grace, which was all that was needed. But does God stop His grace because of this? Does He stop the outflowing of the water to quench their thirst? No, He does not. If Moses failed to sanctify Him before the people, He will only the more sanctify Himself before them. He comes in Himself when the one who should act fails. Just as when the disciples, who ought to have been able to cast the evil spirit out of the child, failed in doing so, Jesus, coming down from the mount of transfiguration, said, “Bring him to me.” It was wrong that they could not cast him out, but His own personal interference was gained through it. He gives the people the water they need, in spite of Moses’s unbelief and their murmuring. He will act according to the rod of His appointing, if Moses does not.

Thus Christ never fails in carrying on that which as Priest He has undertaken. Israel should have walked under the power and comfort of that rod. They saw the blossoms and the fruit, and should have counted on it. If there is anything we want, and we doubt of getting it, because we say we do not deserve it, that is putting ourselves under the law. It is forgetting that there is “the rod “; and that it is, “speak the word only.” God takes away the murmurings by grace. He deals with all our evil, as His children, in grace. Look at Peter’s case.

Was it because he repented that Jesus prayed for him that his faith should not fail? We know it was not. And was it because Peter wept that the Lord turned and looked upon him? It was afterwards that he wept. When we do wrong, priestly grace acts for us, and obtains for us grace to see, and confess, and put it away. Christ probes the heart of Peter, but does not leave him in the evil. This is the privilege of His children. Grace sends the gospel to the world. Grace gives priesthood to the church. It all originates in God. If I sin, it is not I who go to the Priest, but He goes to God for me. It is not said, If a man repents, but if he sins, "we have an advocate with the Father." When, through the action of priestly grace, a sense of my sin is given me, I go to God for strength against it. It is He who obtains that for me which brings me back to God. All this is the fruit of His unsolicited grace. It was God who appointed the rod. He is the God of grace, in spite of all our evil; and when we see it we are confounded. Carrying us through the wilderness is as much grace as redemption and forgiveness. Even when Israel strove with God, He was "sanctified in them." It is very sad to have "Meribah" (chiding, or strife) written on any part of our history—sad as to us—but He makes it an opportunity for His grace. They get just what they want, though Moses is shut out from Canaan. He would make them know the extent of His grace. Another time grace might act in a different way—in chastening, perhaps, if needed; but this taught them what the character and extent of the grace was. Just the same grace that spoke in Isaiah 43:22: "Thou hast been weary of me." "I have not wearied thee, but thou hast wearied' me with thine iniquities." What language for God to use! yet He goes on: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake."

Nothing can make us more ashamed of our unbelief than this astonishing grace. And all because of Christ. Nothing makes us hate sin like this.

The Red Heifer

In Numbers 19 we learn the excessive jealousy of the Lord about sin, not in the sense of guilt but defilement. This He measures by His sanctuary. We have to do with it, and nothing unclean can be allowed. We are clean every whit, but the feet-washing is needed. We belong to the sanctuary and yet are in the world, though not of it; we need to have a just estimate of both. If we but touch evil, a remedy is required. Still it is not the question of justification, but of communion. Sin hinders that—hinders my coming boldly into the holiest. How was this met? The blood of the unblemished heifer, representing Christ who knew no sin and could not be brought under its power, was sprinkled before the tabernacle seven times, that is, before the place of communion, not of atonement. The sin-offering was burnt without the camp. But the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times where we meet God in intercourse. This marks the full efficacy of Christ's blood when I meet God. The body was reduced to ashes, as Christ was judged and condemned for what I am apt to be careless about; but God is not careless, and would make me sensible of sin. Christ had to suffer for it, and it is gone; but the sight of His suffering shews me the dreadfulness of it.

God has an eye that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart; He would have us discern them too, and without this there can be no communion. But we do not get back into communion as quickly as we get out of it. Seven days elapsed in the type before there was full restoration. The Spirit takes and applies the ashes (that

is, the remembrance of Christ's agony, and what occasioned it), and makes us feel practical horror of sin.

When I look at my sin with horror, even in the sense of the grace which has met it, it is a right feeling, but not communion: it is a holy judgment of sin in the presence of grace. Hence, there was a second sprinkling—not on the third day, but the seventh, and then there is communion with God. We see that perfect grace alone maintains the sense of perfect holiness. The result, in the end, is that we increase in the knowledge of God, both as to holiness and love. We must have been out of communion before we sinned, or we should not have yielded. How came I to fall? Because of the carelessness which left me out of God's presence, and exposed me to the evil without and within.

The Faithfulness Of God Seen In His Ways With Balaam

Numbers 22.

It was the object of the enemy to hinder God's people from the enjoyment of the land God had promised to bring them into. It was not now a question of getting out of Egypt. They were brought out, and nearly at the end of the way. Could they be prevented entering into the land? If it depended on what they were, of course they could be; and Satan, the accuser of the brethren, could hinder our getting to heaven because of our sins, if it were on the ground of our worthiness that we must go there. Israel had been stiff-necked and rebellious all the way along, though God had been bringing them water out of the rock for their thirst, and manna from heaven for their food; and now the solemn question has to be settled, whether they are to be prevented entering on account of it. It is the power of the enemy here exerted, not his wiles; they come after, in the history of Balaam. But this was the point, whether, by force or by wiles, the enemy could keep Israel out of Canaan. We shall see how God announces His thoughts about the people; and then the enemy was utterly powerless when He took up the question.

Moab is in the place of this world's power—at his ease from his youth—settled on his lees—not emptied from vessel to vessel (Jer. 48:11). Besides being in the place of the world, the prophet is called with the reward of divination in his hand to act for Moab. Balak had civil authority, but he was conscious that he needed in this case a superior power to help him. The "powers that be

are ordained of God." Therefore there is really no need of this kind of power to gain men's minds when all is right. But Balak, having no sense of God's authority and power, seeks it from another. The Israelites are pitched just on the border of the land when this attempt is made to prevent their entering. This is very practical for us, because many, knowing redemption, and feeling their inconsistencies and failures, begin to doubt whether after all they can reach heaven. It is right to judge ourselves for what is evil in us, but the heart owes it to Christ to trust in the mercy of God to the end.

When the people had crossed the Red Sea, they sung in the confidence of the power of God to bring them right through, "Thou hast guided us by thy strength to thy holy habitation." Moab and all their enemies were nothing to them then; for they were conscious of the power of God for them, though the wilderness was all before them. They knew they had got safely out of Egypt, and they took all the rest for granted; but they did not know themselves. Therefore God led them forty years in the wilderness, to humble and to prove them, and to know what was in their heart (Deut. 8). In the next chapter we see it was also to shew what the goodness of God to them in all this discipline was.

The people are now at the edge of the land near Jericho. Is the promise as available now that they were at Jordan as at the Red Sea? This was the question as regarded the people as a whole, not individually; and it is all a type of spiritual things to us. Faith takes us thoroughly beyond circumstances. It does not close the eye, running blindfolded to heaven, but taking God's judgment about sin, it knows God's grace also about salvation, and can see that the trials in the way are for the purpose of

humbling us, proving us, and doing us good in our latter end. Faith never slights God's judgment about our sin, but trusts in God's grace in spite of it. God will never accuse, though He will chasten His people; nor will He let Satan do it.

Moab really had no need to be afraid, for Israel had strict injunctions not to touch them. Israel would even buy their water of them as they passed through their land. But Moab had no faith in what God said. Satan, with all his cunning, cannot tell what the simplest faith knows—the power of God's grace to save to the end. Moab is just a sample of the entire and total ignorance of God's thoughts in the world. It is well to remember this. They would see this mysterious influence, and yet they are not wholly ignorant of it, but opposed to it. What had God said to Abram? "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." And now Balak goes about to take the very means of getting God's curse upon himself. Such is the utter blindness of the flesh; it always takes the road to turn God's judgment on itself. There was not only sin in Balak, and plenty of that too, but he had entirely closed his eye against all God's thoughts. It is a terrible thing to be out of the way of God's light, and that is the case with the poor world. If the outward moral restraints are removed in the haunts of men, when their passions are let loose, what utter degradation and misery we see! And where there is not this outward wretchedness, how sad to see a person walking through this world without God\ Respectable he may be, and well thought of by his fellow-creatures; but how can he get through death and judgment without God? It is dreadful to think of the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of

their hearts. If God judges according to our works, what is to be done with them? God says, “There is none righteous, no not one.” “All the world are become guilty before God.” Men go on their own way, and think they will get through well at the end. Men of the world are just doing what Balak did. They are looking for blessing where God has sent the curse, and the curse where God has sent the blessing. There is as much sense about God’s ways in an ass as in a man walking without Him.

There are two things in Balaam’s mind. One is, that he is afraid of God Himself. So the world are frightened at what they see wrought amongst God’s people, whilst they cannot perceive the motives that are at work and they have no power to control them. There is no power in a parent to prevent the conversion of his child all in a moment. The world cannot control God’s work. See how God takes Balaam up; but has he any time to go to God? (v. 20, etc.).

God is always for His people in His own heart. Israel were entirely ignorant of what was going on, but God was not. He has taken up the cause of His people, because of the love in His own heart; and therefore, though He warns them and chastens them, yet He will not let Satan have anything to do with them. It is a sign of Balak being a very wicked man, that he tried to get God’s word to Balaam reversed.

In Zechariah 3 we have the same thing. Satan there tries to get God’s sentence pronounced against the high priest. What could Joshua say for himself? But God says, “I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.” He does not say I do not mind the filthy garments, but He comes in of His own love and grace as regards Israel. I have

clothed thee with change of raiment. God had said to Balaam, “Thou shalt not go.” Thou shalt not curse this people. That ought to have silenced him. He ought to have said, There is an end of it, if God says No. But he was as perverse as he could be.

What a terrible plague the people of God are to the world! They are, in one sense, a pest to it, if walking faithfully. If they are killed, they only multiply the more; there is no getting rid of them, nor doing anything with them. There are principles and motives and ways in the children of God that the world cannot get rid of. Balaam says to Balak, “If thou wouldest give me thine house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord.” How pious he is become now! If he might have gone, he would. But though he cannot do what he would for Balak, he still keeps up his credit as a prophet of the Lord. Just as if he had the secret of the Lord, he says, “I will know what God the Lord will say unto me more,” v. 19. There has been the money offered, but Balaam speaks as if he was connected with God. This is the way men often act. They claim a connection with God, but disclaim connection with God’s people. But this will not do. It is in connection with His people that the cross comes in, and that is the test for a man.

Now God lets Balaam go, and he is delighted at it; but God chose him to go now. And his way was as perverse as ever. God intended him to go, that he might pronounce a blessing upon His people, instead of a curse. Morally, as regarded himself, Balaam’s was the most wicked act in going; and yet God brings out all His purposes through it. He is nothing more than a rod in God’s hand. He goes, and the Lord by an angel meets him. He rebukes man’s ways and man’s wisdom, by

putting more sense into the mouth of the brute beast than man has; for though he has a mind, he uses it against God, which a brute beast cannot do. Man, in one sense, is more blind than Satan, because Satan believes and trembles. God could reveal Himself to a beast's eye as well as to a man's, when He pleased. The effect of this on Balaam was that, in his passion, he would have killed the ass (v. 29), if he could. When the Lord opens his eyes to see his madness and blindness all the way he has been going, he feels he has sinned, and that God has stopped him (v. 34); but it was from mere terror that he thus speaks, and he goes on without seeing that instead of cursing the people, he was to bless them, etc. (v. 39). Balaam goes to the idols of Balak to sacrifice. He liked the name of religion; but his heart was not with God at all, it was set on money and honour in this world. What a picture of the impotency of sin!

Mark from this history the way God takes to deal with His people. Man thinks to thwart God's people of the blessing He has for them, and Satan tries to defeat God in His purposes of love. But in going their own way, He suffers men to do the very things that are for the accomplishment of these purposes. This we see in the crucifixion of Christ. The Jews said, "not on the feast day," etc.; but Christ, our Passover, was to be sacrificed for us. It was at that very season when the feast was to be kept, and yet they meant nothing less. What a comfort it is to know that God thinks of us, and arranges all for us, though we fail to think of Him! There is not a day, not a moment, but God is thinking of us, and He is above all the plottings of Satan. He will take care of His people. Do they want food? He sends them manna. Guidance? there is the pillar going before them. Do they

come to Jordan? there is the ark there. Have they enemies in the land? there is Joshua to overcome for them. He deals with them in the way of discipline when they need it, as He did with Jacob. He humbled him, but gave him the blessing in the end. What a thought this ought to give us of the love of God, when we thus see His activity in goodness to us all the way through! What comfort to know He is for us, out of the spring and principle of His own love! He brings His grace and righteousness together in the putting away of sin on the cross. We can never really know God till we know He is love. God so loved the world that He sent His Son. The world did not ask God to send, and they did not ask Christ to come, but God loved them, and He sent Him. What a comfort, I say again, to know God is for us, seeing all the enemies—our own hearts, the world, and Satan! Faith gets through all, by looking at what God is.

Numbers 23.

We have seen how God laid hold of Balaam by exposing his wickedness. Having got him in His own hand, He forces him to have to do with Himself about His own people. It is a remarkable fact that Israel does not appear at all in this scene. It was God and Balaam. So when God beholds His people, He does not allow any check against them, because they are His. If God was walking amongst His people, He took account of all their perverseness; see Deut. 9:24, which speaks of them as at this very time rebelling against the Lord in the plains of Moab. God’s judgment of us as saints in our walk is the same thing; and our sins against Him, after we are saints, should grieve us even more than those we felt as sinners. When God judges amongst His people as to

their walk, He calls everything to account, for He can "by no means clear the guilty." Never does He, in the riches of His grace, bear with or allow sin, as people say. He can cover it in atonement; He can put it away in the cross, instead of imputing it; but never can He bear with it, and so give up any requirements of His holiness.

However, the whole question now was between God and His enemy, and it took place up at the top of the hill, the people knowing nothing at all about it. What could Balaam do with God about the people? Nothing; and when he found he could not avail with God against them, he afterwards seduces them into, sin, and God has to chasten them.

But now, in having to do with God about His people, it is only the occasion of God's making a new revelation of His grace. God could not curse His people, or defy Israel; and so Balaam has to say after him. God has His own thoughts about them, and although He can allow no inconsistency in His people, He will bring to pass His own purposes. "And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. And Jehovah put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab. And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom Jehovah hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

It is of the last importance for us to see how distinct is God's judgment concerning us as in our standing in Christ, and as to our walk as saints in the world. The judgment we form of ourselves is never the same as God's. The Holy Spirit, who leads us to judge ourselves, takes account of all the evil which is contrary to God's holiness. In judging myself I ought to be able to see in myself all the evil, and to be ready to say, when I detect myself, This is not charity, that is not holiness. I have to judge my own heart according to what I am; but God's judgment of me is according to what He sees me in Christ. If I did not know this to be God's judgment of me, I should never have courage to judge myself. How could I ever look at the evil within, if I knew God was going to impute to me all the evil, and would condemn me for it? All the difference between experience and faith is this. The testimony of the Holy Ghost in Hebrews 10, as to what God says of us, has to be laid hold of by faith: "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Balaam has no faith in God, so he goes to a high place to see what He will say to him. Peradventure the Lord will meet him. In the next chapter we find he did not do this. Here he takes the character of being very religious, as we see. With God on the hill, not Israel in the camp, he sees them. The people, as to fact, were going on with their foolishness, or their piety (there were Joshuas and Calebs, no doubt); but that is not taken account of: God takes all this interest in them out of the springs of His own heart. "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."

God is as absolute in taking them for Himself as in taking them out of the world. So we are “bought with a price,” and are therefore not our own. Taken out of condemnation, sin, and misery, we are brought into blessing, and now we are not to be like those who are in the world. We are redeemed from the world, and the result of this principle is, that we do not belong to ourselves at all. What we do belong to ourselves in is in the first Adam. But God has taken us out of this world, that we should belong to Himself. He brought His people out of Egypt to be made His own habitation (Ex. 15-18). God dwells on earth now in us as His habitation. We shall dwell in heaven by-and-by. We are a heavenly people, and the life of a person consistent with God’s dwelling in him is looked for.

It is Satan’s unwearied effort to bring a curse against us just because we are redeemed, as it was with God’s enemy, in the history of His people, to curse them. We have to resist him stedfast in the faith. His accusations are made to God, and God answers for us. Faith takes up the answer of God, as in Zechariah 3. It is of the greatest importance for our peace, and our holiness too, for us to understand this. What could Joshua say to the filthy garments about which he was charged? and ought we to have our filthy garments? Surely not; he has nothing to say, but God answers for him: This is a brand I have plucked out of the fire, and you want to put it in again. Then He says to the angel, “Take away the filthy garments,” etc., and then God speaks to Joshua, and tells him that He has done it. “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee,” etc. Thus He makes the poor sinner to know the perfectness of His work, and

the love in His heart that has wrought on his behalf. He does not say, I will do it, but “I have caused,” etc.

Verse 19. Balaam is obliged to bear witness to the character of God. “God is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent,” etc. He is not only a God of truth, but He does not alter it. He says, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” This speaks the unrepentingness of God. The truth that He tells is truth, eternal truth, and it is now in the mouth of the enemy. “I cannot reverse it.” Not, I will not, but I cannot.

The great need we have, as individual saints in the wilderness, is to see the evil that is in ourselves practically, and judge it perfectly. Then we shall never be judged for it. God cannot allow sin in us. His way of putting it away is the opposite of making allowance for it; but it is the non-imputation of it.

Verse 23. “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, … according to this time it shall be said, what hath God wrought? “If a soul only sees what he has wrought, he stays away from God; but if he sees what God has wrought, he is happy with Him. You can never know how to pronounce judgment upon yourself, without getting into His presence. It must be all uncertainty until you know what God says. You will have Jesus on one side, and hopes on the other—light on one hand, and clouds on the other. It is in knowing our position in the last Adam, as risen before God, that we have peace, and joy, and confidence.

Numbers 24.

The attempt of the enemy did not cause God to reiterate the same blessing merely, but drew out His activity, as it were, to bring out all the riches of His blessings. He carries out His own purposes according to His own will and thoughts. We have seen, firstly, how God claimed them as His own people; secondly, that they were completely justified by God. “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverse-ness in Israel.” God met Balaam, and he found there was no possibility of succeeding against God. Instead, therefore, of going, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, he turns his face to the wilderness.

Verse 2. “Balaam lifted up his eyes, and saw Israel abiding in their tents,” etc. We do not see a picture of the saints here in heavenly glory, for it was not Israel as brought into the final blessing of God in the land, that they are regarded here, but Israel in the wilderness. Thus we get through Balaam the knowledge of God’s thoughts about His people here below (v. 3-5). Directly I look at that which is born of God, I find an entirely new order of things. We are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. The Christian is justified in Christ, and, besides that, he is born of the Spirit. Balaam looks upon the people with God’s eye. The Spirit of God fills his mind, and he sees what God’s thoughts are about His people. Faith enables us to see with God’s eyes instead of our own. “How goodly are thy tents,” etc. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, … and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” —not it cannot, but “he cannot.” “He,” the whole man is of God.

Balaam “saw Israel abiding in their tents.” It was the wilderness. It is not now the justification of His people, but their beauty and loveliness in God’s sight, as in the Spirit. They are not only accepted judicially, but they walk in the Spirit. Of Abel it is said, “he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts,” etc. He was accepted in person first, and then his gifts are well pleasing to God. So Enoch was not only justified, but he had the present enjoyment of favour. “Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” He was, as it were, walking in the joy of the Father’s smile.

Verse 5, “How goodly are thy tents,” etc. This illustrates the aspect of the church of God now, through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). It is more than man was in paradise. There was then no dwelling nor tabernacle of God. By-and-by His tabernacle will be with men. But as being in the standing of the church, we are taken, as it were, into God’s paradise now. We are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. If the church is divided and scattered, it is held in God’s hand. “The wolf, coming, catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep”; but again it is said, “none shall pluck (or catch, it is the same word) them out of my hand.”

We are God’s dwelling, and that is a different thing from God’s regenerating us merely. The fact of being regenerate does not reveal things to our soul; but God does reveal things to us by His Spirit which dwelleth in us.

The manifested beauty of spiritual life in an individual, or in the church, is another thing, and depends, of

course, on the faithfulness of walk; but the maintenance of spiritual life is entirely on God's part, and never fails.

"As the valleys are they spread forth." This is the refreshing power of the gospel. "How goodly are thy tents." They are in favour with all the people; and the secret of the loveliness of the aspect was, that they were watered by the river of God— "as gardens by the river's side."

It is impossible but that Christ must meet the need of faith, let the general unbelief be what it may. Often, it is true, though most humbling, that the individual faith shines the brightest when the general unbelief is the darkest. In Paul's case it was so; he went on in spite of all difficulties, when "all were seeking their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Faith looks not only at the blessing there is in God, but at the blessing where He has given it—with His people. The people are identified with God on high, therefore they are blessed, and God cannot allow evil in them.

Faith recognizes the place where blessing is, and drinks it in. "As the trees of lign-aloes which Jehovah hath planted," etc., and then they become the source of blessing to others when so filled. "He shall pour the water out of his buckets," v. 22. The bride herself says to her Lord, "Come," and says to those who are athirst also, let them "take the water of life freely."

I have not got Christ yet, but I have got the living water, and therefore I can say, Come and drink. We are not in glory yet, and we are not with the world; but we have the Spirit, and it is said, "He that believeth, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Having Christ, we have sap from the tree of life, and there can be no limit in the result. There is no stint, though little power indeed to use it. “His seed shall be in many waters,” signifying the extent of the blessing.

Then, besides this, there is strength. “His king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.” Israel will have a king in Zion, but we are in a closer connection with the Bridegroom as His bride. We shall be displayed in the kingdom by-and-by. Mark the difference, how it is said, “How goodly are thy tents,” etc., but thy “king shall,” etc. The people had not a king yet. Their visible blessing in power had not come yet. Their elevation was to be a future thing in the land.

With us it is not the kingdom we are looking for as our hope; indeed, in a certain sense, we are now in the kingdom. It is for us “the kingdom and patience”; for Christ is rejected and gone. We are being called to share His rejection, and afterwards His glory. “We shall reign with him.” He is a King, and we are kings. He is a Priest, and we are priests. If we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together. He is our Head, and in all things He is to have the preeminence. There is to be power connected with those who have the kingdom. There is not only such a thing as blessing, but it is connected with the people of God.

Deuteronomy

No one is led into the place of weeping without getting some joy. Israel were already God's people: He leads them into the wilderness to humble them; He makes them hunger that He may give them manna; He leads them into trial that He may give them something better. Some would say, If in the midst of the leeks, onions, and flesh-pots of Egypt God had given them the manna, they would have rejected all other things because the manna was better; but it is not so. While the flesh is surrounded by that which suits it, it is fed thereby, and will reject the better things. Day by day, hour by hour, God is leading us to that condition of hunger that He may give us something better, something not discernible by the natural mind, but satisfying. When I have tasted the manna, there is a reality about it; it is not faith any longer. If I am hungry in the wilderness and am fed and braced up by the food, do I not know it? Can power come into my veins and I not know it? It might be a matter of faith that we are to have the manna to-morrow; but it was a matter of feeling and reality that they had eaten it to-day. As we eat and are strengthened, let us say, I know that man doth not live by bread alone. We feed on Jesus the living bread, the gift of the Father, and we may say that we are miraculously fed from heaven every day by supernatural food, that we might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

What think you of possessing in measure now all that we shall possess in the day of the Lord? Then pain of body

and pain of heart would all appear very light, and we could say with the apostle, after enumerating things that would make some people mad, “these light afflictions, which are but for a moment.” Why do not we thus speak? It is the right of all who have the Spirit. Outside the sanctuary, until the Lord comes, there will be troubled hearts and diseased souls, but it must not surprise us; it is all alike an opportunity for the display of God’s grace which spreads itself abroad to meet the misery. Every want that pressed on the Lord Jesus always gave an occasion in His soul to the cry of faith.

Joshua 1-13.

Chapter i. The first thought is to cross the Jordan.

Verses 3, 4. The principles come in afterwards, namely, all the extent of the promises of God; but realization by the fact that one takes possession of them. There is a connection between the moral state of man down here, and the glory of man above.

Verses 7, 8. Herein is the strength—all my power is with thee, Joshua; but there must be obedience.

Verse 9. Again, another principle; the starting-point is that we have the authority of God to walk with Christ. Then there is energy. It is the certitude of God's will.

The "single eye" does not mean only that we have an eye, but that there is nothing in the eye to prevent our seeing.

Verses 12-18. If the testimony is sufficiently powerful to go forward, all is in movement among God's people. Those who seek their rest without the conflict in the heavenly places must equally go to the war.

Chapter 2:8-11. One sees here that dread seizes upon God's enemies, as soon as there is a testimony of the Spirit.

Verse 11. One character of Rahab's faith is, that she identified herself with the people of God before their victories. The faith of Abraham was in God absolutely, whilst the faith of Rahab identified itself with the people of God.

Chapter 3. The great principles having been laid down, it is now a question of crossing the Jordan.

The Red Sea is death in redemption (Rom. 5; Exod. 14, 15); Jordan is the application of death to the individual—spiritual death with Christ. Redemption brings into the wilderness; but when one is dead and risen (in spirit), one enters into the heavenly places (in spirit). For us, death is life. Jordan is not the sign of natural death, because afterwards they meet with fighting. It is death practically, death in us spiritually.

Paul (2 Cor. 4) goes farther. He was dying for others. But, indeed, had he not been dead as to himself, he could not have suffered thus for others.

In the Epistle to the Galatians there are three things—death to the law; death to the flesh; death to the world.

Verse 4. It is a new way. One may have religion; but when it is a question of dying, it is quite a new thing. In the flesh, a man may try to do works; but in the presence of God the flesh is destroyed. If we have passed through death, the power of Satan is annulled.

Verse 13. Although it is only with respect to Canaan, God takes possession as “Lord of all the earth.” It is His title for the millennium.

Chapter 4. Then Joshua calls to mind the word of the Lord, and takes out of the midst of Jordan twelve stones, to put them in the place where they were to pass the night.

Verse 9. They also set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan. There is this double effect, that having passed through death, we find in heaven the trophies of death, which is overcome, and the Lamb who was slain. Passing through death oneself, one values the death of Jesus. But one must be spiritual and heavenly for that.

To sum up, then, we have—the memorial, the trophy of Jordan, and the Jordan. Having passed over, they set up the camp in Gilgal.

Chapter 5. But here we have all the Canaanites afraid. In the resurrection of Jesus, Satan was shaken to the very foundations of his empire. Then, in Christ risen, we find ourselves in Gilgal.

Verses 2-8. There is first of all this—that the true circumcision does not take place until one is in the heavenly places. This we see every day. It is the application of the heavenly things to the flesh.

Verse 9. “This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt.” If I have got hold of the thought of the church, and I see it worldly, it is indeed a reproach.

Verse 10. “And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal.” One must be in heaven in order to endure the circumcision; it is not being circumcised in order to get to heaven.

Verses 11, 12. They enjoy all their privileges before giving one single battle. The passover they celebrate in the presence of their enemies. As to the sense of it, it is somewhat more than the passover in Egypt. They have now the old corn of the land. Now we have the heavenly Christ; for as to the manna, it is Christ in the wilderness. Here it is the old corn of the land—the enjoyment of Christ in heaven; then the manna ceased. As walking through the world, we have Christ to sustain us in our weakness day by day (the manna). We also have Christ for our joy and the enjoyment of the heavenly things.

Verses 13-15. Having given all that, now God says, You must fight.

Verse 13. In the affairs of this life I can say of a man, even of a Christian, How much I like that man's character! but when it is a question of heaven and of warfare, I say, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?"

Verse 15. Again there is this warning: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot." I bear all the charges of thy battles; but as for thee thy business is to walk in holiness. The Lord insists upon the holiness of the camp. God in His church will have holiness that there may be blessing, as He would have it for redemption (Exod. 3). "Loose thy shoes." The shoe may have contracted defilement, but it is no longer on the foot.

Chapter 6. Faith and obedience; but in the eyes of men, it is in a way which appears ridiculous that Jericho falls. The curse is pronounced on the enemies of God.

Chapter 7. Achan, by the accursed thing, defiles the whole camp. The effect of the blessing becomes for Joshua the occasion of leaving the place of dependence. He forgot to loose his shoe before the captain of the host of the Lord. He gives himself up to a vain confidence. If, in the conflict in the heavenly places, one is not with God, one only falls in a more terrible manner. It was more serious to be beaten in Canaan than in the wilderness.

Verse 2. It was prudent according to man to send spies, but it is not so very good thus to go out for exploring the land.

Verses 6-9. The heart of Joshua melts also like that of the people.

Verses 10-12. It is not a question of talking about the Canaanites: Israel had sinned.

It is necessary to be decided, when it is a question of purifying oneself from the accursed thing.

Chapter 8. What we see here is that it is quite an affair to take this small city. In this manner of proceeding there was a double motive: first, to put an end to the discouragement; secondly, to make all the people feel what the question was.

Verse 18. Nevertheless, when the accursed thing is removed; and though the whole army is there, Joshua (the Spirit of Christ) stretches out his spear, and the ambush (which could not see it) enters into the city. It was the proof that God was still with them that they had more trouble; but at the same time the principle was recovered—the presence of God. It is beautiful to see how the faults committed at Ai and at Jericho were entirely repaired by the goodness of the Lord.

Verses 30-35. Although the land is not altogether conquered, Joshua treats it as being the land of Jehovah. Read Deuteronomy 21-23. Having once entered into the real position, we may consider everything as ours. Joshua shews this in two ways. First, he commands the dead body to be taken down (v. 29): otherwise the land would have been defiled, and that could not suit the inheritance of Jehovah. Second, having taken possession, Joshua builds an altar, and owns all the consequences in blessings and curses. It was placing the enjoyment of the law under the responsibility of the people to obey Jehovah.

The altar was on mount Ebal. The meaning of it is in truth this: thou shalt worship if thou canst, for the sign of relationship was connected with responsibility.

In Deuteronomy one sees the thing in its details.

Chapter 26. The people acknowledge that the land was given in grace. They offer to Jehovah. It was the proper state of a Jew.

Chapter 27 is another principle—the complete curse resulting from their having taken this inheritance on the ground of the law. From Gerizim there is no blessing pronounced.

Chapter 28 is the blessings and the curses with respect to God's government. We have the things as facts in the history of Israel.

Chapter 29 is only saying that, according to these words, God had made a covenant with Israel.

Chapter 30. The consequence is indeed set forth; but then God adds, If thou shalt obey and return unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, after all these things have come upon thee, I will bring thee back. This is the secret thing (Deut. 29:29). When they were driven out of Canaan they could not attain to righteousness by the law.

Joshua 9. The effect of this victory and of these blessings is to stir up the rest of the Canaanites against them. Here they are now leagued together. Here again there is a snare: namely, that when one has resisted a confederacy, one is tempted also to form a confederacy. This is in one sense the place which the Gibeonites took here. As Joshua had been deceived by the sin, he is so now by their artifice, and in a rather gross way. It was a question of being an Israelite and nothing but an Israelite. The Gibeonites only bring fresh attacks upon Joshua and upon Israel.

The camp was always in Gilgal.

Verse 14. The men of Israel judged, alas! by their provisions: “The men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.” (See v. 6, 7).

Chapter 10. Joshua goes up from Gilgal and comes back to Gilgal. This is an important thing to notice.

Chapter 11. Here we have another principle. Hazor was the capital; and it is the only city that Joshua burns. That which is the seat of strength and energy according to the world cannot become the centre of power according to the Spirit.

Chapter 12. In one sense Joshua had conquered all: but when it is a question of taking possession, there is scarcely anything. In the time of Paul the church had before it eyes all the promises; then, when Paul is dead, one again sees Canaanites appearing.

Chapter 13. Finally, Joshua only put two tribes and a half in possession. Something similar has taken place with respect to the church.

Joshua 1

In the Book of Joshua we read the history of the taking possession of the land of Canaan, so far as that was carried out; as in the Book of Numbers we follow the same people in their toilsome journey through the wilderness: a journey more toilsome through their own unbelief, but in which a faithful and compassionate God accompanied them all the way, and led them, though by a path of chastening, when they would not go up at once by the path of faith. Their clothes waxed not old, nor did their feet swell, those forty years.

Both these parts of their history, remark, were after their redemption out of Egypt.

I would trace just now the principles on which the path and service of faith, as represented by the history of Joshua, can be securely and successfully trod.

Let my reader remark—what perhaps he has never noticed— that the conflicts which are recorded in the Book of Joshua are not only after redemption out of Egypt but after crossing the Jordan. Now Jordan is generally taken for a figure of death, and Canaan of heaven; and I do not doubt justly. But how comes it that all is fighting after it, and that the man who appears to Joshua comes as captain of Jehovah’s host? War characterizes Israel’s state after entering into Canaan; their journey but through the wilderness. This remarkable feature in the history of those events, which “happened unto them for ensamples [types], and are written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are to come,” calls us to enquire what the connexion of these events is, and how the passage

through death and entrance into heaven leads to a state of conflict and war.

The New Testament makes very plain what is the solution of this apparent difficulty. It teaches not only that Christ is dead and risen again for us, but that we have, in God's sight as united to Him by the Spirit, died and risen with Him. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," Col. 3:3. He hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, Eph. 2. Thus the Christian himself is viewed as having himself passed through death and being risen again, because Christ who is his life has. "If ye be dead with Christ," says Paul (Col. 2). "If ye then be risen with Christ," Col. 3. In this sense we are viewed as having passed through Jordan. We have died, and are risen, and are entered into the heavenly places. Hence we have our conflicts there; for the Canaanite and the Perizzite are yet in the land. So Paul says, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities, with powers, with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." He is here referring to Joshua and Israel, who had to contend with flesh and blood—we with spiritual enemies. Thus the Christian is looked at as having died and risen in Christ, and called upon to possess the land—to realize the blessings given by the power of the Holy Ghost, whether apprehending and enjoying the unsearchable riches of Christ, or rescuing from the power of Satan those who are led captive by him.

Before I turn to the practical principles I have referred to, let me draw my reader's attention to the effect of having thus passed the Jordan.

First, there is, and thus only, the death of the flesh, entire death to the world. Israel was not circumcised in the wilderness: Israel was now circumcised, and the reproach of Egypt rolled away. To this, as the place of self-judgment, Israel returned after all their victories. But there was another point: they ate of the old corn of the land, and the manna ceased. The manna is Christ as come down and humbled—Christ for the need of the wilderness. The old corn belongs to the heavenly land—Christ in His heavenly glory. This is all ours before any combat—before a wall has fallen or an enemy is conquered. We possess all the heavenly blessing by a divine title. Then, "the man with the drawn sword" —Christ in spirit—comes to lead us to conflict, but to victory if we walk under His leading.

This leads us to the principles on which victory is to be obtained in the conflict in which we are engaged. All is promised from the river Euphrates to the great sea. But then comes the question of taking possession. We must actively take possession of it to enjoy it. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." Nothing can be simpler. You have only to take possession. But this you must do. So with us. Large possessions are before us. All the unsearchable riches of Christ are ours. But there must be the diligent occupation of the heart with these things in order to possess them. Let the reader be assured that there is a large and rich field before him, all that God has given him in Christ to delight in; and he has received the divine nature (for I speak of saints) to delight in these things.

But here conflict comes in, because these spiritual enemies would hinder us from realizing, in a pure and

undistracted heart, what Jesus calls our own things; as the things of this world he calls another's. But these conflicts, though useful for exercise and the experience of God's faithfulness, are no hindrance to our taking possession; but, while testing our own state, only shew how God is with us. Were the falling of the walls of Jericho and the victories of Joshua a hindrance? No.

Holiness and looking to God, in a word, separation of heart to God, are required when the captain of Jehovah's host came up to meet Joshua. He was to take his shoes off as much as Moses before God in "the bush." The Lord in our midst for conflicts is as holy in nature as the Lord in redemption. Hence, as is known, when there was an Achan in the camp God would not go out with them. But, when there is uprightness of heart, the word is this: "There shall not a man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." What a comfort and strength is this! No difficulty in anything. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" I cannot think of, or meet with, a difficulty which for a moment stops my course. I have to be careful for nothing, and, making my requests known to God, in the midst of conflict, God's peace keeps my heart. And this never fails. "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Not only God does not forsake us, but He does not fail us in the strength, grace, wisdom, needed so as to give firmness and power. In nothing does He fail us. He is always with us, and with us for, and in, the conflict. The Lord will make war with Amalek; but it is in Israel, but God's war. Thus divine strength and power with us, in faithful goodness, is the first and blessed groundwork for our hearts in the conflict.

It leads to another principle: confiding faith, courage. "Be strong and of good courage." God calls us to

confidence and strength of heart in His strength, for we shall succeed in the work He has given us. This too is blessing. Take courage, for you shall do the work. Why not, if the work be His and He be with us?

But this has a special bearing worthy of all note. You shall divide the land—" only be thou strong and very courageous"; no drawing back, no being terrified, shrinking before the power of the enemy. "In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." Satan is there, but if there we have a free courage, God is there, witness of ruin to Satan's instruments, of sure salvation to those who have God with them. There is no question (if we are grasshoppers, and our enemies giants, and the walls up to heaven), if God be there. Of what consequence was the height of a wall, if it fell at the blast of a ram's horn? What matter that the sea is rough, if Christ is there to make us walk on it? What good its being smooth, if He be not?

Now mark what courage is shewn in, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all that my servant Moses commanded thee!" We need courage to obey. It seems folly. The world is against us. There seems no sense, often, in the prescriptions of the word of God. Our own fleshly ease is interested in not being so particular. The path is different from all the world. It supposes a living God, who acts and notices all things, to whom we belong and whose will is everything to us. Of this the world knows nothing. To do God's will and simply obey His word requires courage in the face of the world, courage with our own hearts. To this we are called. "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all that Jehovah has

commanded us." It is the courage of faith which looks to God. This is the way of prospering in the conflict. God's strength is employed in helping us in the path of God's will, not out of it. Then no matter where we go, what the difficulties, how long the journey seems, He makes our way prosperous: "Whithersoever thou goest."

This leads to another and natural consequence, but one of great importance, because it not only informs us of the will of God, but keeps us in His presence, and familiar with the ideas, thoughts, ways, hopes, the whole manner of our God. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein, for thus shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success." Compare Psalm 1. This meditation on God's word, of course, makes us know His will. But it does a great deal more. It gives the habitual delight of the heart to be in what God reveals, in what He delights in. We acquire His (that is, the true but divine) way of thinking of things; not the side of the vain show of this world. Our own hearts are formed by and in this divine and blessed apprehension of things. Oh what a light it is, and how does the vanity of this world appear what it is! "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Besides, the soul is kept subject to God in meditating on His word: an immense point morally. Nor is this all. It secures the communications of His grace. "I have called you friends, for whatsoever I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Owning the word of God is owning God in this world as He has spoken. But I must pass on.

The next ground Jehovah gives is, “Have not I commanded thee? “Nothing gives greater confidence than this. “We ought to obey God,” says Peter. If I am even going right, but do not surely know that I am doing God’s will, the least difficulty casts all into doubt, and all my courage is destroyed. When I know that I am doing God’s will, difficulties are no matter. I meet them on the road. But for obedience to God’s will, God’s power is there; and the heart, knowing that it is doing God’s will, has no distrust. Uprightness would fear if it might be self, but uprightness fears nothing, hesitates in nothing, when it knows it is doing God’s will. It can appeal to any one if that ought not to be done. “Have not I commanded thee; be strong and of a good courage.” And then we have therewith the positive assurance, “Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

A further principle is brought out in the case of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh. It is given to us in these divine wars to combat for others. This is an immense privilege. I have to combat to possess more and more of the unsearchable riches of Christ, to realize more of His life and of the knowledge of Him, to have the vineyards as well as the oliveyards of Canaan, and the old corn of the land; in a word, to possess what is given me in Christ. But it is given to us to combat in every way for God’s people also. Paul (2 Cor. 1:11) was dependent on the poor praying saints, it might be on some poor bed-ridden widow, for the gifts by which he carried on his active warfare in the Lord’s field. He himself was labouring unceasingly, both in prayer and the the ministry of the word, to put God’s people in possession of their privileges. This is an immense privilege. Not only are we

saved, blessed, made partakers of glory, joy in God; but God is pleased to make us partners, co-workers under Him in His own divine privilege of love and blessing. This is grace indeed! Surely we must know it, as its objects, to witness it; but God's love in us flows forth in love to make it known to others.

Note another thing. If we are doing God's will and work we may reckon on Him for all that is dear to us, and in which we are interested. We could not keep it without God were present. He can keep it without us if we are doing His will and service in love. The two and a half tribes could leave their little ones and all that they had behind, to go armed to the war to help their brethren. No doubt, no fear, no hesitation! Such is the path of faith. It counts on God in the path of obedience to His known will. He has divine wisdom for every step, and divine power. Both are in Christ. We cannot know wisdom perfectly, nor see the end or the bearing of many things; but He who gave us the word did, and we are guided in the word according to that perfect knowledge.

Christ As Our Food

Joshua 5.

I would say a word as to the way in which Christ may be considered as our food. He may be looked at as the food of the Christian in three ways.

Firstly, as a redeemed sinner; secondly, in connection with sitting in heavenly places in Christ; and thirdly, as a pilgrim and stranger down here. But this last is merely accessory and not the proper portion of the Christian. The Lord said to Israel that He had come down to deliver them from Egypt and bring them into the land of Canaan. He did not say a word about the wilderness when He came to deliver them from Egypt, because His interference for them there was in the power of redemption and for the accomplishment of His promises. However, there was the wilderness as well as redemption from Egypt and the entrance into Canaan; and Christ answers as our food to these three things. Two of them are permanent; for we are nourished by Christ in two ways permanently, that is, in redemption and glory. The third way is as the manna which we have all along the road. It is in these three ways that Christ meets His people and nourishes them all the way. Two of them remain, as we have seen, but the third ceases when the circumstances it was to meet have passed away. They did eat the passover and the manna until they got into the land, then the manna ceased; but they continued to eat of the passover.

Now there are two ways in which it is proper for us ever to be feeding on Christ. First, as the passover, for they ate the paschal lamb when the wilderness had ceased

and Egypt had been long left behind. When in Egypt the blood was on the lintel and the door-posts, and the Israelite ate of the lamb inside the house. The thought they had while they were eating it was, that God was going through the land as an avenging judge; and the effect of the blood on the doorposts was to keep God out, which was a great thing to do, for if brought into God's presence as a judge, woe be to him in whom sin is found.

The state of the one that now eats of Christ is just according as he estimates the value of the cross, through fear of what sin actually merits. When we have got into the effect of the blood of the paschal lamb, we have got into Canaan, and enjoy the peace of the land as a delivered people, having crossed the Jordan—not only the Red Sea. That is, we have passed through death and resurrection; not as knowing Christ dead and risen for us merely, as presented in the Red Sea, but as being dead with Him and entered into heavenly places with Him, as in Jordan. Then the character of God is known as their God, that is, the accomplisher of all that which He purposed towards them. It is not keeping God out now, but it is enjoying His love; not looking at God as in the cross pouring out wrath in judgment against sin. In Jesus on the cross there was perfect justice and perfect love. What devoted-ness to the Father, and what tender love to us! And this is the way the saint who is in peace feeds on the cross. It is not feeding on it as knowing that he is safe; for Israel's keeping the passover after they got into Canaan was very different from their keeping it when judgment was passing over. In Canaan they were in peace, and they were able to glorify God in this way, in the remembrance of their redemption from Egypt.

In this type we see presented, not the sinner that feels he is safe, but the saint that can glorify God in his affections; his heart confidently flowing out to Him, and feeding on Christ as the old corn of the land—the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. We see Christ now by faith at the right hand of God as the glorified man, not merely as Son of God, but as Son of man; as Stephen, when the heavens were opened to him, beheld Jesus at the right hand of God. We also see Him up there. We do not see Him as He is represented in the Revelation, seated on a white horse, coming forth out of heaven. He will indeed come forth and receive us up where He is, and we shall be like Him and be for ever with Him. But we shall feed on Him as the old corn of the land when we are there, and this is our proper portion now: manna is not our portion, though it is our provision by the way.

Joshua sees Jehovah as the Captain of Jehovah's host, and Israel feeds in the land before they fight. And our portion is to sit down in it before we fight, because God has given it to us. They do not eat the manna in Canaan, because it is for the wilderness. The manna is not Christ in the heavens! it is Christ down here. It is not our portion; our portion is the old corn of the land. That is, the whole thing, according to God's counsels, is redemption and glory. But all our life is exercise down here, or sin (excepting that God does give us moments of joy), because, while here, there is nothing but what acts on the flesh, or gives occasion for service to God. We may fail, and then Christ comes and feeds us with manna, that is, His sympathy with us down here, and shews how His grace is applied to all the circumstances of our daily life: and that is a happy thing. For most of our time, the far greater part of our life, we are

occupied in these things, necessary and lawful things no doubt, but not occupied with heavenly joy in Christ. And these things are apt to turn away the heart from the Lord and hinder our joy. But if we would have our appetites feed on Him as the old corn of the land, we must have the habit of feeding on Him as the manna.

For instance, something may make me impatient during the day, well then, Christ is my patience, and thus He is the manna to sustain me in patience. He is the source of grace; not merely the example which I am to copy. He is more than this, for I am to draw strength from Him, to feed upon Him daily: for we need Him, and it is impossible to enjoy Him as the paschal lamb unless we are also feeding on Him as the manna.

We know that God delights in Christ and He gives us a capacity to enjoy Him too. To have such affections is the highest possible privilege, but to enjoy Him, we must feed on Him every day. It is to know Christ come down to bring the needed grace and turn the dangerous circumstances with which we are surrounded to the occasion of our feeding on Himself as the manna to sustain us and strengthen us in our trial.

Joshua 5

We must remember that all these things which are written “happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” This expression, “ends of the world,” has its importance as also this, “once in the end of the world,” etc. (Heb. 9:26). It is what we are in as Christians, consequent on the end of all the dealings and ways of God with man as to teaching or testing him. Now man as man has been fully tried, and God has set up another man. He is more than man too, but still another man, and it is in grace too, surely, for sinners, that we may find a better paradise than that which has been lost. The Lord Jesus Christ could say, when He came to the end, “now is the judgment of this world.” We find men tried in every way from innocence to the cross of Christ, and the Son Himself is cast out of the vineyard and slain. John the Baptist came after the law and the prophets and preached repentance (Matt. 11), but they would not repent. When he mourned, they did not lament; and when the Lord came and piped, they would not dance. In that same chapter He says, “Come unto me.” Now man must come to Christ as ruined, according to His own invitation.

Man may be decently alienated from God, or indecently, but it is all the same. “The carnal mind is enmity.” We must come to the Second man, to Christ. God did not set up the Second, whilst He could recognize the first. He cannot own both; and to acknowledge man in the flesh now is to set aside the fact that God has set up another. What I would now set forth is the full deliverance we

have in the Lord Jesus Christ. I need not say this is not deliverance as to our body, but blessed liberty of spirit while we are waiting for the deliverance of body. We are not only forgiven, but are brought into liberty of association with God in holiness.

This deliverance is shadowed in Israel's history by figures, Egypt, the wilderness, Jordan, Canaan. We are all aware that the general idea is that Jordan means death and Canaan heaven. But directly we enter Canaan, we get conflict. This is not the heavenly places as a place of rest evidently. That which characterizes Canaan is conflict, and we get a figure of what we find brought out in Ephesians 6—the wrestling, not with flesh, and blood, but with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, for which we need to have on the whole armour of God. But if we are to have conflict there, we must first be there. What I would speak of then is the way we get into the heavenly places. Remember Christ is there. We find in the history of Israel the way a soul progresses to the heavenly places. It is when they get into Canaan, and not in the wilderness, that the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. They kept the passover as circumcised, they ate the old corn of the land, and the manna ceased.

And this is the way the soul gets into deliverance "from this present evil world," and is introduced into the heavenly places. They were slaves in Egypt, making bricks without straw; but God comes down to deliver them, and He talks only of Canaan and not of the wilderness. But first He appears in the character of a judge. He must pass them through the judgment. They were as great sinners as the Egyptians (perhaps greater, for they had a greater knowledge of God), but still,

wherever the blood was, there was shelter—perfect security. It was only because the blood was on their houses that God passed over. It was not a question of communion, but the blood keeping God out as a judge.

So with the believer now. It is a blessed fact that, wherever the blood is relied on, God cannot see a single sin. God would have to deny the efficacy of that blood if He did not pass over. What screened them was not their seeing the blood but God seeing it. Many souls are saying, I do not know whether I have accepted it aright. But what gives peace is knowing that God has accepted it. They think they must look into their hearts to see if they have accepted it aright: but a simple soul would not think of such a thing, but would only be too happy to rest in God's value of Christ's blood. There may be many a work to give right affections. It is quite true that we ought to find the blood each day more precious, but that is not questioning my acceptance. It is a question of growing affections; but what gives peace is not growing affections, but the fact that God has accepted the blood, and He must deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ if He did not receive me. The effect of it was to arrest His hand in judgment. Not only has my sin been pardoned, but God has been glorified at the cross of Christ. That gives full value to the blood.

If God judged sin only, then He is righteous, but there is no love. If He had said of men, "They are poor wretched things and cannot help it, so I will pardon all," there might be love shewn, but there would be no righteousness. It would not be holy love. But when we come to the cross, we have perfect righteousness and perfect love. God's truth and majesty are fully brought out there, because He, the "captain of our salvation,"

was there made “perfect through suffering.” He has suffered, and now the Son of man is glorified and God is glorified in Him. He has run the race and is now set down at the right hand of God.

“God hath highly exalted him.” In virtue of the cross man is glorified. Stephen sees the Son of man in heaven: that is the wonderful thing. Stephen did not say “I see the glory”: this was natural in heaven; but “I see the Son of man at the right hand of God “in the heavens—man in heaven. He is there not only as Son of God but as man. He gets His place in the glory of God. We get this wonderful truth because He has finished the work God gave Him to do. None but He could sit there. God has been glorified by what man has wrought. He was divine of course, or He could not have done it. This becomes the basis of everything—man having a place in the glory of God, not at His right hand—that is the place of pre-eminence for Christ alone. Now that He is there, He has sent down the Holy Ghost to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of righteousness both to the believer and to the unbeliever: to the unbeliever because he rejects Christ; to the believer because he is associated with Him. He convinces the world, not as individuals, but all in a lump. When the world cast out Christ, the Father says, “I will have Him,” and now He is set down as the result of His finished work. He receives it now from His Father as man. The angels desire to look into this. All God’s moral attributes have been glorified in man in the person of Christ. It is the foundation not only of the putting away our sin, but of the glory of God in righteousness and truth.

When we have passed through the veil and entered within the holiest in the consciousness of our souls, what

value do we not see in the blood! And now we apprehend what the cross is! Now I contemplate the cross for the affections of my soul. I meditate and think of the cross, then I get growth. When we are at home with God, there can be growth. It is not there I find peace. For peace is had by learning that righteousness has accepted the blood which love gave. Now love gives it to me, but righteousness is exalted in giving it. Israel go to the Red Sea, and here they are brought to a standstill. They found they were hemmed in on every side, and now they are “sore afraid.” So often when a person is delivered from judgment in one sense, he meets somehow with death and finds Satan pursuing. Many a soul gets peace and comfort whilst looking at the cross: but is afraid when it thinks of judgment. “I am a poor sinner delighting in the cross: it just suits me.” Does judgment suit you? When they came to the Red Sea, it was not judgment, but God a positive Deliverer. They had known God as a Judge in Egypt, and the blood had screened them. Now they learn Him at the Red Sea as a Deliverer. They never see the “salvation of God” till they get to the Red Sea, and they pass out of Egypt. They are not only sheltered from judgment but brought into a new place.

The blood screens us from judgment on account of our sins, and by that same cross and resurrection we are brought to God. Christ dead and risen is what we have in Romans; and the result is we are brought to God as our Father. Death and resurrection take me clean out of the place I was in. If I say “I am a guilty sinner,” He says, “You are justified.” If I say “defiled,” He says “You are cleansed.” If I have offended, then I am forgiven. He has met every question that could perplex the soul.

The new place of man is as perfectly redeemed and brought to God. Not only are his sins put away, but he is delivered, brought out into the wilderness. When God speaks of deliverance, He does not say a word of the wilderness. I am brought out into a new place altogether, not yet the heavenly places, but I have "redemption through his blood." So we find two conditions of the Israelites—in the wilderness, and in Canaan. And there are two distinct parts in the life of a Christian. First, what we find in Hebrews and Galatians, the place of deliverance from the present evil world (Gal. i:4), that is the wilderness; and, secondly, I am in Canaan, the heavenly places, as shewn in Ephesians and Colossians. The wilderness is what the world is to the Christian. What has a dead and risen man to do with the world? Now death and judgment are behind me, but I have not left conflict behind.

The blessed Lord went into death, and bore the judgment. If I am associated with Him, it is all behind Him. If I have a part in Christ, I have a part in the deliverance (see Ps. 22). As soon as "heard from the horns of the unicorn" He says, "I will declare," etc. The first thing the Lord does in resurrection is to declare the Father's name to His brethren. He brings them out into the same place He is in. In John 20 He says to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren"; and then He leads their praises as the firstborn among many brethren: "In the midst of the church will I praise thee." He brings them to His God and their God, His Father and their Father. He had been all alone in His suffering and wrath. Now all is settled, and now He says, "In the midst of the congregation." He associates us with the praises— "Not ashamed to call them brethren." He never said "My

brethren," nor "peace" until after He was risen. He had said, "Fear not," and anticipatively He had said, "My peace I give unto you"; that is, you shall have it. But peace was not then made, and it is not till He has made peace by the blood of His cross that He comes and "preaches peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh." He passed into the new place as man and says, Now you are here with me. Now we are associated with Christ, as Israel sings, "Thou hast led forth thy people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength into thy holy habitation." We have the promise of glory too: "Thou shalt bring them in," Exod. 15:13-17.

The wilderness is the path of a Christian in which he learns himself. It is the place of a soul who is really at rest before God. There may have been experience before of slavery, etc.; but they were the experiences of a soul in which God has acted, but which is not yet delivered. It is where a soul is who knows he is redeemed. If I only know the blood, I am still in Egypt; but if I have passed through the Red Sea, I know God as a Deliverer; I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8). The prodigal son had experiences before he returned home, but they were the experiences of one who had not yet met the father. There was a work in the man. He found he was perishing. He had repented and set out; but there still remained the question, What will he say to me when I meet him? Will he set me on his right hand or left? He had his speech already made up and had fixed the place he was to take in the house, that of a servant, but he had not yet met his father. He learns what his place was in the house by what the father was to him when he met him, and he says nothing about the place of a servant.

He is brought in as a son. He did not, could not, say, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” for his father was on his neck. It was not what he was for God, but what God was for him. He puts the best robe on him, not a robe. He met him in his sins, but does not bring him in in his sins. God met him in rags, but in Christ he is brought in.

If I have got through the Red Sea, God is a deliverer and not a judge in virtue of the full blessed work of Christ. I am not in the flesh. It is not merely that your sins are forgiven, but you are in the Second man, in Christ, before God. The first practical effect is, I am brought into the wilderness. A person has a great deal to learn after he is redeemed. I am out of the flesh and have my place in and with Christ; but the learning of the flesh in me is a humbling process. “And thou shalt remember all the way Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years to humble thee, to prove thee,” etc. “Thy raiment waxed not old, neither did thy foot swell these forty years,” Deut. 8. God was thinking about their very clothes and their feet, but He gave them all the discipline and correction needed to shew them themselves. And when through their unbelief they refuse to enter the land of Canaan, being unwilling to go up and fight the Amorites, He in His grace turns round in unfailing love and patience and dwells with them all the forty years of their wilderness journeyings.

What characterizes the Christian is the presence of the Holy Ghost, God dwelling in him in virtue of redemption. He does not dwell in innocence; He never dwelt in Eden. The dwelling of God with man was always consequent on redemption, whether in the cloud with Israel or in the church by the Holy Ghost. He had walked with Adam in

the garden, dined with Abraham, so to speak, but He never dwelt with them. But directly He gets a people redeemed, He dwells with them and talks of holiness. He adapts Himself to their circumstances. When they were in bondage in Egypt, He comes to them as deliverer; when they are in the wilderness dwelling in tents, He pitches His tent amongst them and leads them through. When they arrive at Canaan, He meets them sword in hand as their captain to lead them in conflict; and when at length they are all settled down, He builds a beautiful house and dwells in their midst. So with His people now. He dwells with us by the Holy Ghost: first in them as individuals ("Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost"); secondly, in the church collectively ("In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit "). It is not merely they are born of God, but they have the blood on them, and there the Holy Ghost dwells. "After ye have believed," etc. He spake of "the Spirit which they that believed on him should receive." "He that stablisheth us is God." He quickens unbelievers and dwells in believers. The presence of the Holy Ghost is what forms the distinctive character of the Christian and of the church. The leper was washed, sprinkled, and anointed —the blood placed upon his ear, his hand, and his foot; and then the oil upon the blood. It was most holy: nothing must pass into the ear, or be done by the hand that would defile, neither must they do anything that would defile the feet in walk. The anointing—that is, the presence of the Holy Spirit in us—is the seal of the value of the blood. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost," Rom. 5. The Holy Spirit is the earnest, not of the love of God (for we have this), but of the inheritance for which we wait.

In the wilderness God is humbling, proving us, and making all work together for good. Circumcision is not practicable in the wilderness. Israel come to Jordan and cross it. Here we have a figure, not of Christ dying for me, but of my dying and rising with Him. It is not simply that Christ died for us, but I am crucified with Christ. I reckon myself dead and have received Christ as my life; I am dead, risen, and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; I am gone out of the wilderness altogether. We were dead down there in sins, and Christ came down and died for sins; and now we are quickened, raised up, and seated in Christ. This is the new place altogether; and it is the doctrine taught in Ephesians. I am no longer looked at as alive in the flesh at all; I have got into heavenly places; and the moment I have got there, all is mine— "All spiritual blessings in the heavenly places"; but then it is only as I set my foot on my blessing, that I make it practically my own. And then I find that there is another foot there: the enemy is in possession; so that I have need of the whole armour of God. The place we have to pass through is the world as a wilderness; but, as to my position, I am in the heavenly places, and I must walk accordingly. If I am living in the world as a man in the flesh, I meet my neighbours and I may find them kind and obliging; but directly I begin to talk of heavenly things, I find them opposed.

I have got then to shew forth Christ in living relationships. If it is true that I am in Christ, it is true also that Christ is in me. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The standard is not a man running on towards heaven, but it is shewing out the Christ that is in me. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the

life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" — this and nothing else. "Death worketh in us, life in you." I hold that Paul is dead. It was Christ acting through Paul. If we fail, that is wilderness work. If Christ is in me, I must never let a bit of anything but Christ be seen. Now you have Christ in you, this is positive power and nothing else. Now look to it that this be seen and nothing else. Joshua says, "Set your foot on." It is yours. I have got into Canaan and conflict comes directly. I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ. It is all mine, and now I am seeking to get hold of the things that I have a right to. "As captain of Jehovah's host am I now come." We get testing in the wilderness, conflict in Canaan. When I am in Canaan, I have spiritual intelligence and activity in that which belongs to me. "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ"—how much have we each realized of the spiritual blessings which are ours?

In the stones taken out of Jordan we find that the believer takes with him the character of death. The ark went down. We died to sin. The world and Satan's power is all gone. We belonged to death once: now death belongs to us. Now I am bound to say, "Reckon yourself dead." We are never told to die to sin, but that we "are dead." The first thing is, we have passed through Jordan dry, and that is our title to reckon ourselves dead. Circumcision is the practical application of this. "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth," etc. (Col. 3). If I see a man impatient, I do not deny he is dead, but I say you want a little of Gilgal. If I see a man looking at nonsense in the town, I say, I do not deny you are dead, but you want to be circumcised. This is the practical application of the death of Christ to our souls, actually realizing it. Most strikingly in Joshua we get Ai

taken, then conquest after conquest; but we find Gilgal, the place of circumcision, to be always the place to which the camp returned after their victories. No matter what success you have, you must go back to Gilgal. The Book of Joshua is the history of successful energy; the Book of Judges, of failure, with God coming in and removing it from time to time.

Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, is the place of practical divine power. We find even victories dangerous unless we return to the judgment of the flesh. After preaching the gospel (the most blessed work that can be), we must go back to Gilgal. Israel began well at Jericho: what were the high walls to faith? The higher the walls, the worse the ruin when they come down. But instead of returning to Gilgal, they get self-confident and send up a few to take Ai. But there we get failure. They have to return to Gilgal and judge the flesh. In Judges the angel of Jehovah goes up from Gilgal to meet them at Bochim, that is, from the place of power to the place of tears. They had left the place of power for the place of sorrow. They sacrifice there, but it is in tears.

After the passage of the Jordan, the first thing we saw was the setting up of the twelve stones; secondly, circumcision; and then, thirdly, we get the passover. They can now look back at the foundation of everything in redemption. They keep it now, not as guilty and protected by it—this they had been in Egypt—but as celebrating the truth that the death of the blessed Son of God is the foundation of all blessing. The Lord’s Supper is nothing less than celebrating that which is the foundation of God’s giving us everything. The more we look at it, we find the cross holding a place that nothing else has, except Him who died on it. “As is the heavenly,”

etc. “As he is, so are we,” etc. The cross is even a deeper thing than the glory. The glory has been obtained by it, but the cross is where the moral nature of God, His holiness, and His love, have been glorified. Here we see the circumcised believer in Canaan feeding upon the lamb, the remembrance of the death of Christ. The fourth thing seen is that they feed on the “old corn of the land,” and the manna ceases. The old corn is a type of the heavenly Christ. The manna suited the wilderness —Christ come down from heaven. In the midst of all the circumstances down here He meets us on the journey, and we feed upon Him. It is the same Christ—only in another character—that we see in the old corn of the land. We have a humbled and a glorified Christ for the food of our souls: not only His life down here, but what we find in 2 Corinthians 3, “We all with open (unveiled) face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.” It is the fruit of the land—a humbled Christ who is now in the Canaan to which we belong. They had not yet taken a city, but they sit down at the table which God has spread for them in the presence of their enemies. All is mine before a single victory. I sit down in the presence of my enemies. He has spread a table for me. God’s delight is my delight. Before I draw my sword in conflict, I sit down and know that everything is mine.

Lastly, we have the man with the drawn sword come to take His place as Captain of Jehovah’s host. In heavenly things it is all conflict. Mark the word here. It is a question of “Art thou for us or for our adversaries? “There is no middle place; but a complete split. If you are for the world, you are against Christ. The moment it becomes a question of Christ, it must be either for or

against. The world has crucified Christ, and He has said, “He that is not for me is against me”; and “He that is not against us is on our part.” I know that the meaning of these two statements has been questioned, and thought difficult to reconcile, but it is very simple. If we are for Christ, we must be against the world; and if we are not against Him, the opposition of the world to Him is so strong that it will not have us. “Light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light,” and there can be no uniting of the two. You never see the world accept faithfulness to Christ. The human heart is enmity to Christ. Satan’s great object is to get Christians to suit their Christianity to the world. You will never get the world to take God as its portion. “As captain of Jehovah’s host am I now come.” Of course, it was the Lord Himself. We have the same words here as at the burning bush to Moses, “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.” In the spiritual conflict we have to carry on, holiness is as much a question as redemption; and when we come to have conflict, we must be as holy as we shall be when we are with Him. Thank God, redemption has done this. You will have the Lord with you. The One who carries on the warfare is the Holy One who has redeemed us, and the Lord’s own strength is with us. How far have we the testimony? Can we say, “I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God? “

Is your thought and purpose to be at Gilgal or at Bochim? Is it your thought to go on in the knowledge of perfect redemption? to have everything of the flesh judged? and to have the Lord’s strength withyou for successful conflict?

“Prove all things.” By what standard? My own comprehension, or God’s revealed word? “Hold fast that which is good.”

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The call of the Christian is a marvellous thing. I do not speak only of glory; but in saying so I think also of being called to be like Him, to partake of His nature; and I become spiritually like Him. Therefore the apostle says (Eph. 5:25) that Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, to the end of presenting it to Himself glorious. The word does not render the church glorious, it sanctifies the church, but communion with Christ in glory is what glorifies. It is in virtue of the power of what He is that we share His glory.

In Ephesians 4, 5, we see that we are conformed to what we know. Here is the reasoning of the apostle: you have known what God is in pardon, in love, and in glory; if you have laid hold of that, it is well, but you ought to reproduce it in your conduct. What is spiritually received in the heart does reproduce itself. Therefore it is said, Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. God loved you when you were only His enemies. I do not now speak of our perfection in Christ, for it is already accomplished; but it is a question of our realizing on earth that which we know. John says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life.” As much as I enjoy, so much I reproduce. When I realize what Christ is, it is the joy of my soul. Without doubt

that will judge the flesh; for when Christ enters, all that is contrary to Him is manifested. We are going to see a little how Christ nourishes, and how one is sustained by Him in ordinary life, so that the power of Christ could not be enfeebled even in the midst of all the worryings which tend to distract us. If we cannot pass through them, occupying ourselves with the Lord, then, when we would come back to Him, the heart is cold. His love is weakened in us if we have not that which we used for going through all circumstances with Him.

We may distinguish three characters in the Christian. Firstly, he is a sinner redeemed. We see in him an object of grace in redemption. There are in him two opposites brought close, God and the sinner. Never has been, never will be, seen such a manifestation with an angel. Secondly, he has part with Christ in glory. Later on we shall see the other character; he has Christ as the manna for the passage through the wilderness. It is therefore of a passing nature, as the two other characters are everlasting.

When God visited His people in Egypt, He did not speak to them of the desert they had to cross, but of Canaan. So, in drawing us out of the world for communion with Jesus, God speaks to us of heaven; He has glory in view for us. But we are apt to stop and consider our circumstances in the wilderness, but when the Spirit acts, one sees only the end.

Paul did not live in the things that are seen, because they pass away, and are null in this sense; but he abode in the things eternal. Consequently the first requisite for enabling us thus to regard the world as null is to know that we are not of it. God found us in sin, entirely

estranged from Him; and the question is how to place us in heaven. As He took Christ from the tomb, and set Him at His right hand in heaven, by the same power He has taken us out of our sins to place us in heaven, all the rest being blotted out.

In the chapter before us we find two things: the passover and the old corn of the land. All other things are left aside. It is a question of being in heaven for leaving the manna. This is a great deal to say; it supposes not only shelter from the judgment of God, but a place in heaven. Even when Israel were no longer in Egypt, they did not want the old corn of the land whilst they were in the wilderness. Pharaoh was no longer there. Israel was delivered from the bondage of Egypt, nevertheless they did not eat the old corn of the land. It is just the same for the Christian who has not learnt the salvation he has in Christ. He is no longer under condemnation, but he cannot glorify God. He is sheltered from judgment, but he does not know the efficacy of Christ's work for glory.

All effort therefore must be entirely done with, and, like Israel outside Egypt and the power of Satan, we must know God as a Saviour without fear any more. A Christian is one who can say, All is done by Christ for my salvation; He has plucked me for ever from the power of Satan: as Israel could have said, We shall know Pharaoh no more; he is at the bottom of the sea.

Satan was conquered when Jesus drank of the cup which His Father gave Him to drink. The deliverance is complete for us, for God has shewn our Saviour, and as the apostle Paul says, If God is for us, who can be against us? It matters little then that Satan and the

wilderness are still there. I leave all aside, because I know God is for me. But there is another which I ought to know. The Jordan remains, which is a different thing. Christ is dead and risen for me: such is what the Red Sea tells me; but the Jordan declares that I am dead and risen with Christ. It is the knowledge and the enjoyment of my union with Him. When we have this, we begin to eat the old corn of the land. We are seated in heavenly places in Christ. Being thus introduced into Canaan, we begin to have warfare with the enemies who are there, but we eat the corn of the land. And there is Gilgal, and circumcision, which means that, when we have the consciousness of being thus in the heavenlies in Christ, we judge all according to the standard of heaven. If I am there, I say of such or such a thing I see in the world, This is not of heaven, and I leave it; there I must abide, and must judge the flesh in the presence of God.

Returning to the manner of being nourished with Christ, we see that, when the old corn of the land was eaten, the manna ceased; that is, we enjoy redemption in quite a new way. The principle of the difference lies here. At the beginning I thought of my sins and of Christ; this is the door by which we must enter. We must be humbled, and enter by Christ. But afterwards, knowing that God loves us as He loves Christ, and that His favour rests on us, and knowing all the bearing of redemption accomplished by Jesus, I begin to estimate the love of Jesus as God estimates it, to have the same thoughts as He in this respect. Then I see Christ in quite another way than before; I am nourished with Him in a way entirely new. It is no longer a mere question of being sheltered only, but I am united to Christ Himself. I contemplate all the perfection of the Lamb who is there;

and when I think of the abasement He submitted to on the cross, how He abased Himself to make good the character of God, in order that God might be just without giving up love, and that He might act according to love without giving up righteousness, then I adore Christ. The Son of man has been glorified, because God has been glorified in Him. He has been content to be compromised in order that God might be glorified. He has renounced all, yet had an absolute confidence in His Father. “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” He goes to the end, and drinks the cup, that the Father might be glorified and we saved. Now I nourish myself with all this; not only am I sheltered, but I adore. What occupies him who is in his sins is to be sheltered; but he who feeds on Christ, while adoring Him, rejoices while contemplating Him, that he is seated in Christ in heavenly places.

The more spiritual we are, the more we know what the glory is that Christ would share with us. That which He was through all eternity, and all He has won by His obedience is given us, and we shall be like Him.

Is not Christ seen in heaven an object of affection to me? Am I glad to see Him there? He wishes that our affections should find nourishment in seeing Him in glory. “If ye loved me,” said He to the disciples, “ye would rejoice because I go to my Father.” And when I think that Jesus has been banished and rejected by the world, I am happy to see Him in heaven. He is the old corn of the land, for He is of the heavenly country. He is also the food that suits us. The Christian is heavenly, and ought to occupy and nourish Himself on Him who is there as the Lamb.

When I say that we ought to abide in Canaan, it is in Canaan where the warfare is that I speak of. There are continual conflicts in the heavenly places represented by Canaan, but it is clear that in heaven by-and-by there will be perfect repose. As a sinner, the believer was of Egypt; as a Christian he is of Canaan; but he is crossing the wilderness, and sometimes his spirit is still in Egypt, because he gets weary of the wilderness, and the heart then turns back. The world should be for him, as for Jesus, only a dry land, where no water is (Ps. 63). Here below we have nothing but a desert, where are fiery serpents; but it must be crossed and passed through with God. If our affections are capable of being nourished with Christ, we shall be able to endure everything. I say to myself, Why is it that I am not there? I know however, that Christ is my Saviour. Oh! it is when one does not feed on Christ as the old corn of the land that one does not abide in communion with Him. The manna is for the wilderness, but the old corn of the land is for Canaan.

The other character which I have named is Christ as manna for the people in marching through the desert. Jesus speaks of it when He says to the Jews, “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven,” which the manna set forth.

If the Christian neglects to feed on Christ in this sense, he has no strength to put on Christ here below in his walk. If he walks ill, if there are falls, he cannot at Gilgal (for we must come there after all) feed on Christ as the old corn of the land, that is, feast in communion with Him, the heavenly rest. In this case one must be humbled, and settle accounts with Christ, which is an immense difference in the moral state of the soul. If

Christ went up the mountain, then came the transfiguration; it was for Him the old corn of the land; He fed, as it were, on the glory; but if He went down, He found at the foot the power of Satan. In all the circumstances of the desert, however, Jesus lived on account of the Father. We too should live on account of Jesus. It is where we meet with the enemy's power that Jesus is our food as manna. Jesus could always say, "As the living Father sent me, and I live on account of the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live on account of me." As Christ Himself crossed the wilderness, and walked there by faith, we are called to do the same. In all circumstances He prayed; if difficulties increased, He prayed more earnestly. He was there as man, and passed through everything with the Father's help.

The Christian feeds on a Christ who has been tried and humbled, and ought to be himself as Christ, crossing the world with all the grace necessary, in order that one should own his Master in Him. If he walks with Christ, every sort of goodness, mildness, of long-suffering, will be seen in him. For Jesus, the effect of temptation was to bring out grace. If I am with Him, and people insult me, I endure; I shall not cease to be meek, because I feed on Him who is such. It is not that my christian character obliges me to be in these things, but I have all needful for going through them, and I forget them because I am not of this world, but of elsewhere. If I walk with Christ in me, if I eat manna in the desert, I feed also on the old corn of the land in Canaan. Every day one may do both. The manna is wanted, and daily diligence (for the manna spoilt). They had need of manna to go to Canaan.

But to glorify God, and reproduce the character of Jesus, in all positions of husband, wife, master, servant, one must feed on Christ, the old corn of the land. Another circumstance may be pointed out. Israel wanted the old corn of the land in the plain of Jericho before the victory was won; then Christ presents Himself as captain of Jehovah's host {v. 13). "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" said Joshua. It must be for or against when it is a question of Christ. I may, as man, have relations with others in certain things, but every man I meet is "for" or "against," when the question is of following Christ in heaven. If it is some one more spiritual than I that I meet, he is for me; if it is some one less spiritual, he is against me, for I might be drawn into evil by him.

If we would enjoy the heavenly joy, we must feed on Jesus as the manna come down from heaven, which is all we want for all the circumstances where we are found. Then we shall enjoy Him and the glory as our everlasting portion.

Sketch Of Joshua

The Red Sea closes Egypt; but by faith I am already in Canaan, not in Egypt at all, having been brought out. I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in me. I have died out of flesh. The world is not Egypt to me now, but a place of exercise as the wilderness. Moses pleads for God's "going with Israel the reason given for His destroying them. How could we get on through the world if God did not go with us?

It had been all grace up to Sinai; after it came the law. The world was Egypt, but is now a wilderness; but the Book of Joshua shews the other, side of Canaan, the type of heavenly places. Numbers opens out the journey through the wilderness.

The world through which I am passing is the desert to me, with Christ as my manna, and the rock whence water flows; and I am passing through as a pilgrim and a stranger. Our enemies, Satan and all, have been destroyed for faith. The Christian is always in that sense a riddle. He has Christ as his life, but not wholly yet as Saviour (Phil. 3:20); he has, and he has not, salvation; he is waiting for redemption, not as regards the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7), but as to the body (Rom. 8:23). So in his service all is enigmatic to unbelief; "by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things," 2 Cor. 6.

By faith, and in the Spirit, I have this place in Christ who is in heaven; for, in point of fact, we are poor feeble creatures, who have this treasure in earthen vessels. The fulness of Christ as a man dwells in me, and Christ is my life. It is not mere theory or mysticism, but we who believe are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and this is intended to promote self-judgment, neither darkness on the one hand, nor self-satisfaction on the other, but a constant judging of ourselves by Christ our Lord.

Chapter 1.

Verse 3. We have the principle: Jehovah was giving the land to the children of Israel. Now there is in it another element—it has to be realized. It is all yours, but you must realize it. It is for us enjoying the heavenly land in the Holy Ghost.

Verse 5. Another great element is God's presence with us. We must have the courage of faith, and count on Him.

Verse 7. But the courage of faith must be the courage to obey God's word, "that thou must prosper whithersoever thou goest."

Verse 8. Hence the word must form the path. There is the diligence requisite that takes the word, and meditates on it, to know the mind and will of God.

Verse 9. There is submission to His authority. "Have not I commanded thee?" It is a great secret of blessing, before one sets about anything, to know that God commands one. Difficulties! If I have the certainty of His will, why mind them? If He puts them in the way, one takes the step, spite of all, looking to Him. The hill and

the mud may be in the road where I am to walk: if I did not know I was in the right road, they might make me think that I had gone wrong. All the principles of the christian combat follow. Obedience is the great thing here, and along with it one should be strong and of good courage.

Chapter 2.

Verses 9-11. Faith learns that, after all, the terror of God has fallen on the enemies. It should not be so with us: “In nothing terrified by your adversaries; which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.” If one finds the mighty power of Satan coming against us, why be in the least frightened? Is not the Lord stronger than he? If God is with me, who against?

Rahab is a believer in the midst of all this people; she shews us the character of faith. So James points to her faith no less than Abraham’s. She was identifying herself with the people of God because she was sure that He was with them, as Abraham had given up everything to God. James takes both as proofs and samples of faith: the one counting on God j the other seeing what His people are to Him. For His sake one was willing to kill his son, the other to betray her country. They were the two strongest possible instances of practical faith—bad works, if they had not been of faith, which made them most excellent. So the motive that governed Moses was his identifying Jehovah’s glory with His people; not that He is glorious merely. “The Egyptians will hear of it.” The same principle that makes him execute judgment in killing the idolaters below, makes him plead their cause with Jehovah above.

Chapter 3.

Verse 4. The crossing of the Jordan is the grand point here. The ark was to be there, and “there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: Come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore.” It was going down into death there where Jordan had flowed. This was what the Lord says to Peter: “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.” Jesus must first go into this scene of death: afterwards we can follow Him into heavenly places. There is no water at all, once the ark is there: the river fails, and the ark remains, till they are all gone over to the other side. So has Christ utterly broken the power of death, in resurrection of course finally destroyed it. The moment Christ had gone through all, there is free entrance for the believer into heaven, first in spirit, by-and-by actually. It is not now deliverance from Egypt, but coming into Canaan; in passing over Jordan, as before through the Red Sea. Death for the believer is now that he has done with life, sins, suffering, trial, temptation, the world; for he goes to be with Christ, though he waits for a glorified body, till He comes to raise them that sleep. I did belong to death; now death belongs to me. “All things are yours … life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Otherwise how could one talk, for example, of judgment being mine, or righteousness, etc.? Now I can; for judgment cannot reach me, because Christ has borne my sins.

Verses 15-17. Here it is not the wilderness, but the second part of christian life, heavenly places, into which

we get by association with Christ. It is not merely His dying for us, but our dying with Him. It is all done: the Jordan, as we see, is quite dry. Scripture does not say that we have to die. We have to go over Jordan, not as a river, but as a dry path, into Canaan. We are quickened together with Christ, being forgiven all trespasses; we are raised together and seated in Him in heavenly places. The dry bed of the river shews how completely the power of death is gone.

In verse 13 the title of Jehovah is “Lord of all the earth,” His character in connection with Israel.

Chapter 4.

A memorial of twelve stones is set up in Jordan, and as many are taken out of it and set up on dry ground in Canaan. It is the witness that through death I get into heaven, and I look back constantly at Christ’s death. The ark went down into Jordan and stayed till the people crossed over. I am out of death; and yet my privilege is to look back at Christ’s death in everything. This makes all the gain to us. He has turned all to the greatest blessing. I get the old man judged, and gone to faith. Is not this much for the soul? What was the judgment of God is the very ground of all blessing—first, as to Christ Himself, and then as to my being in it with Christ. As to my place, I have done with the old creation. The fact that blessing is by death, the death of the Son of God, tells a great deal that nothing else can. Till I take death as the end of everything here, of all that Adam was, what part have I with God? In the present day they are trying to reform and improve Adam by schools, societies, etc. The Christian, alas! joins with the infidel in mending up the old thing. It is casting contempt on the death of

Christ; a totally different thing from my doing good as a Christian, because this is the spirit of Christ. In Israel God wrought the experiment before all eyes of doing everything possible to reclaim man, if it could be; but it could not be, as He of course knew from the beginning. Man is irremediable, but God can save one, or any, out of that state. Yet all was tried first. “I have one Son.” The cross was the final moral judgment of man.

The stones were set in the midst of Jordan, because still we go back, and see the people of God in Christ’s death. Jordan overflowed all its banks then; the power of death and Satan was never seen as in the cross of Christ.

Chapter 5.

Verses 1-9. Gilgal, as the scene of Israel’s circumcision, is the next step; it means rolling. There they submitted to that sign of the covenant, and rolled away the reproach of Egypt. They had never been circumcised in the wilderness. One may be delivered from Egypt; but there is no such thing as being crucified to the world in merely belonging to the wilderness, though we have to go through it, and overcome it. But in getting into heavenly places, one has done with it and is circumcised.

Verses 10-12. Israel had not got a bit of the land yet, though they had crossed the Jordan and encamped in Gilgal. But they now keep the Passover, and eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after, and the manna ceased. A risen Christ is needed to feed the soul (2 Cor. 5).

Verses 13-15. And now another point: the Captain of Jehovah’s host appears with drawn sword. See to what

they are brought by crossing the Jordan. First they are circumcised, they apply it to their condition; they are no longer in the flesh as to their own estimate or experience. Having died with Christ, I am not in the flesh, having put off the old man, and put on the new. In going now through the world I have to manifest the life of Christ. If Satan comes to tempt me, I am entitled to say that I am dead. When I get into Canaan, everything is for me or against me. Supposing I have even an amiable nature, it is a snare; in walking through this world, as, for instance, in the young rich ruler. But before God all are pronounced out of the way altogether. Affection is lovely as a creature thing; but one sees the same in a dog, save that man boasts of it, and the dog does not! There is nothing moral in that. Which is best—an amiable man pleased with himself, or a cross man crying to God to give him grace? Amiability will not do at all—you must have Christ, and you will be cross because you are denying that which you were priding yourself upon. When we get into heavenly things, the question is, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”

The circumcision here is the application (so to speak) of Jordan; for until you get into heavenly places you never can judge yourself—you judge sins. If I began so, I should be hopeless, because I could not get rid of it till I am dead with Christ. This is Jordan. The flesh is never anything but thoroughly bad. I must have death with Christ before I can have circumcision, or mortifying it. Pleasures? ‘lam dead ‘ puts an end to all question of these things. The moment one gets the truth of being heavenly, one sees the inconsistency of all that. We are never in scripture called to die to sin; Christ died, and in that He died, He died unto sin once. Of course He had

no sin; but for this reason God could make Him to be sin for us in grace, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. As for me, I have sin, and therefore cannot die to it; but He did; and I, being dead with Him as a believer, am called to reckon myself dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Him. So much for death first.

That getting into heavenly places in Christ is exactly what brings me into conflict with Satan. In the wilderness one is apt to be impatient, and exercises and dealings come from God; but, passed into Canaan in spirit, I am competent and called to fight the enemy. Circumcision means that I disown and mortify the flesh, I will have nothing to do with it and put it off. It is the practical realization of what I have in title in Christ (Col. 2: n), being a figure of having put off the old man, not that one has to put him off. Having Christ as my life, Christ dead and risen, I can say that this is not I, but sin in the flesh; but then I am bound, if it be so, that sin never acts; I am inexcusable if I allow it to appear. As it is, then, I need the circumcision or mortification of it. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are on the earth." This supposes power in Christ; for it means, not that I am to die, but to put to death. I am to act in power, to kill or put to death what is working in myself; I am to spare nothing in me that is contrary to God, but use power to put these things down. Not being called to die to sin makes it very plain. See the realization of it in the apostle (in 2 Cor. 4)— "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," the daily making it good. I get my place in holy liberty when I can say that I died with Christ, and am crucified with Him; but being also risen with Him, and having in Him the power of life

in resurrection, I can take the place of being circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, as the condition of soul inwardly henceforth; and now I must be always carrying out the true meaning of the cross. If the flesh attempts to crop up, I can say, I do not own you, being dead and risen with Christ.

Then I eat the passover and recall the remembrance of this blessed work which did bring me out of Egypt. Christ is thenceforward eaten as the corn of the land; a heavenly Christian, I live on the fruits of Canaan, the heavenly things that God has revealed to us. The manna means Christ come down to us in this world. In heaven it will be precious to eat the hidden manna; but it is not the food for us as entering Canaan. Manna is not His heavenly side, but Christ for us down here, as we pass through the wilderness; as the old corn is Christ risen and in heavenly places.

So the Holy Ghost has an analogous place. He is the earnest of the inheritance (Rom. 8), shewing us all the joys of the future, and of heaven; but He helps our infirmity also and groans in us, conscious of all the trials and difficulties of the way. Both are true of course of the Christian.

It is beautiful to see the way Jehovah suits Himself to His people. When they were in Egypt, they wanted a Redeemer; and the word is, “Stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah.” When in the wilderness, they were staying awhile, or journeying; and Jehovah comes and lives in a tent in their midst, or goes at their head. In Canaan He appears as Captain of Jehovah’s host with a drawn sword, because it was a question of their fighting. When they were settled in peace in the land, and He has

built the king a house, He has a great palace built for Him, a temple of Jehovah.

We are not like Israel fighting against flesh and blood, but against the world-rulers of this darkness, spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. Our translators in Ephesians 6 say, “high places”; they were afraid to represent evil spirits in heavenly places: as they changed thrones into “seats” in Revelation for the twenty-four elders or glorified saints. They judged scripture presumptuously, instead of learning from it in simplicity.

We have the whole position now: the principles on which we are to walk in chapter 1; the Jordan, or death and resurrection with Christ for heaven, in chapters 3, 4; the application of it in chapter 5.

Chapter 6.

Then in chapter 6 follows the warfare or conflict. The first thing shewn for conflict is the absolutely divine power that is needed and given. They are commanded to march round Jericho, ark and all; and the walls at last at the given moment— the very thing that alarmed them before—are made to tumble down without a blow; but this is only on the seventh turn on the seventh day of their compassing the city. Then it is accursed, and must be all destroyed. Self must not be mixed up with it; it is Jehovah’s power, and Israel must have nb connection with it, save in submissive obedience to His word, and no spoil for their own use could be taken out of it. Israel must appropriate nothing. Jehovah would have them in no way mixed up with the great city of the world devoted to destruction. Those on the contrary must be

destroyed who touch its treasures. They are Satan's goods.

Chapter 7.

But the goods were touched, and Israel got all beaten directly after at Ai. It is simple but instructive. God acts on the sin that was there, though hidden. Israel had not consulted God but went forward on human principles. Discipline follows.

Verse 3. "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai, and make not all the people labour thither; for they are but few." Such was the counsel of the scouts to Joshua. It was only a little city. Soon they learnt that it is not by might or wisdom, and that God refuses to fight for Israel with sin unjudged. And Joshua mourns and cries to Jehovah.

Verses 11-15. "Israel hath sinned," is the answer, "and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith Jehovah God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which Jehovah taketh shall come according to the

families thereof; and the family which Jehovah shall take shall come by households; and the household which Jehovah shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of Jehovah, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel." Achan is taken and confesses; the evil is put away.

Chapter 8.

But Joshua has to make all the people go up, and a vast deal of trouble is taken before the city is captured. Jehovah will have sin to be felt in its terrible consequences to the entire people, though from one man only.

The people did not see Joshua's spear as is ordinarily supposed. It was a sign of Jehovah's to Joshua here, as Moses' uplifted hands were in Exodus 17.

Verse 26. For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. The people now do get the cattle and the spoil, though Ai is burnt, and made a heap for ever, and its king hanged.

Chapter 9.

Then we see peace made with Gibeon without consulting Jehovah; and the rulers as faulty now, as the people before. They make alliance with the power of the world, they did not ask Jehovah; else they had been kept from such a false position. They received them, as the church has done to the world. The Gibeonites proposed to join them in doing good and putting down the bad. Was it not a great comfort, in the face of so many enemies, to find

some friends to help them? The consequence was that, for their oath's sake, Israel was obliged to leave Gibeon standing; and misery was entailed on Israel centuries afterwards. A famine befell them in David's time because Saul slew the Gibeonites.

Chapter 10.

Yet God interposed for Israel more conspicuously than ever immediately afterwards where Gibeon's alliance drew on it a combined attack of five kings of the Amorites. "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of a man: for Jehovah fought for Israel," v. 14. And many other kings did Joshua smite utterly as the Jehovah God of Israel commanded, returning regularly to Gilgal to encamp, the place of circumcision, that no flesh should glory but he that glorieth should glory only in Jehovah.

Chapter 11.

There is another element in the history of Joshua. Hazor, the capital of all those kingdoms, cannot when taken be God's capital. He will not have the chief seat of this world's power for the metropolis of His kingdom. It is the only city of the many that conspired at this epoch which was burnt (v. 13). How different the spirit of Popery! It was glad to get the world's capital for its own. But it is the city of confusion; Rome is Babylon thus viewed. The church of God is heavenly, and we Christians must have heavenly things. How people delude themselves!

Chapter 12.

Jehovah would have His people know their conquests. Hence the detail.

Chapter 13.

When Israel did not carry out the commands of Jehovah as to the Canaanites, these were left as thorns in their sides.

Chapter 14.

Fidelity as the fruit of faith with its abiding strength is precious in Jehovah's eyes, as we see by Caleb.

Chapter 15.

But Judah was not Christ, and the stoutest of Judah's children failed to drive out the Jebusites who dwelt there, till a brighter day—the day of the Beloved.

Chapters 16, 17.

Joseph's children, though not destined to royalty like Judah, get their birthright as far as it could be then.

Chapters 18, 19.

The tabernacle of God is set up at Shiloh, though seven tribes had not yet received their inheritance; and Joshua seeks to rouse them to make good the promised land, casting lots for Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.

Chapter 20.

Provision is made in the cities of refuge that Jehovah's land should not be denied by blood, whether by Israelite or by the stranger sojourning in their midst.

Chapter 21.

The Levites have their cities defined, though they have no inheritance in the land like their brethren, Jehovah being their inheritance.

Chapter 22.

The altar of the Reubenites on the other side of Jordan gave occasion to the rest for suspicion of the two tribes and a half there; but for the time they held to the name of Jehovah.

Chapter 23.

Joshua in his old age warns Israel that the word is as sure in its warnings for the rebellious as in its promises to the obedient.

Chapter 24.

The people have their history rehearsed from the idolatry of their fathers on the other side of the river in old time, till Jehovah put them in Canaan, and pledge themselves to serve Him; and Joshua departs with the evident consciousness of the precarious tenure that turned on Israel’s obedience, however fair appearance might be for a little season.

Gideon—God’s Mighty Man Of Valour

The history of Gideon is of much practical importance. It is the history of one of those revivals in Judges, so peculiarly applicable to the present circumstances and need of the church.

Every now and again (as we learn in the previous chapters of this book, which will be seen at once to be occupied throughout with the failure of Israel, when placed in the land into which Joshua had brought them in blessing) Israel had been sold into the hands of their enemies. Groaning under the consequences of their sin, they had cried unto Jehovah; and Jehovah ever faithful, had raised up some one, as a deliverer out of the hands of those that spoiled them. He was grieved with the afflictions of His people. He judged their sin and evil, yet at the same time pitied and saved. But then the persons by whom He wrought were always in themselves insignificant. We do not find revivals beginning from the head. Very generally, when there has been anything of a recovery from the doctrines and traditions of men, it has taken place through the instrumentality of some obscure individual raised up in the energy of the Spirit.

Such a “saviour” was Gideon.

“The children of Israel (we read) did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years,” chap. 6:1.

The Midianites knew not that it was Jehovah who had delivered Israel into their hands, yet in reality, they were but the rod with which it pleased Him to punish His people. As with the Assyrian (Isa. 10): “O Assyrian, the

rod of mine anger, and the staff in thine hand is mine indignation," etc. When He has done with His rod, He can break it or burn it. "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood." Satan himself is very often the rod used by God for the discipline of His children.

"And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel." Nothing could have prevailed against them, had they been faithful to Jehovah. "And because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong-holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came up as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their cattle were without number; and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites," v. 2-6.

They were in a sad condition. "And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah."

This is always the first symptom of anything like a revival. When the people of God, instead of saying that they are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, feel how really poor and miserable, and blind and naked they are, and that they can only receive that

which God is pleased to give, He is about to interfere and raise them up.

The sin of the church has brought it into desolation. Yet little real cry has gone up to the Lord; and wherefore? We are not aware of how far we have departed from our original standing. We have got so much of the world's dignity, and influence, and riches! These things, though they hide us not from God or from Satan, are hiding from ourselves our real poverty. Did we but know our destitution, did we but cry unto the Lord, He, "when he saw that there was none shut up or left," would deliver and raise up. Whether as to Israel, or an individual, or the church, the lesson needed to be learnt is the same, that of its impoverishment and destitution. No matter how poor we are, if sensible of our poverty; for there is all fulness in Christ.

"And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah because of the Midianites, that Jehovah sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah God of Israel, I brought you out of Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them forth before you, and gave you their land: and I said unto you, I am Jehovah your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but ye have not obeyed my voice," v. 7-10.

He first of all shews them their sin, as He did when they could not take Ai. There the secret of their impoverishment is found out. 'You are crying unto me now (He, in effect says), because you feel your impoverishment; but the real cause of your

impoverishment is this—you have sinned against me.' They had none to blame but themselves. So with the churches in the Apocalypse; and therefore, the word to them is "Repent."

God had been faithful to Israel, but Israel had not been faithful to God. This was the point of the prophet's testimony. He ever vindicates His own conduct. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." Were we walking as He would have us, neither the world, nor the flesh, nor the devil, could prevail against us. Whenever we find ourselves under the power of our enemies, we must be sure to charge the fault on ourselves, and not on God. Does Joshua lie on his face because the people have turned their backs before the men of Ai, Jehovah says to him, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou on thy face? Israel hath sinned." Joshua ought to have known that sin in Israel, not any change-ableness in God, was the cause of their being smitten. Jehovah would not be amongst them any more, until they had put away the accursed thing. Could He go out to bless iniquity? Nothing can weaken our hands but sin; "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Whether in the restoration of an individual soul, or of a body of saints, God will have it acknowledged that there is no failure in Him, but that we have suffered because of our own sin and folly.

Having testified of their sin, Jehovah next raises up for them the instrument of their deliverance. "And there came an angel of Jehovah, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite;

and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites," v. 11.

Not anything could have been more abject than the condition of Gideon as described here:—stealthily threshing wheat (for fear of the Midianites), to feed his family! But here is one whom the Spirit of God delights to make mention of; whose name, unrecorded of man, is thought worthy to be recorded by Him (Heb. n:32-34). The Spirit of God writes to magnify the grace of God, not to exalt man. He would have us bear in mind such little incidents as that noticed here, in the history of the soldiers of faith, in order that we may see by what weak and insignificant instruments God works. His mightiest victories have ever been won by such, and not by those who had resources in themselves.

"And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou might man of valour," v. 12.

What a remarkable salutation! Stealthily threshing wheat to hide it from the enemy looked not like valour. To the human eye, there was everything that betrayed depression of spirit. But God's "mighty men "have ever been such as were arrant cowards in themselves, men distrustful of their own strength and wisdom in coping with the enemy— "out of weakness made strong." None are "mighty men of valour," but those to whom it has been said, "Jehovah is with thee." When God calls a person by a name, He makes that person what the name imports. But He takes the most abject man of an abject tribe, to make him His "mighty man of valour." "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are

called," 1 Cor. 1:26-29. God works not ordinarily by such: the credit would then be given to our wisdom, our influence, and the like, and it is written, "No flesh shall glory in his presence." He takes "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and base things of the world and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." Is Timothy exhorted to "fight the good fight of faith?" it is, as one "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." To every Christian it may be said, as Paul writes to those at Corinth, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong"; but again, we are told to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

"And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my Lord, if Jehovah be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites," v. 13.

His heart has been touched, and prepared of the Lord for the work to which he is called. He has a deep sense of the condition of Israel upon his soul, though he is without the power to help them; and he has been comparing that condition with the title and power of Jehovah. This is the way of faith. It is not for us to be comparing ourselves among ourselves, we should compare our condition with the title and will of Jehovah to bless. Is not something of this sort the language of many a saint now?—Can it be possible that the Holy Ghost is in the church, whilst, at the same time, the church is so worldly, so divided? is it at all like what it was in the apostle's days? The answer of the Lord to the

cry of Israel discloses the secret of our condition. We have sinned. We have not obeyed His voice. And, if awakened to the sense of what we have lost, ofttimes, there has not been the acknowledgment of our sin in departing from God, and it has, therefore, only led to fretfulness and impatience or to wrong pretensions. Gideon sees the Lord's hand to be upon His people, and that because of sin. But he identifies himself with the people. He might have said, 'Israel has sinned,' or 'Satan has driven us here'; and then, there would have been no hope. He cannot understand Jehovah's presence, without making His people happy; and he at once loses sight of himself in his interest in, and thoughts about, the people of God as God's people, and says, "If Jehovah be with us, why then is all this befallen us? … now Jehovah hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

"And Jehovah looked upon Gideon, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel out of the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" v. 14.

Jehovah looked upon him. That is the first thing. The man who is really strong and mighty is he who has thus got into the secret of Israel's impoverishment. Jehovah has looked upon him. Jehovah has identified Himself with him, and shewn His heart to be towards him. There is no limit to his might. But does Gideon feel himself to be a strong man? No! never before had he so known his own weakness and insignificance; never had he so felt the poverty of his father's house as now. "And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house," v. 15.

Thus it is always with the soldiers of faith. They have never so felt their own weakness as they feel it when called to be God's mighty men of valour. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." People often say, 'I want to feel that I am strong.' What we need is to feel that we are weak; this brings in Omnipotence. We shall have a life of feeling by-and-by in the glory; now we are called upon to lead a life of faith. What saint but knows from the experience of the deceitfulness of his own heart, that, had we power in ourselves instead of in Christ, we should be something. This is what God does not intend.

"Wherewith shall I save Israel?" His threshing instrument would have been a poor thing indeed to look to, as that" wherewith "to go against the host of Midian. Never, we repeat, had he felt the poverty of his father's house as now. When God is about to use a man, He makes that man feel in himself most consciously nothing. If He delivers by Gideon's hand, He must have the glory, not Gideon; His must be the strength, not Gideon's. It is always as it should be when we drop down into our nothingness. Strong in the Lord, we are weakest in ourselves. Can we not, almost invariably, trace our failures to self-confidence? When a believer thinks that he is going to do a feat, his failure often becomes ridiculous. God must abase that which is proud and lifted up.

"And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee." As with David in another fight of faith, there was no sword in the hand of Gideon, not anything "wherewith" to go against the Midianites. But what matter of that? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He goes not forth unarmed. "Surely I will be with thee [and as a

consequence of that], thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

Here, then, is the mighty man of valour, and here is his armour.

Gideon asks a sign:—

"And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee."

There is feebleness here doubtless; he ought to have had simple confidence, and not have needed a sign; still all he really cares for is having Jehovah with him.

"And He said, I will tarry until thou come again."

"And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of Jehovah departed out of his sight.

"And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of Jehovah, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord Jehovah, for because I have seen an angel of Jehovah face to face."

Another mark of feebleness (we do not see this fear in Abraham, under similar circumstances): but Jehovah will give Gideon confidence to stand before Him.

"And Jehovah said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die," v. 17-23.

Is there not most important instruction for ourselves in all this? Faith has that to present to God which He can accept. Whatever our own failure, still Jesus is the same, the value of His work is unchanged. There has been of late an awakening to a good deal of busy activity in service; but God never says to a soul, 'Peace be unto thee, fear not," because of service. We are in danger of putting service in the place of the burnt-offering. Where this is done, the soul gets weighed down, not being able to find satisfaction in the service, instead of going on in happy liberty of spirit.

Gideon's heart reassured, he builds an altar there unto Jehovah, and calls it Jehovah-shalom (v. 24).

And now he is prepared for service. He has been under God's tutorage. He has learned where his strength is (he no longer says, "wherewith shall I save Israel?") and Jehovah has given him confidence to stand before Him. But where does He set him to work?—with the Midianites? No, not in the least. He has to begin Jehovah's work at home, with that which is nearest to himself.

"And it came to pass the same night, that Jehovah said unto him, Take thy father's youngest bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it; and build an altar unto Jehovah thy God upon the top of the rock in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down," v. 25, 26.

There judgment commences. We must "cease to do evil," before we "learn to do well." The Lord comes to us as

“the God of peace”; still it is, ‘Down with the idols in your father’s house.’ We may have been restless in service; but in the midst of much doing, how little have we done this, or ever practically attempted to set up God’s altar “in the ordered place.” Man’s will has not been invaded. It is of the essence of wilfulness to say, ‘ I have a right to worship God how I like.’ Obedience to God is the saint’s rule and liberty. Not all the powers in the world have a title to interfere with this. And moreover, if God says, ‘Pull down the altar of Baal,’ He will give strength to do it.

How does Gideon act? His conduct is that of simple faith and obedience.

“Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as Jehovah had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father’s household and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night,” v. 27.

He acts unhesitatingly. And what is the consequence? Immediate opposition.

“When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold the altar of Baal was cut down, and the grove was cut down that was by it (the grove might add beauty to the altar of Baal, but Gods altar must be set up in its native simplicity), and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it,” v. 28-30.

The action of faith always excites the flesh. Israel knew not where their strength was, they thought it in Baal. Gideon had learned it to be in God. These are sifting times. In the Lord's day everything was apparently in beautiful order; but because He was setting aside men's traditions, all were against Him. So now. How many suppose the strength of Christians to consist in the things they see around them! The soul taught of God knows it is only in Jehovah Jesus.

"And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar," v. 31, 32.

It was of no use to argue the case, except to shew the people the folly of pleading for Baal. If the things set aside were Baal's, and if Baal was a god, surely he would arise and take their part. It was of no use to debate. And do not let us suppose that all the arguments of all the good men in the world can make that which is evil, good. It is melancholy indeed to see the arguments that are devised by the wit of men in vindication of evil. 16 The bounden duty of the saint is to separate from evil, however sanctioned by antiquity or anything else.

The name "Jerubbaal" was no defence. On the contrary, it brought up the question whether there was power in Satan now that faith was in exercise.

When mixed up with the world, Satan has no occasion to disturb us. Let him be alarmed, and up come Midianites, Amalekites, etc. "Then all the Midianites, and the

Amalekites, and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel," v. 33.

Here is Gideon with his own people against him, and the enemies of Israel gathered together and pitching in Jezreel. But he has peace with God, and Jehovah is (so to speak) bound to appear on his side. How does he act? The Spirit of Jehovah comes upon him, and he blows the trumpet, and Abiezer is gathered after him (v. 34). Had Gideon been serving Baal, he could not have blown the trumpet thus. But Baal is down, and the altar of God is set up in the ordered place. He sends messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also are gathered unto him, and to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and these all are gathered around the man, who is least in his father's house, the poorest of the tribe of Manasseh, but to whom Jehovah has said, "Go in this thy might."

There seems still to have been a measure of distrust in Gideon's mind (v. 36-40). He asks a fresh and double sign that Jehovah will save by his hand, as he had said, proving by the fleece both wet and dry. Jehovah grants his desire; and he is sent forth, with the confirmed assurance of his divine call and mission, to "turn to flight the armies of the aliens."

Again let us remark, faithfulness begins not with the Midianites, it begins at home. This is a great principle (whether as to an individual soul, or as to the church of God). Gideon must attack the evil inside his father's house, and in the midst of Israel, before he is used of Jehovah to save Israel out of the hands of the Midianites.

The moment there is a thorough sense of grace, the word is, "Go in this thy might."

He is set up as captain of a large army; and now he stands forth to confront the enemies of Israel, and of Jehovah.

“Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them by the hill of Morah, in the valley,” chap. 7:1.

This is God’s way of acting. He never honours us when we are thinking that we are anything. Great blessing has often been preceded by our deep humbling, by humbling even sometimes in the eyes of others. We were brought low, and the Lord lifted us up.

But Gideon has a still further lesson to learn (one painfully our own). He has known the acceptance of his offering. The youngest of an idolatrous household, he has built an altar to Jehovah, and begun to destroy idolatry. But he has yet to be taught that there is not a bit more courage or prowess really in the men that had gathered after him than in himself.

“And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to deliver the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me saying, Mine own hand hath saved me,” v. 2.

At once he has to get rid of a great number of them.

This is done first of all by means of an ancient ordinance of Moses. Jehovah tells him, “Now, therefore, go to proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and faint-hearted, let him return, and depart early from mount Gilead.” (Compare Deut. 20:8.) God’s great design in His dealings was to teach Israel to trust

in Himself. He wants to find in His people a true heart. A true heart makes a strong hand. Having confidence in the Captain of our salvation and not in ourselves, we faint not at the sight of our enemies, but reckon, with true-hearted Caleb, that "we are well able to overcome them."

"And there returned of the people twenty-and-two thousand. And there remained ten thousand," v. 3.

Do we not know what this means? We know that the Lord Jesus sent forth the proclamation.—'Let those who will follow me count the cost.' "Foxes have holes [told He one, who had said unto Him,' Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest'], and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" —and then there was fearfulness and faint-heartedness. When there was nothing but Christ, and everything else was against them, many turned back, and walked no more with Him. Confidence in the flesh must be renounced; God will not use the flesh.

The present is an age when people are coveting to know a little about everything. Were God to employ the learning of learned men, the influence of men of rank, and the like, the church would say, 'We have saved ourselves.' Those who have had what are called "the advantages of a good education," find that He says, 'Set your learning, your wisdom, your influence aside: I cannot save by these.' The use to be made of these things is to say of them with Paul, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Often are these much coveted things found hindrances in the way of those who possess them, and the great thing to be done in conflict is to keep them under. God will not allow

human learning, influence, moral character, or aught else, to come in as any item in our deliverance. He is very jealous of all man's substitutes for, and imitations of, the power of the Holy Ghost. In stripping ourselves of such things, we may seem to others to be throwing away our influence and our usefulness; but what is usefulness? what is "doing good"? The doing of God's will. And God is faith's sufficiency. To all appearance Gideon was weakening his own hands; at the first proclamation, twenty-two thousand left him; but in reality, instead of losing strength, he was gainer by their departure. These fearful and faint-hearted ones would have discouraged the rest had they remained amongst them— "Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brother's heart faint, as well as his heart." The flesh is very bold in word, but when it comes to the point of trial, with Peter, it curses, and swears that it knows not Jesus. There is a great deal of "philosophy and vain deceit" going about now. "Beware lest any man spoil you," says the apostle. Were all the trappings of the flesh laid aside, we should discern how little real spiritual energy there is amongst us. Do you ask, 'What shall I study?' Study well these four words: "the flesh profiteth nothing."

"And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go," v. 4.

There is such a thing as the trial of our faith; and, whilst we very often should be quite unable to test one another, God knows the best way of doing this as to each.

“So he brought down the people unto the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men. And the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley,” v. 5-8.

God’s ways are strange to sense: the infidel scoffs at them. These people were really not afraid (as those who departed before) to go to the battle; they were all of them soldiers girded for war—the test was this, whether, in that thirsty day they would lap the water, putting the hand to the mouth, or bow down and drink at their ease. The three hundred chosen ones (those by whom Jehovah was about to work) had not time for halting, their hearts being in the work, and they merely took a draught as they went on their way.

The apostle speaks of being “entangled with the affairs of this life” (2 Tim. 2:4); all that we can safely take, would we “please him who has chosen us to be soldiers,” is just a draught by the way. There is a very great difference between being in the circumstances of this life, and being entangled with them. When tested by Jehovah, those who bowed down were not fit for His use,

any more than (though they were not) the faint-hearted. They must go to their homes.

Glory is (for all who believe) God's answer to the work of Christ; grace is followed by glory: "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Instead of its being this, the devil seeks to put it before the soul on the ground of our devotedness and zeal. At the same time, beloved, would not you and I that our place should have been with "the three hundred"? Shall we let slip the opportunity of confessing Jesus, because we are saved? In the experience of almost every believer there is a being brought down to the water—some turning-point, when he either goes onward in devotedness to the Lord, or otherwise sinks down into a mere common-place christian. Not one of us is too obscure to be tried whether he will seek God's honour, or present things, first.

Gideon (instructed that the battle is Jehovah's, and that he must get rid of all encumbrances) is next shewn his enemies.

"And it came to pass the same night, that Jehovah said unto him, Arise get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thine hand," v. 9.

It is a blessed thing to be shewn our enemies and told with Gideon, that Jehovah has delivered them into our hands. Our old man is "crucified "(Rom. 6:6), the world "overcome," and its prince "judged," John 16:33, 11. If we are walking by faith, as risen with Christ, Satan, the world, and the flesh are under our feet.

And mark further, how graciously Jehovah anticipates the need of His servant, in adding:—

“But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host; and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host,” v. 10, 11.

Not anything could be more alarming than to see the fearful odds that are against the people of faith—the world, the flesh, and the unceasing hostility of Satan! Who would not be faint-hearted, if we saw but this? God is pleased to let Gideon hear what is in the Midianites’ hearts. So too is He pleased to let us know, very often, what is in the hearts of our enemies. “Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? “lets out the secret. And as to the men of the world, there is not one in a hundred of them but that has the fullest conviction that Christians are right; yet, because they have numbers on their side, they try to persuade themselves to the contrary. Almost everything he hears bids the intelligent Christian, ‘Be strong.’

Let us follow Gideon.

“Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. And the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and all the children of the east, lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his

hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host," v. 12-14.

Divine encouragement is never to the puffing up of the flesh. Anything of pride and self-importance must have been sorely wounded. When God will shew His favoured servant the things that are coming to pass, and that he shall smite the Midianites as one man, He makes him feel, that (in himself) he is but as a "cake of barley bread."

And is there not instruction for ourselves in this? Were Christians stripped of their worldliness, more really like the "cake of barley bread" (the most homely thing possible), the world would stand more in fear of them. We have clothed ourselves with its trappings and desired its respectability, so that it thinks we are obliged to go to it for help. There is an unhealthy kind of zeal, often found amongst us, which makes a person ask himself, How shall I give a testimony? Rather let each saint seek to shew forth "the mind that was in Christ Jesus." A man, always anxious to prove himself an honest man, we should begin to suspect; and if a person is always very anxious to prove that he is a Christian, it is doubtful whether he yet knows much of the mind of Christ. Let us quietly subside into simple God-fearing God-acknowledging Christianity, and though outwardly, as a cake of barley bread, the world would feel about us, as the Midianite speaks of Gideon to his fellow.

"And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped."

Before he goes to battle, he worships in the full confidence of victory. The worship of faith is always the

worship of confidence. Were we more really, in our own eyes, the “cake of barley bread,” there would be more abounding praise.

He worshipped:— “and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered into your17 hand the host of the Midianites,” v. 15.

What is this “host of Israel”? Three hundred men! The Midianites are “as grasshoppers for multitude,” Jehovah’s “host,” but a handful of men! It is most important to see the dignity attached to the three hundred. God (as we have before remarked in the history of this mighty man of valour) reckons not according to what we are in ourselves but according to that which He makes us.

And had He actually delivered the Midianites into the hand of Israel? No. Neither as yet is Satan actually under our feet, though faith counts him to be. Had Gideon said, ‘ I will not believe before I get the spoil,’ that would have been unbelief.

And now comes the conflict.

“And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon,” v. 16-18.

The weapons of their warfare were the most foolish things imaginable, trumpets, pitchers, and lamps in the

pitchers! Faith's weapons must be mighty through God alone.

"So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp, in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon! And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran and cried and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites," v. 19-23.

These things shall yet be acted over again. Now the weapons wherewith we have to fight are testimony by word of mouth and our own insignificance. Our power is in giving testimony to Jesus, and never getting out of the place of being but "earthen vessels." We must remember that the vessel only contains the light, let us not pretend that it is the light. The excellency of the power must be of God and not of us.

"And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites."

Impotent in ourselves for blessing (and having found this out), but having proved the blessedness of simple dependence upon God, we can, with Gideon, call upon

others to have fellowship with us (v. 24, 25). But let us not be setting up ourselves. Everything depends upon the presence of the Holy Ghost, ungrieved, unhindered. Let this be told, and let us hide ourselves.

The men of Ephraim are seen at the close of chapter 7 slaying Oreb and Zeeb. (They are allowed to come in for blessing in result.) Now they turn and chide with Gideon for not having called them at the first.

“And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? and they did chide with him sharply,” chap. 8:1.

This is just what the half-hearted Christian does. He is very angry at not being associated with those who are wholehearted. But whose is the fault? Whenever there is any energy of the Spirit of God working in the church, the language of the men of Ephraim is the language of such; ‘Why not have taken us with you?’ Faith’s answer is very simple, ‘Because then we must have gone on your ground; what we have to do is to go wherever the Lord leads: we cannot stop to make compacts and agreements.’ No one Christian has a right to stop on his way for another; he must go forward himself in individual faithfulness. The effort to drag others along with us is in reality but a device of Satan to keep ourselves back. Note Jehovah’s word to Jeremiah, “Let them return unto thee; but return not thou to them,” Jer. 15:19. Are any desirous of going forward, let them not stop to carry along with them “the men of Ephraim.” Far better is it to go on with but few to follow, than to get numbers with us who are only half-hearted.

“And Gideon said, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? “v. 2, 3.

Let us mark this. Where the power of God is most working, there is always the deepest grace, and the consciousness that all that we are, we are by the grace of God. What a manifestation have we here of the mind that was in Christ! How graciously did the Lord speak of His poor, failing, faithless disciples; “Ye are they,” said He, “that have continued with me in my temptations,” Luke 22:28. Gideon esteems others better than himself. Not any thing so hinders blessing (individual or collective) as a feeling of superiority to others.’ The exercised soul will judge itself, whilst it sees that which is done by another in the light of grace. Gideon casts himself and his three hundred in the shade and brings into prominence the victory of the men of Ephraim. If honest in self-judgment, have we not at times detected in ourselves something of an inclination to overlook grace in other saints because they “followed not with us?” Grace is able to fasten on that in a brother that is pleasing to God, and seeks to bring it out, passing over in so doing, very much there may be, along with it of failure. Jesus knew, and perfectly, the weakness and failure of His disciples, though He addressed them as He did. It is a blessing when we can sink ourselves, that others may come into prominence. “Let your light,” it is said, “so shine before men, that they may see your good works [not, you], and glorify [not you, but] your Father which is in heaven.” If any chide with us, let us seek grace to go down, and take the lowest place, and give

them credit.— “Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.” See Prov. 15:1, “A soft answer turneth away wrath.”

“And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint yet pursuing them,” v. 4.

What three little words could be more blessedly descriptive of the Christian, than these?—not, ‘faint and sitting down,’ not, ‘faint and giving, up,’—but ‘faint, yet pursuing.’ We have to do with Him who “giveth power to the faint,” Isa. 40:29. “To them that have no might he increaseth strength.” It is a blessed use to make of our faintness and weariness, that of drawing out of the fulness of the supply of grace and strength in Christ. It is said, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might”; but to whom? To the one who has no strength in himself, who would give up his course if strength were not supplied to him. One victory achieved, the conflict goes on afresh. Do we find ourselves fainting in spirit? Still let us go on, for our God giveth strength to the weak. We like not this trial of faith. It is very painful doubtless to feel day after day our own weakness. We want to feel that the battle is over; but let us remember that now is our time of war. We are called on to fight “as good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” and that in a daily round of conflicts. To-day there has been sufficient grace and sufficient evil, and to-morrow there will be sufficient grace and sufficient evil. What we need is to live day by day on God. He is faithful, and will supply strength according to the occasion and need. The church will not be at rest till the Lord comes. But weakness ought to be no hindrance to our going forward—“faint, yet pursuing.” It is a sad thing to be a spiritual sluggard, for

a saint, like a door on its hinges, never to get off himself. The moment a person has learnt to renounce himself, he goes forward. Were felt weakness a reason for standing still, who so weak as Gideon?

The next thing taught us in this history is that the world is neither able nor willing to supply refreshment to the man of faith. The world never gives, it may concede something to us, if we concede something to it, but it never gives. That which is required by it is, generally, the sacrifice of faithfulness.

“And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me: for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?” v. 5, 6.

If you profess to the world that you are “following after” resurrection glory, “pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus “(Phil. 3), you will not meet with anything at its hands but some such taunt as this.

“And Gideon said, Therefore, when Jehovah hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower,” v. 7, 9.

In the confidence of victory Gideon was going forward (though consciously faint), and these princes of Succoth and the men of Penuel would not come to the help of

Jehovah against the mighty. To them it seemed a foolish thing to be fighting with three hundred men against such enemies. So we seem to be very fools when we speak of certain glory. We must make up our minds to this. There are no resources to be had from the world, to help us on in the conflict in which we are engaged. 'You say you are kings and priests unto God, that you are to have glory,' is the taunt of unbelief, 'but you cannot shew us anything for it: when we see you in the glory, we will believe."

We have not one thing to shew, not anything of which the natural man can take notice. Our wisdom is foolishness. We must go on feeling our weakness, confident of victory. By-and-by the tables will be turned. The taunts and reproaches of the world will bring down judgment on their own heads. One special thing that the Lord is coming to judge is, we are told, "all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," Jude 15. There is not any present ridicule of His saints that will not be regarded as against Himself in that day.

"Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword," v. 10.

"And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was secure. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zelmunna, and discomfited all the host," v. 11, 12.

“And Gideon, the son of Joash, returned from battle before the sun was up, and caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city,” v. 13-17.

“Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the childrec of a king. And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as Jehovah liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his first-born, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels’ necks,” v. 18-21.

“Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son’s son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you,” v. 22, 23.

The Lord Jesus would not be made king by the people (John 6:15). He came in His Father's name (they would not receive Him thus) and He would not be received in His own name. It is a very different thing being received in our own names, from our being in the name of the Lord. Gideon retires; he will not take the place of rule that belongs only to Jehovah. He knows that if the people's minds are fixed on Gideon, nothing but weakness and dishonour can result; but that if Jehovah be acknowledged and leaned on, there will be strength and blessing. Do we not find this principle running all through the New Testament?

Paul hides himself. Though having had such revelations from the Lord, though possessing such a compass of knowledge, yet the moment he sees the spirit coming in of setting up Paul, he says, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." So again, "Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," etc. (1 Cor. 3). Had he put himself forward, Christ would not have been seen. And this principle, true of Gideon, true of Paul, is true of every saint acting in faith.

One special mark of growth in grace is evidenced in our magnifying the name of the Lord Jesus, even though it be in the vilifying of our own names before the saints, and before the world, in our taking all blame to ourselves, and our giving all praise to the Lord. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Had the history of Gideon closed here, what a beautiful picture would it have presented!

There is none perfect but the Lord. He is the true Gideon, the true Samson, the true David. At the close of the chapter we see declension after revival—speedy declension, and thar proceeding from Gideon himself.

“And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey (for they had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites”):—

He wanted some monument to signalize his victory. These earrings were the spoils of triumph confessedly from Jehovah.

“And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold, besides ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were about their camels’ necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it, which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house,” v. 24-27.

Man seeks something whereby to perpetuate present blessing. This has ever been one way of his perverseness. ‘What security have you that it will last?’ he asks, and faith answers, ‘None whatever, but the presence of the Holy Ghost.’ If we attempt to secure it by other means like Gideon, we make an ephod. We seek to perpetuate blessing, to secure it to others, but in a very short time keep up the form (having lost the power), and worship that instead of God, just as Gideon’s ephod had divine honours paid to it. What is it

to have a set of principles (however scriptural) without the power of the Spirit? The only thing to give perpetuity of blessing is the presence of the Holy Ghost. God has wrought in the way of revival, and men whose hearts bounded with love to God and to their fellow-men have said, 'Oh, we will perpetuate the blessing," and nothing but evil has come of it. We cannot secure the truth of God by arrangements of our own. Such arrangements may spring from a feeling of piety, but they evidence a want of dependence upon God. There was the energy of the Spirit working in Gideon, but he it was who prepared the way for Israel's re-apostasy.

The restoration lasted not longer than there was individual energy of faith.

"Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more: and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon. And Jerubbaal, the son of Joash, went and dwelt in his own house… And Gideon, the son of Joash, died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites."

"And it came to pass as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of Israel remembered not Jehovah their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel," v. 28-35.

Of what use was the ephod now? It had entirely failed of effecting that, which doubtless Gideon designed it

should effect. And have not the well-designed efforts of men of God, who have sought to provide for the pure truth, repeatedly ended in the same way? The great thing we have to look to is (not the holding in prominence this or that particular doctrine, but) the ungrieved presence of the Holy Ghost. Let us remember that He is the Holy Spirit, repressive ever of the flesh. If I have set up something, that something becomes an object to me instead of the Lord. His glory must be the prominent thing. How speedy was the departure of the church from God at the first even in Paul's days! "All sought their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," Phil. 2:21.

16 It is a most fearful instance of the want of a sound mind, when we find so much perverse ingenuity, so many subtleties, so many analogies drawn, in order to lull the awakened conscience into contentedness with evil.

17 Here again there is the setting aside of self. He does not say, "into my hand," but "into your hand." Jehovah had said, "into thine hand" (v. 9), and the Midianite "into his hand" (v. 14).

Thoughts On Ruth

As in Judges we have the dark side of man's misuse of the favour of God to His people under Joshua, so this brief book lets us see a bright picture, yet most true, of His work in view of Messiah. Ruth, a lowly Moabitish stranger, led by gracious and godly affections in faith, seeks shelter under the wings of Jehovah, finds grace in His sight, and is herself exalted to be a direct link in the line of the Lord's progenitors after the flesh. It is the type of the remnant (after Lo-Ammi was sentenced and executed on Israel) received back in grace in the last days, preparatorily to the kingdom, when the Kinsman-Redeemer espouses their cause. The names are of evident significance. Elimelech (my God the King) being dead, Naomi (my delight) typifying the Jewish nation, is a widow and loses her children, and calls herself Mara (bitterness). But a remnant, without title to promise, is received in pure mercy, identifying itself with the desolation of Israel, and is finally blessed with the richest grace and honour on the earth. The nearest of kin refuses to redeem the inheritance; the law could not restore Israel to it, nor raise up the name of the dead. Boaz (in him is strength) typifying Christ risen does it in grace.

Thoughts On 1 Samuel

The first Book of Samuel commences with the promise of the king.

Chapter 2:10. The people had walked badly, and God presents Christ when all else failed down here. That which man was not able to accomplish, God perfectly accomplished in Christ, but always going far beyond. In Adam, rule; in Noah, the sword; in Sinai, the law; in Aaron, the priesthood (already before Eli). Prophecy does not imply responsibility, because it is a question of the power and of the sovereignty of God in grace; in Israel, royalty; and finally, the church.

Verse 18. In a certain sense, Samuel has as it were taken the place of the priesthood. The priesthood was the means by which man drew nigh to God; but when the priesthood had failed, God can work in sovereignty, and that is what He is doing here; He gives Samuel, or prophecy, by means of which God draws nigh to man, in His sovereign grace.

Verse 32. God forsakes His own dwelling-place, and in the land which God gave to Israel for their good, the enemies would take possession of it. It is not a question, however, in this verse of the tabernacle of the congregation; it is the tabernacle, in the general sense, to signify habitation, or dwelling-place.

Verse 35. It is no longer a question for the priesthood to walk before God, but before His anointed one, royalty being introduced. The king forms the link between God and the people, and the priesthood takes the second place.

Chapter 3. Having determined to judge the house of Eli, God reveals it by the mouth of Samuel. Sincerity is worth nothing, if there is not also light and faithfulness. Nevertheless, there was piety with Eli, for when he learns the death of his sons, this affects him little, but the taking of the ark causes his death.

Chapter 4. Samuel is prophet.

Judgment is executed. For the present moment, that which takes the place of the ark in Israel is the Philistine. God takes care Himself of His glory, when His people can no longer take care of it. Yet it was a sad capture for the Philistines. They carry the emblem of power into the very midst of their idolatry. When the ark is taken, in the main all is over with Israel. All their history from Sinai closes here. That is why the ark was never brought back to the tabernacle, but placed in Sion, which commences an entirely new order of things.

Read Psalm 78:—

Verse 59. God in great wrath rejects all.

Verse 65. He awakes in David.

Verse 67. As to Joseph, who has the double portion of the inheritance according to nature, God refuses him.

Verse 68. All is now on the ground of election according to grace.

Chapter 6. Good sense in the priests. They sent back the ark with the thought that the God of the ark was more powerful than the affection of the cows for their calves. God could overrule nature; otherwise that which had happened to them was mere chance. When David brought back the ark, he had not the good sense of the priests of the Philistines.

Verse 19. Much the same happens to the people of God when they are not faithful. When one has lost God, one laments after Him; then, when He is there, they forsake Him.

Chapter 7. The sovereignty of God in grace acting by prophecy—Samuel, the centre of all this system.

Chapter 8. Although God had already interposed in grace several times, they reject Him as king; they will have Him no longer.

Chapter 9. Saul, wretched man! He ignored the man by whom God had done so many things, and God who had wrought them.

Chapter 10. Nevertheless he is anointed.18 What was the state of" Israel at this moment? Very sad. Still there remained the God of Bethel, who had promised to Jacob never to forsake him. If Saul had been honest, he would have said, This is what we want.

Then Saul is recognized by Israel.

The hill of God is the seat of the sovereignty and power of God in grace, where the Philistines (Satan's power) were. We see nevertheless a company of prophets (the Spirit acts in power in spite of the Philistines), a small remnant who praised the God of Bethel, so that if there had been ever so little faith, Saul could have known the thoughts of God, and, being His anointed to be the leader and deliverer of the people (chap. 9:16), he might well have driven away the Philistines who were in the land of God. There are the signs; but we must listen to the word. Whatever may be the signs that we may have, one must await the direction in order to act. The Philistines are always the enemies in the land; the

others are outside; these are in the land of God. The worst enemies of the church are those who are within.

Verse 8. Saul remains two years before going down to Gilgal.

Chapter u. It was all well to deal with the Ammonites; but the Philistines were then the true test: Saul was feeble as to these.

Chapter 12. Samuel retires, leaving the people in the position they had chosen under the king, responsible before the Lord, but not without his own intercessions.

Chapter 13. The iniquity penetrates very deep. Although the people had their king, there were no arms in the land.

Saul is put to the test. He causes the trumpet to be sounded, not in order that God should hear in Israel the elect of God, but the Hebrews—a heathen name. He seems not to have had one single thought of God. If the Philistines have any strength, it is also needful that the Hebrews should listen. It was nation against nation—no intelligence, no link with God. Gilgal ought to have recalled something to Saul's mind, but he has neither faith nor intelligence. Saul may here represent some one who desires good, but it is only the flesh. He nevertheless follows the word of God outwardly, but he proves at the same time that he has never depended upon God for one single instant, and that the flesh cannot sustain itself in the path of faith. If he had known the need he had of God, he would have waited, whatever might have come. The faith of Jonathan begins, and the flesh cannot follow. When faith begins all flesh is routed.

Chapter 14. Jonathan did not look for the honey, but God gave him some to refresh his heart in the midst of the energy of his faith.

Verse 47. Saul was troubling everything. There is relief, and not deliverance, for soon we find the Philistines and Goliath. He did not destroy the enemies, but He plucked Israel out of their hands. God had not yet anointed David, for He does not work until the people have entirely failed.

Chapter 15. Saul is here a second Achan. God has in His heart what Amalek did. He will destroy him. Saul ought to have understood that, but he is not identified with the feelings of God. He avails himself of the power which God gives him to rob God.

Chapter 17. When David was alone, it was a trial; but he was infinitely worse in Saul's court, surrounded by unbelief. After having been in the court, he could again mind the sheep. Self-denial of David! It is needful, that after having worked with God, he should still wait on God for the reward. In order for faith to be something, it must go through every difficulty—family difficulties, etc. The "uncircumcised" — man who has not God—Goliath had committed himself by challenging God's army. This was the strength of David.

Verse 58. Faith has no pretensions; it returns to its own insignificance, because, after all, faith is nothing save what it draws from God.

Chapter 18. Jonathan recalls to my mind the remnant of Israel. He loves David with all his heart; but he had not followed him. Chapter 23:16-18 tells us what Jonathan was. Abigail represents much more the faith of the church. In the tribulation of Jesus the remnant does not

take part with Him, whereas Abigail follows him everywhere. Although he is rejected, she calls him Lord, whilst Saul is to her only a man. She has intelligence. She judges Nabal, although the judgment was not yet executed. She becomes the wife of David in the desert; thus it is with the church. When David was with Achish, he was in a sad state—a servant of God, who said he had done evil to the people of God, in order to be well with the world!

They said of David, the Lord is with him. They expected much from him, but nothing came. One must follow for a long time the path of faith.

Verse 14. Here is the intelligence of David: when it is a question of enemies David is always ready.

Chapter 19:20-22. Saul loses all conscience. The thought that David was with Samuel ought to have stopped him — Samuel by whom he had been anointed. God put all things in his way to stop him, but he was hardened. In prophesying himself, he ought to have understood that the power which caused him to act at this moment, and which rested on David, was greater than himself; but he despises these signs, as he had despised the first. The career of David then became very painful, because it was a question of not killing Saul, of doing nothing.

Chapter 21. The sword of Goliath—the power of death. David carried it with him, but certainly did not shew it to Achish.

Chapter 22. Here he is in his place. All was there—royalty, prophecy, and priesthood. Saul, after having despised prophecy, turns against the priesthood. Yet David is not discouraged; he will protect Abiathar.

Chapter 23. One of the characteristics in David is always to consult God.

Chapter 24. For the present David was doing nothing. It is difficult to do nothing when one feels that God is with us. David has much more regard for Saul than Saul had for himself. Excellent spirit!

Chapter 25. Prophecy, properly so called, disappears. Nabal (Israel) is set aside, he who rejected David; and Abigail becomes the wife of the despised one, while he is in the wilderness. It is not properly the church, but she is on the principle of the church. Abigail goes to meet David before the death of Nabal: thus it is with the church before the nation is judged. The faith of this woman is very remarkable.

Jesus, after all, was taking care of the sheep, although He was not owned.

Verse 26. Abigail, as it were, sentences her husband to death. She sees in Saul a man, and in David the anointed and the servant of Jehovah.

Chapter 26. God again gives to David the opportunity of killing Saul, and that which David says to him this time is much more severe. David never surrenders himself to Saul. He is a hero. He never lets go his object, and his persevering faith is a beautiful thing. Verses 10, 11. He has a profound respect for all that belongs to God.

Chapter 27. His faith here fails completely. He seeks the favour of God’s enemies in boasting of” having done evil to His people.

Chapter 29. Poor David! God permitted all this to shew that in bringing him to the throne all was grace. He is set aside for a certain time, like Saul.

Chapter 30. David burns through the fire which he himself has kindled. But he always lays hold of God’s actings.

Chapter 31. The Philistines are in full possession of all, in order to be completely beaten. What grace that God prevented David from going with Achish! If he had put his hand on Saul, he could not have uttered the lamentation which he composed on the subject of his death.

The progress of evil in Saul deserves attention. After disobedience, after jealousy and hatred against David, he despises the prophet in the very circumstances which ought to have reminded him of his authority, then the priesthood, and lastly, he is totally forsaken, and seeks for help in the power of Satan. It is well also to notice that when he falls Israel is deprived of everything. David was among the Philistines— Samuel was dead—the priesthood was judged, and even Abiathar was far off. There remained nothing, the state of Israel was complete desolation. Mark well that (David, by his unbelief, having been obliged to hide himself among the Philistines) all depended on God in pure grace. Mark also that, when David leaves Saul, which is the beginning of his typical history, in contrast with Saul, he takes with him the shewbread and the sword of Goliath. When once he is in his normal position, we have with David that which Saul had despised—the prophet, the priest—David himself being king. This history is perhaps the most sad in the scriptures. It is the history of that which had the position of faith, without the faith which would have had the reality. All he does turns to judgment. On the contrary, in the same measure as that, Saul rejects all that is of God. It is found again with

David. Thus the prophet, the priest, only is suffering; but the wisdom of God there.

18 Up to Eli all depended on the priesthood; but royalty having come in, all depended on the king. If the king fails, the people go to Babylon; under the priesthood all the people were given up to the Philistines, as was the ark. The king is sovereign, he organizes the priests; he is responsible. Instead of having recourse to the priesthood in order to know the will of God, royalty was with prophecy, which was the sovereign gift and the sovereign power of God, when everything had failed. Before royalty it was the priest who was the anointed one.

Jonathan: A Word On Working With God

1 Samuel 14.

In the doings of Jonathan, we get energy of faith in the midst of sad confusion in Israel.

The people of God had sought in a carnal way to establish themselves against their enemies. A people of no faith to lean immediately upon God, they had asked for themselves a king; and whilst testifying to His own rejection by them, God had instructed Samuel to hearken unto their voice in all that they said, and make them a king (chap. 8). “Give us a king, to judge us like all the nations,” their cry, as again (even after the prophet had warned them as to consequences, in accordance with the divine testimony), “Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles”; the carnal desire is met, and Saul set up to war against Israel’s enemies.

Such is the state of things in the midst of which we find Jonathan. And though he enters not into the full mind of God, he is able to act in the energy of faith.

It is hard for faith to endure the afflictions of God’s people, and the dishonour done in it to God Himself. Jonathan endures it not. He has faith in the God of Israel, and he makes up his mind to attack the Philistines. He calls to his armour-bearer, and says, “Come let us go over unto the Philistines’ garrison, that is on the other side,” v. 1. The sin of the people of God may have subjected them to the power of the

“uncircumcised,” but this cannot subject the rights of God. Such is faith’s reasoning. And nothing is more simple. The moment there is separation unto God, a standing with Him, there is zeal for God and strength in His service. But he confers not with flesh and blood, “he told not his father.” There was no faith in Saul; and had he consulted him, Saul would most probably only have discouraged—with faith he would have gone himself. He would either have stopped or hampered him; when he does act, it is only to trouble. Faith has to act on its own responsibility. One way in which we very constantly fail is in asking counsel of those who have not the faith or the light we ourselves have; we thus sink down to their level.

All that could give authority, or accredit it, in the eyes of the people religiously too, was with Saul. The king, the priest, the ark were all there. But Jonathan waits not for the people. He has none but his armour-bearer with him; and so much the better for him, for he is not troubled with the unbelief of others. Where there is a single eye, there is ever confidence in acting and not hesitation. The flesh may be confident, but its confidence is in self, and therefore only folly. Faith makes nothing of circumstances, because it makes God all. It is not that difficulties in themselves are lessened, but that God fills the eye.

The Philistines’ position is a strong one amidst precipitous rocks: what could human energy avail? Jonathan has to climb up upon his hands and feet (v. 13). The oppressors too are there in great numbers, and well armed. But faith with a single sword counts God sufficient. “Come,” is the unhesitating word, “let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be

that Jehovah will work for us," v. 6. The "uncircumcised" have no strength when looked at thus; they have not the God of Jacob for their help: their hope is not in Jehovah. Little matter as to the condition of His people, if He be with them: "there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." The enemy may be as the sand on the sea shore for multitude: that is nothing— and faith knows it. He can give strength to one sword to subdue a host.

Jonathan seeks not other help. Happy in his companion, a man of a kindred spirit (his answer bearing him the witness— "Do all that is in thine heart; turn thee, behold I am with thee according to thy heart," v. 7), he at once discovers himself to the Philistines (v. 8).

We have already remarked on the strong simple confidence of Jonathan in Jehovah's power. Another thing that characterises his faith is the consciousness of the impossibility of the link between God and His people being broken. Sad as the condition of that people is—the Philistines in power in their midst, pillaging a defenceless land; no means of resistance left to them, not a sword or a spear (except with Saul and with Jonathan) found in Israel (chap. 13:19, 22); the very king they have in their midst, one they have sinned in setting up—this touches not His faithfulness. The Philistines are delivered into the hand of Israel19 (not into his own) in the judgment of the man of faith (v. 12). In isolating itself with God, faith identifies itself with His people. It loses sight of self, passes over their desolations, and recognizes all that is theirs in God. Jonathan is as Jehovah's hand. And see what boldness! Though Israel be not able to sharpen a mattock, in the name of the God

of hosts, Jehovah, God of Israel, he goes straight on his way.

But then, whilst he goes forward thus, conferring not with flesh and blood, there is nothing of boastfulness, no acting in fleshly haste and excitement. His expectation is from God. He can discover himself plainly to the garrison of the Philistines, telling them as it were, “Here am I, an Israelite”; but he will wait and see;—if they say, ‘Tarry until we come to you,’ he will stand in his place, and will not go up to them. But if they say, ‘Come up unto us,’ he will go up; Jehovah hath delivered them into their hand. There is to be the sign (v. 9, 10). In other words he will wait for them to come to him, or he will go and throw himself into the midst of their camp, just as Jehovah may bid. He will not make difficulties for himself; but he will not turn away from difficulties which meet him in the path. His is the real dependence of faith.

Having done this, the very haughtiness and scorn of the hostile power instruct him as to what to do. “Behold,” say the men of the garrison one to another, “the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves”; and then indolently and with fleshly confidence taunt these true Israelites, “Come up, and we will shew you a thing!” v. 12. It is the sign for Jonathan; “Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.”

In the energy of faith he goes forward and climbs the rock, his armour-bearer following. The Philistines fall before him; it is comparatively easy work for the armour-bearer to slay after him. The power that inspires Jonathan acts for him. Jehovah is really there; He uses Jonathan as an instrument, He puts honour upon the

arm faith has strengthened, but He manifests Himself. The terror of God falls upon the enemies of Israel (v. 13, 15).

But what of Saul? He has been left tarrying under a pomegranate-tree in Migron, whilst God is triumphing over the Philistines through Jonathan (v. 2). “And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another. Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us,” v. 16, 17. All that is regular as to form is with Israel, but not faith. “And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there.” That is all they know about it.

“And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God,” v. 18. Here again there is form—the form of honouring Jehovah in seeking His guidance. It seems all right, yet it is but the form. (God, if we may so speak, has left with Jonathan.) Saul will have the ark brought; but while he talks with the priest, the tumult of defeat in the host of the Philistines still going on and increasing, he bids him stop; “Withdraw,” he says, “thine hand,” v. 19. There is no simplicity of dependence upon God, but the uncertainty and bewilderment of unbelief.

He joins the battle (v. 20). But it is not as entering into the spirit of the thing,—he has no sense of that on which Jonathan had counted, the secret of Jonathan’s strength: “there is no restraint with Jehovah to work by many or by few.” He calls the people around himself, and adjures them saying, “Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies,” v. 24. “So none of the people tasted any food.” There is

great apparent energy, it is true, but it is not of the Spirit of God; so that when he gets into the tide of victory, he is in reality only a troubler, distressing Israel and hindering the pursuit. It is a carnal and selfish zeal. We may get into the path of faith, but we shall find there that nothing but faith can walk in it; let the flesh mix itself up in the work of faith, it is only for weakness.

The people come to a wood, there is honey upon the ground, yet no man puts his hand to his mouth, for they fear the oath (v. 25, 26). Jonathan has not heard that oath; wherefore he puts the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dips it in an honeycomb, and puts his hand to his mouth and his eyes are enlightened (v. 27). And when made acquainted with the curse, and seeing the people faint around him, he at once exclaims, “My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they had found; for had there not been now a much greater slaughter amongst the Philistines?” v. 28-30.

Happy Jonathan! Faith is so occupied with its work, and has so the sense of God’s love and grace, that it has full liberty, and whatsoever God presents in the way it can thankfully avail itself of, taking it and going on; whilst the carnal zeal of that which is but an imitation of faith, and which never works with God, makes a duty of refusing it. Had Jonathan not been occupied heart and soul in Jehovah’s work, he might have stopped to think about the honey; as it is, he merely takes it for refreshment and passes on. Through the energy of faith he is carried clean out of the knowledge of the oath (v. 27). Out of the reach of this unbelief, he can avail

himself of the kindness of his God with joy and thanksgiving, and pursue his course refreshed and encouraged, whilst the people (who had not the faith to go with him) are under the curse and cannot. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Saul has put both himself and the people under this miserable restraint (if the flesh puts itself under bondage, it must keep its oath), and in result they are led into sin; for they are so hungry, that when the time of the oath is expired, they fly (v. 32) on the cattle taken as spoil, and slay them, and eat the flesh with the blood thereof, thus violating a direct command of God (Deut. 12:22, 23).

The effect of all this is that of making faith guilty for acting in liberty. Such is ever the way of the flesh in its mixing itself up with faith.

At a moment of manifest outward blessing Saul must build an altar, and make much of Jehovah's name, just as previously he had professed to seek counsel at the ark. He builds his altar (v. 36). But let us mark the emphatic comment of the Holy Ghost, "this was the first altar that he built unto Jehovah." Then, through the priest, he consults God as to pursuing the Philistines;— "but he answered him not that day," v. 37. On this he seeks, by an appeal to the "God of Israel," to discover the hidden and hindering sin (v. 36-41). Jehovah indeed acts, yet it is only to manifest the folly of the king; the "perfect lot" is given and Jonathan is taken (v. 42).

"Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so

and more also: thou shalt surely die, Jonathan," v. 43, 44.

The people do not allow this. They interfere and say, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground: for he hath wrought with God this day." That is self-evident. "So the people rescued Jonathan that he died not," v. 45.

He had "wrought with God." His was the simple happy path of unhesitating faith which counts on God, on His faithful connection with His people, and walks in the blessed liberty of taking the refreshment He may give by the way—liberty for refreshment, not for licentiousness; while the flesh is making its solemn resolutions not to touch, nor to taste, nor to handle, and then, the occasion serving, it sets aside the authority of God. Faith of this sort confers not with flesh and blood; it acts from God, and it acts for God.

All the religious actings, all the forms of piety, are with Saul. He has the ark and the priest. He makes the vow to abstain from food; manifests zeal for ordinances; prevents the people eating flesh with the blood; builds his altar when others have got the blessing, and takes the credit to himself. He can be religious, when he has comfort and blessing; but there is no reference to God in faith, so as to go through difficulties with God. There is energy, but it is energy in the flesh; deliberation when God is acting; and action, when he does act, in haste and bewilderment.

The Lord preserve His people from the guidance and help of unbelief in the work of faith, blessed in the simplicity which acts with Him.

19 Saul’s summons of the people (chap. 13:3) is by their national name of “Hebrews,” the name a Philistine would have called them by.

Thoughts On 2 Samuel

As the first book gave us Israel tired of their original relationship with God, and the trial of the king of their choice, ending in the destruction of himself and his house, the second contains the establishment of David as the king, according to God, though failing far more in ease and exaltation than under the oppression and persecution of Saul.

Chapter 1. The generosity of David is here apparent, his horror at the Amalekite, who hoped to profit by Saul's death, and bis genuine grief over the fallen king of Israel, with his loved Jonathan.

Chapters 2, 3. David asks of Jehovah, and is guided by Him; but war goes on humblingly between the men of Judah, round David, and the rest of Israel, round Ishbosheth, who had no real claim to the throne. It was the more sorrowful a conflict, because, personally, the chief in command for Ishbosheth (Abner) was a better man, by David's own confession, than Joab, his own second in command. After all too it was Abner's pique which closed the strife, not Joab's prowess or skill; and David has to mourn over Abner, treacherously slain, and to spread Joab's iniquity before Jehovah.

Chapter 4 shews us David true-hearted in the matter of Ishbosheth's death inflicting what was meet on the murderers.

Chapter 5. The kingdom over all Israel now turning to David, who had reigned seven years and a half in Hebron, as after thirty-three years in Jerusalem, over all Israel and Judah. Zion is taken by the energy of Joab,

who becomes commander-in-chief. David is honoured of the Gentiles, has sons and daughters born of his numerous wives and concubines, and defeats the Philistines who assail him.

Chapter 6. David seeks to have the ark brought back, but thought not of what was due to the holiness and the word of Jehovah, who smote Uzzah for his rashness. But the evident blessing which rested on the house of Obededom the Gittite, where the ark rested, touches the king's heart, who now conducts it meetly, and with triumph and with humility too, the more conspicuous because of the empty pride of Saul's daughter, Michal, childless till death.

Chapter 7. David desires to build for Jehovah, but learns that it is reserved for his son, the man of peace, as he had been of war. God, who had called him in His sovereignty, must do all to establish David's house (as well as to bring Israel into rest) when His Son, the Son of God withal, should build the house, and the throne be established for ever. What an outpouring of David's heart follows!

Chapter 8. The Philistines are subdued, the Moabites, Ammonites, and the Syrians; so are Zobah, Amalek, and Edom, and all the administration is in order.

Chapter 9. The kindness of God shines in David's dealings with Mephibosheth, Jonathan's lame son.

Chapter 10. Those who despise the king are punished condignly.

Chapter 11. The king's sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Chapter 12. His conviction by the prophet's parable, and Jehovah's dealings, the death of the first child by Bathsheba, the birth of Solomon, and capture of Rabbah.

Chapters 13-19. The sword departs not from David's house; Tamar's dishonour; Ammon's murder; Absalom's flight, return, and conspiracy; David's departure; Shimei's cursing; Ahithophel's counsel defeated by Hushai; Absalom's death, and David's mourning; but he returns, all Judah and half Israel conducting him back.

Chapter 20. Sheba's rebellion is put down and the king is fully restored, and all ends in peace.

Chapter 21. But God in His righteous government will not pass by wrongs against His name, and judgment comes in David's day for Saul's forgetfulness of the oath in the matter of the Gibeonites, who are avenged on the descendants of Saul. Even then David, far from resenting Rizpah's feeling for that'unhappy house, himself pays the last honours to the memory of Saul and Jonathan; God is entreated for the land; the Philistine champions fall.

Chapter 22. David's song.

Chapter 23. David's last words, with the names of his mighty men, and the record of their exploits.

Chapter 24. God's wrath in consequence of David's numbering of the people, and His grace in bringing in blessing at the point where the plague was stayed—Jerusalem and its sanctuary.