Papers on Christian Living

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Use and Abuse of Wine, etc

The testimony of the Bible to the:

With a notice of the corresponding terms in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and remarks on the chief objections of modern times.

[The Hebrew characters are inserted with a transliteration only at the first mention of each word, thereafter only the transliteration is given.]

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The Use And Abuse Of Wine

The question of sin, in one shape or another, has, from the first, agitated men's minds. It could not be otherwise. For God erects a tribunal in the conscience of all, — even of the Gentiles who had not His written testimony. (Rom. 2) Philosophy gave neither solution to the problems of the intellect, nor relief to the anxieties of the heart; for as it could not rise to the Infinite Source of all good, so it did not dare to descend to the depth of the sinner's need. Evading the difficulties as long as was possible, it ended at last with denying all truth as to either. "The world by wisdom knew not God;" and where He is unknown, so is sin in its source, its nature and its doom.

On the other hand, the family of faith have ever had a certain knowledge of God, and therefore of themselves. This gradually increased from the word of judgment on the Serpent, till the Seed came to whom the promise was made. Thus the knowledge, though true and received with a divine conviction, was necessarily partial, as indeed the revelation was, till, in these last days, God spake by His Son, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. In Him, specially in His death, the real character of everything was made manifest. There the badness of man, set on by Satan's craft, was met and overcome by the goodness of God. The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. There is no veil, as there once was in Judaism. With the cross it could not co-exist. but was rent from top to bottom. And if the holy light of God displays what the sinner is in his wants and wretchedness, it cannot but

display the ample provision which God has made in the blood of His own Lamb. Thus is the poor believer taught what sin is by what it has cost the Son of God; and he adores as he sees that where sin has abounded, grace did much more abound.

Hence the distance between the wisest unbeliever and the least instructed believer in their thoughts about sin. To the one, Jesus is nothing; he may admire, and ask what is truth, but, like Pilate, he goes out without waiting for an answer. To the other, Jesus is all, Jesus is truth, and he knows it to his peace and blessing. The former is satisfied with stepping into the troubled waters of Bethesda — with a reformation of man as he is. The latter sees in sin, not sickness only, but moral death, and therefore can rest in nothing short of the quickening power of the Son of God. He knows that for faith is reserved the resurrection of life, the complement of the spiritual resurrection which is already enjoyed. Alas! he knows too that those who hear not the Saviour's voice have not life, and cannot escape the judgment which shall be executed by and by. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5:19, 20.)

Now, the Teetotal system, however modified, will be found to offend against these fundamental truths. Having a low estimate of sin, it presents as low a remedy. Even as to the single evil with which it seeks to deal, it barely skims the surface. It does not, it cannot touch the heart within, and so it wreaks its vengeance

upon the liquors without. Pharisaism washed the hands, Teetotalism washes the lips. But the same word of the Lord detects the inadequacy of both. “Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: there is nothing from without a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mark 7:14-16.) The entire spring of moral action, the heart, is corrupt before God. What man is, taints what he does. Hence, while the human method is to cut off this and that, the divine is, first of all, to make the tree good. If that be done, good fruit is sure to follow: if not done, the more men work about it they only get more bad fruit.

It is a new life which the sinner requires as the starting point; not a step Godward can be taken previously. But it is precisely this which the Gospel proclaims at once, without money and without price. The gift, the free gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And God will own no way, no truth, no life, no Saviour but His Son. Therefore, to occupy men with a teetotal pledge, is in fact to divert them at best with a quack medicine, and this, not for the root of the disease, but for a particular symptom — to divert them, I say, from the Gospel, which is as efficacious a cure in the drunkard’s case as in all others. For it is the power of God unto every one that believeth.

Since the days of Cain, man has never wanted some new or revived invention wherewith to patch up his outcast condition. If Teetotalism, then, had come forward merely as a medical discovery, or even as a branch of philanthropy, it might have passed unnoticed save by those whom it concerns. But seeing that, in its grossest

form, it taunts the servants of Christ with their vain efforts, and professes to outdo the Gospel; seeing that, in its least offensive shape, it claims Scriptural authority, and aspires to be the pioneer and the handmaid of the Gospel, the subject calls for a passing notice.

The Christian reads the Old Testament. He finds that wine intoxicated Noah and Lot, (Gen. 9, 19) and that it afterwards afforded occasion for frequent and solemn remonstrance. (Prov. 20, 23 Isa. 5, 28, etc.) Again, he finds wine brought as a natural comfort to Abraham and Isaac, (Gen. 14, 27) and often so treated, literally as well as figuratively. (Deut. 14, Ps. 104. Prov. 9:31:6. Cant. passim, etc.) He sees in the New Testament neither contradiction nor difficulty. The Lord commenced His miracles by making water into wine, (John 2) was invidiously compared with His forerunner because He abstained not, (Luke 7) and made bread and wine (which John the Baptist never used)1 to be the chosen, constant memorial of His dying love till He come again, the symbol also of our communion with each other. Finally, the Holy Ghost more than once dwells on the end of the drunkard, (1 Cor. 6, Gal. 5) corrects the unhallowed licence of the Corinthian church at the Lord's Supper, (1 Cor. 11) and warns believers, especially such as were prominent, against excess in daily life. (Eph. 5, 1 Tim. 3 Titus 2) At the same time, He takes pains (1 Tim. 5:23.) to remove the scrupulousness of a devoted young servant of Christ, and en joins the use of a little wine, rather than water, for his stomach's sake and often infirmities. So graciously does God deign to interest Himself even in the bodily weakness and wants of those who love Him! The conclusion is irresistible. Total abstinence, as a general rule, has not, nor ever had,

divine sanction. It is a device at issue with the plain facts and doctrine of Scripture, and this as to Christians no less than as to Jews. In the Old Testament yayin and in the New Testament οἶνος — that is, the ordinary words for “wine” in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures — are used both in a good and in a bad connection; because the moral evil lay not in the thing itself, nor in its use, but in its abuse. There were different kinds of wine then, (Neh. 5:18,) as there are now. But not a single text intimates a particular sort of yayin which could not inebriate. Nay, more: what Scripture does say, disproves the fancy, as the sequel abundantly shows. Thus, Num. 6:3 plainly marks off yayin as fermented grape-juice, and that in the vinous as distinguished from the acetous stage; excluding other fermented drinks, vinegar, unfermented grape-liquors, as well as the solid fruit of the vine. We who adhere to the regular sense of the word are not bound to produce specific proofs; we are entitled to take it in the same sense everywhere, unless positive cause be shown to the contrary. But those who affirm that in certain places the word has a different meaning, are, in each instance, bound to give Scriptural reasons adequate to produce conviction. This they can never do. We deny their affirmation: upon them falls the burden of proof.2 Not to anticipate, however, the Temperance Reformers may be divided in twain. One party consider that alcoholic liquors are essentially poisonous3 and therefore evil as a beverage; that in Scripture times there were two distinct genera of wine, etc., — the one unfermented and a blessing, the other fermented and a curse. But the moderate own that the use of alcohol is not in itself sinful; that inspired men, and even Christ Himself, did not abstain; that the habitual use of fermented beverages may be sanctioned

by the Bible: still they plead that, though lawful, it is not expedient. It is plain that the latter system destroys the former. Among themselves the difference is keenly felt, if we may judge by the unusual acrimony of their recriminations. The partisans of expediency pronounce the doctrine of the ultra-teetotalers to be “preposterous and pestiferous lucubrations,” “mischievous error,” and “modern delusion,” and hear in return that, in its present shape, their theory is “an absurd and blasphemous abomination, and the sooner it is universally scouted and scorned, the better” — “a fraud and a counterfeit of the worst description.” Since this is their spirit to each other, he who is forced to condemn them both, can expect little courtesy from either.

Let us, however, examine their arguments; and first, of those who advocate “thorough and consistent Teetotalism.”

The words for wine, say they, “must have been, at first, necessarily applied and restricted to fresh unfermented juices. The primitive process of wine-pressing is well expressed in Gen. 40:11, and also by Milton,” etc. Now, every Scripturian must know that this statement is not only without Bible evidence, but contradicted by it. Noah “drank of the wine and was drunken.” This is the first recorded application of the word “wine.” Is it restricted to fresh unfermented juice? Or does it not necessarily mean the fermented liquor of the grape? This case was long before the dream of Pharoah’s butler, even if the process described there had been called wine-pressing in the chapter, which it is not. Nor are the reveries of “Paradise Lost” as to Eve, of weight on such a question.

We are referred to Lev. 10, “where Teetotalism is proclaimed as the Eternal’s selected remedy for intemperance.” But, in the first place, the restriction applies simply to Aaron and his sons. Secondly, it was in force only when they went into the tabernacle. Is this to proclaim Teetotalism? Does it not rather imply the ordinary liberty of the priests to use what on a special occasion was forbidden? Another writer reminds us that under the New Testament all believers are priests. Does he forget that.if Aaron’s sons are to be spiritually interpreted. so is the type of wine and strong drink? Thus natural joy and excitement seem to be shadowed under these drinks, as the uncovering of the head and rending of the garments were the symbols of natural sorrow. Neither becomes those who enjoy nearness to God. His presence was meant to silence both. Whether, therefore, we look at the type or the antitype, Lev. 10 does not proclaim Teetotalism.

Next, we are told of “the establishment of the first Teetotal Society among the Holy Nazarites.” Now, not only is their case a peculiar one like the priests, but there are points essential to the Nazarite which differ alike from the theory and the practice of the Teetotal Society. His separation consisted in three grand heads; he was to eat or drink nothing that came from the vine, to let his hair grow and to come at no dead body. None of these things is put forth as a moral principle more than another. The whole was a carnal ordinance imposed until the time of reformation. To drink wine was defiling to the Nazarite, but it was equally so to cut the hair. Christianity is subject to no part of the ordinance as such, though we may well profit by the truths which it figures. Moreover, when the days of his separation were

fulfilled, God ordained that the Nazarite should shave his head and might drink wine. (Num. 6:13-20.) Does God ordain what is wrong? The Nazarite was then free to drink the very wine which before had been forbidden. Does this permission really square with Teetotalism? Lastly, what has the principle of a separation from all vine-produce, in common with the Teetotal pledge? The Nazarite was forbidden the unfermented as well as the fermented, the solid no less than the liquid. Does this accord with the reasoning of "Tirosh lo yayin," or of any other accredited work of Teetotalers? If not one entire verse of Num. 6 can be honestly interpreted in favour of their society, why cite the Nazarite ritual as their precursor? And bow do they seek to escape from the net in which they have entangled their own feet? They are forced to allow that from everything pertaining to the vine the Nazarites equally abstained; but, with self-complacent scepticism, they add, that we, with our better chemical knowledge, of course do not! Can Christians tamely listen to such contempt of God's Word? The folly, too, of these speeches is only less gross than the sin; for, what had a Nazarite to do with chemistry?

It is enough to remark on the message of the angel of the Lord to the mothers of Samson and of John the Baptist, that theirs was an extraordinary Nazariteship. Again, the Rechabites obeyed in neither building nor sowing, quite as much as in drinking no wine. Their case, if applicable at all, would prove far too much. If it proved that men ought to drink no wine, it would prove that they ought to build no houses. (Jer. 35.) So Daniel and his friends abstained from the king's meat as well as his wine. If they drank water, they eat pulse. It was a

question of Jewish cleanness,4 not of morality. Accordingly, Dan 10:3 clearly implies that, save in special circumstances, as fasting, the prophet did eat flesh and drink wine. The cup offered to the Lord upon the cross, and refused, did not consist of wine merely, and therefore does not bear on the present question. The case of Timothy, as we have seen, proves the reverse of what it is cited to prove.

The reader has before him the Scriptural argument of the extreme party. Let him judge whether the case of the moderate section is not as decided a failure. They appeal to Rom. 14:21 and 1 Cor. 8:13. The question is: does the scope of these texts coincide with that of a Teetotal Society? Is a drunkard the “weak brother” for whose sake the Christian is to forbear using his liberty?5 The simple reading of 1 Cor. 8 shows that nothing is further from the mind of the Spirit. The question here is one “touching things offered unto idols.” The Teetotal question has nothing to do with such offerings. That is, the essential features of the Corinthian difficulty do not exist in the case of Temperance. Rom. 14 (though it mentions wine, which 1 Cor. 8 does not,) is as little to the purpose. At Rome, the dispute grew not out of Gentile idolatry, but out of the religious scruples of the Jewish converts, who, on certain days, would not partake of meats and drinks. Thus have we seen Daniel abstain from his customary food for three whole weeks, and every Jew similarly testified the affliction of his soul on the Day of Atonement. But it is preposterous to apply such a principle to a Temperance Society. Some Gentiles in these days may refrain from fermented liquors; others may adopt a vegetable diet. Is the Christian to be tossed to and fro at the whim of a world which perverts

everything? Is he to refuse anything which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth? Lastly, the way in which "the weak brother" is treated is as revolting as untrue. 1 Cor. 5 proves beyond cavil that a drunkard is a wicked person to be put away from the Church, not a weak brother to be borne with. But Rom. 14 describes a class as different as possible — not false professors of lax, unholy walk, but real Christians who had feebly realised their deliverance from all questions about things legally clean or unclean. Therefore they retained a conscience in bondage to days, meats and drinks. Where is the analogy between the Roman and the Corinthian cases, and a Teetotal Society? There is none. But if so, it is clear that their argument from Rom. 14 and 1 Cor. 8 totally perishes.

Let us now glance at the various words in the Bible rendered "wine," "strong drink," etc., and others connected with them. No wise man will deny the possibility or the fact of mistakes in human translations, nor will he say that the least error is of no moment. Yet, the believing soul will rejoice to prove afresh how God has watched over His Word, not indeed to keep the erudite from error, but to feed His babes day by day, even through the least exact translation. A show of learning may puzzle the unlettered Christian who meddles with it, as it will surely mislead those who trust it rather than the Spirit of God. But the minutest accuracy serves only to confirm the general teaching of Scripture, as might be expected by the heart that knows who and what God is.

The ordinary expression for “wine” in the Hebrew Scriptures is h yayin which occurs an hundred and forty-one times. Like the Greek οἶνος, the Latin vinum, the Italian and Spanish vino, the French vin, the German wein, and the corresponding if not cognate term in other languages, it designates the fermented juice of the grape. Gesenius conjectures that it comes from an unused root, conveying the ideas of “boiling,” “foaming,” etc., which is the parent of the word for “mud,” as well as of that for “wine.” The allusion seems clear to the frothy, turbid appearance which accompanies the process of fermentation; for, as Pliny, treating of this subject, observes, “Fervet vinum, cum ex musto in vinum transit.” The phrase also shows that, in the common parlance of his day, the naturalist drew the same line which moderns do between the fermented and the unfermented juice of the grape.6 In Eichhorn’s edition of J. Simonis Lex. Man. Hebraicum, it is derived from the same source, “a fermentatione,” while it is added that others seek the sense of softness — “sensum mollitiei et glabritiei quaerunt, et yayin h vertunt proprie molle, i.e. molliter per fauces descenders, conf. Prov. 23:31 et Cant. 7:10.” Perhaps the author of “Anti-Bacchus” would no longer argue as he did, (page 94,) that the word is derived from the word “to press, squeeze,” and therefore simply means an expressed juice.

The usage of the term, as it is more important than the etymology, so is it clear, uniform and decisive. What we mean by “wine,” unless it be modified by the context which surrounds it, is certainly an intoxicating vinous liquor.7 That this is the force of yayin h will be apparent from the inspection of all the texts wherein it occurs. In

Num. 6:3, “liquor of grapes” is distinguished from yayin h, or “wine,” as is plain to the English reader. The “wine” was evidently the fermented liquor: the other phrase denotes any unfermented drink of grape-juice, and, therefore, forbids the thought that it was comprehended under that word. Hence yayin was even employed to denote the effect of wine. Accordingly, Gesenius gives “crapula” as a secondary meaning, and refers to Gen. 9:24. 1 Sam. 1:14; 25:37.

It has been said by Dr. Eadie, in his Biblical Cyclopaedia, that it sometimes seems to signify the growing fruit of the vineyard; (Deut. 28:39. Jer. 40:10-12;) as in Germany, the vine-dresser in spring or summer will say: “The wine” blooms or flourishes well — “the wine” will be good this season. Now, supposing that the expressions were parallel, (for the first text speaks of drinking the wine, and surely not the growing fruit,) it is manifest that the phrase is figurative. Nor can a figurative use alter the real force of a word in any language. In fine, yayin h and Wein simply and properly designate the fermented liquor made from vine-fruit, and not the fruit itself, nor the bare juice while issuing from the press, though by a figure common to ancient and modern tongues, the one or the other may be so applied.8 The text already referred to (Num. 6: 3) separates yayin from “moist grapes or dried” not less clearly than from any unfermented “liquor of grapes.”

In the Market Drayton Discussion (page 30) it was alleged, and without contradiction, that in Num. 6:4 the wine and the vine tree are synonymous phrases, — that the word yayin was employed for the vine itself. This is not the fact. The margin gives the original literally, whence the English reader may see that gephen, the

regular word for the vine) is found, no less than h, (yayin,) which appears here as well as in Judges 13:14, not as a synonymous expletive, but for greater accuracy. It is true that gephen alone is the general Hebrew term for “vine.” Still, yayin is clearly added here, as conveying not the same but another idea, to complete and define the sense, because the word in itself was capable of being applied to other plants, as in 2 Kings 4:39. That is, the allegation is unfounded. Yet, granting it, what does it prove? That there was, or was not, metonymy in such cases? Is it gravely sought to make h yayin, in its proper sense, interchangeable, not merely with the “liquor of grapes,” from which the Spirit of God expressly distinguishes it, nor with the grapes, but even with the vine itself? That it may, by a bold but common form of speech, represent the fruit, is confessed on all hands.

Again, the Teetotal argument founded upon Ps. 104:13-15 is worthless, because oil and bread, no less than wine, are said to be brought out of the earth. If the context prove “wine” to mean grapes, it equally proves “bread” to mean corn; and if the latter is unreasonable, (save in a figurative way, as in Isa. 28:28,) so is the former.9 In truth, to deny figures in Scripture is, so far as man can, to torture and degrade the Word of God. It is ignorance, or worse. And those who boast loudly of their own matter-of-fact exegesis will generally be found to literalize the figurative, to allegorize the historical, and so to stultify the whole divine record by forced human accuracy in a part, which coheres neither with itself nor with all the rest.

Perhaps it is not amiss to add some few testimonies taken casually as to the nature of wine, which are quite

needless to the simple reader of the Bible, but which may possibly be of use where the mind is pre-occupied with the modern oppositions of science, falsely so called. “Wine, an agreeable spirituous liquor, produced by fermentation from those vegetable substances that contain saccharine matter.” (Encycl. Brit. 3rd edition, vol. 18, page 809.) — “The simplest case of fermentation is that of must, or the expressed juice of the grape, which, when exposed, either in close or open vessels, to a temperature of about 70°, soon begins to give forth carbonic acid, and to become turbid and frothy. After a time, a scum collects on the surface and a sediment is deposited: the liquor, which had grown warm, gradually cools and clears, loses its sweet taste, and is converted into wine.” (Brande’s Dictionary of Science.) — “All that which is now called wine in the east,” says Mr. Henry Homes, Missionary at Constantinople, “is as truly wine as that which is called wine in France. Whether boiled or not, whether sweet or sour, all the known wines are intoxicating.10 The boiling which the people of certain districts choose to give to their must, for the purpose of securing a wine that will keep better, should not be confounded with the boiling of the same must for the purpose of making sugar and molasses. In the former case, it is boiled perhaps half an hour, and not reduced one-twentieth in bulk; in the latter case, it is reduced more than three-fourths in quantity. And hence an ‘inspissated wine’ should never be confounded with inspissated grape-juice. The former gives us an intoxicating liquor, and the latter a syrup, or molasses. We might say the same of sweet wines, that although by drying the grapes in the sun, or by boiling the must, the wine is preserved sweeter than it would otherwise be, such wines are still intoxicating, and some of them

extremely so. In some districts, the people regard the boiled wines as stronger than the simple fermented ones.11 Those of Mount Lebanon are stronger than the majority of the wines of France." (Bibliotheca Sacra, page 292.) — Mr. Eli Smith, another Missionary in Syria, communicated to the same work the results of his own specific inquiry. "Unintoxicating wines," he says, "I have not been able to hear of. All wines, they say, will intoxicate more or less. So in regard to fermentation, when inquiring if there exists any such thing as unfermented wine, I have uniformly been met wish a stare of surprise. The very idea seems to be regarded as an absurdity."

Ch. v.

Genesis.

9:21. — He (Noah) drank of the wine, and was drunken.

24. — Noah awoke from his wine.

14:18. — Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine.

19:32. — Come let us make our father drink wine.

33. — And they made their father drink wine.

34. — Let us make him drink wine.

35. — And they made their father drink wine.

27:25. — And he brought him wine.

49:11. — He washed his garments in wine.

12. — His eyes [shall be] red with wine.

Exodus.

29:40. — And the fourth of an hin of wine for a drink-offering.

Leviticus.

10:9. — Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee.

23:13. — And the drink-offering thereof [shall be] of wine.

Numbers

6:3. — He shall separate [himself] from wine, and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine

4. — He shall eat nothing that is made of the vine tree (margin, vine of the wine.)

20. — And after that the Nazarite may drink wine.

16:5. — And the fourth [part] of an hin of wine for a drink-offering.

7. — And for a drink-offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine.

10. — And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of wine.

28:14. — And their drink-offering shall be half an hin of wine.

Deuteronomy.

14:26. — For oxen or for sheep or for wine.

28:39. — But shalt neither drink [of] the wine, nor gather.12 29:6. — Neither have ye drunk wine.

32:33. — Their wine [is] the poison of dragons.

38. — Which drank the wine of their drink-offerings.

Joshua.

9:4. — And wine bottles, old, and rent.

13. — And these bottles of wine.

Judges.

13:4. — And drink not wine.

7. — And now drink no wine.

13:14. — She may not eat of any [thing] that cometh of the vine (lit. vine of the wine) neither let her drink wine.
13 19:19. — And there is bread and wine also for me.

1 Samuel.

1:14. — Put away thy wine from thee.

15. — I have drunk neither wine.

24. — And one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine.

10: 3. — And another carrying a bottle of wine.

16:20. — With bread, and a bottle of wine.

25:18. — Two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine.

37. — And when the wine was gone out of Nabal

2 Samuel.

13:28. — Mark ye now when Amnon’s heart is merry with wine.

16: 1. — And an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2. — And the wine, that such as be faint may drink.

1 Chronicles.

9:29. — And the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil.

12:40. — And bunches of raisins, and wine and oil.

27:27. — Over the increase of the vineyards for the wine cellars.

2 Chronicles.

2:10. — And twenty thousand bathe of wine,

15. — And the barley the oil, and the wine.

11:11. — And store of victuals, and of oil and wine.

Nehemiah.

2:1. — Wine [was] before him: and I took up the wine.

6:15. — And had taken of them bread and wine.

5:18. — And once in ten days store of all sorts of wine.

13:15. — As also wine, grapes, and figs.

Esther.

1:7. — And royal wine in abundance.

10. — When the heart of the king was merry with wine.

5:6. — And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine.

7:2. — On the second day at the banquet of wine.

7. — And the king, arising from the banquet of wine.

8. — Into the place of the banquet of wine.

Job.

1:13. — Eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house.

18. — Eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house.

32:19. — Behold, my belly [[is]] as wine [which] hath no vent.

Psalms.

60:3. — Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

75:8. — And the wine is red.

78:65. — A mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

104:15. — And wine [that] maketh glad the heart of man.

Proverbs.

4:17. — For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

9:2. — She hath mingled her wine.

5. — Drink of the wine [which] I have mingled.

20:1. — Wine is a mocker.14

21:17. — He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

23:20. — Be not among wine-bibbers.

30. — They that tarry long at the wine.

31. — Look not thou at the wine when it is red.15

31:4. — Not for kings to drink wine.

6. — And wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

Ecclesiastes.

2:3. — I sought in mine heart. to give myself unto wine.

9:7. — And drink thy wine with a merry heart.

10:19. — And wine maketh merry.

Song Of Solomon.

1:2. — For thy love is better than wine.

4. — We will remember thy love more than wine,

2:4. — He brought me to the banqueting house. (margin, house of wine.)

4:10. — How much better is thy love than wine.

5:1. — I have drunk my wine with my milk.

7:9. — Like the best wine for my beloved.

8:2. — I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine.

Isaiah,

5:11. — That continue until night, [till] wine inflame them!

12. — The tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts.

22. — Woe unto [them that are] mighty to drink wine,

16:10. — The treaders shall tread out no wine in [their] presses.

22:13. — Eating flesh, and drinking wine.

24:9. — They shall not drink wine with a song.

11. — A vying for wine in the streets.

28:1. — The fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine.

7. — But they also have erred through wine... they are swallowed up of wine.

29:9. — They are drunken, but not with wine.

51:21. — Afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine.

65:1. — Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money.

66:12. — Come ye, [say they,] I will fetch wine.

Jeremiah.

13:12. — (bis) Every bottle shall be filled with wine.

23:9. — I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome.

25:15. — Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand

35:2. — And give them wine to drink.

5. — And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites, pots full of wine and cups, and I said unto them, drink ye wine

6. — We will drink no wine: for Jonadab commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed.

8. — To drink no wine all our days.

14. — He commanded his sons not to drink wine.

40:10. — But ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits and oil

12. — And gathered wine and summer fruits very much

48:33. — And I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses.

61:7. — The nations have drunken of her wine.

Lamentations.

2:12. — They say to their mothers, where [is] corn and wine 7

Ezekiel.

27:18. — In the wine of Helbon, and white wool.

44:2f. — Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter the inner court.

Daniel.

1:6. — Of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank.

8. — With the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.

16. — And the wine that they should drink.

10:3. — Neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth.

Hosea.

4:11. — Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away the heart.

7:6. — The princes have made [him] sick with bottles of wine.

9:4. — They shall not offer wine [offerings] to the Lord.

14:7. — The scent thereof [shall be] as the wine of Lebanon.

Joel.

1:6. — And howl, all ye drinkers of wine.

3:3 — And sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

Amos.

2:8. — And they drink wine of the condemned in the house

12. — But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink.

6:11. — But ye shall not drink wine of them.

6:6. — That drink wine in bowls.

9:14. — And they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine

Micah.

2:11. — I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink 6:16. — And sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

Habakkuk.

2:5. — Because he transgresseth by wine

Zephaniah.

1:13. — And they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof

Haggai.

2:12. — Bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any mess.

Zechariah.

9:15. — And they shall drink [and] make a noise as through wine.

10:7. — And their heart shall rejoice as through wine.

§ 2. Tirosh, NEW WINE.

There are eight and thirty occurrences of the word h (tirosh) in Scripture. From the root obtain, and hence to

inherit, Furst deduces the meaning das Gewonnene, i.e. a something gained, an acquisition. In this etymology Moses Stuart acquiesces. — “Sic dictum (says Eichhorn’s Simonis) quod se possessorem hominis faciat, ejus cerebrum occupando, ut ille non amplius sui compos sit.” Parkhurst likewise considered it to mean new wine, so called from its strongly intoxicating quality in taking possession of a man, as in Hosea 4:11, where the LXX give μέθυσμα and the Vulgate “ebrietas.” Substantially alike is the opinion of Gesenius: “mustum (ita dictum, quia inebriando cerebrum occupat,” etc.)16 He adds, at the close, “de succo uvae Jes. 65. 8.” So De Wette, Wie wenn sich Saft in der Traube findet: elsewhere he translates the word lost, save in two places, where he has Wein. In the same text, Luther renders it Most. The LXX render it ὁ ῥὼξ ἐν τῶ βότρυι>, and similarly the Vulgate, “granum in botro.” There does not appear to be any greater difficulty in the phrase of the prophet than in the well known Latin verse, “Vixque merum capiunt grana quod intus habent.” In four places the Vulgate has vindemia, while the English Bible makes it “new wine” in twelve passages, and once “sweet wine.” Dr. S. Lee also and Mr. W. Osborne, Jugn., along with Fürst, hold the word to designate “new wine.”

A strange hypothesis has been recently advocated by a few, that the word signifies every where the solid produce of the vine. But this is amply refuted by Isa. 62:8, Prov. 3:10, and Joel 2:24, which texts clearly indicate its liquid nature.17 Not but that h (tirosh) like h (yayin), may be used poetically for the vintage fruit, which produced the liquor. Thus Gesenius explained Isa. 24:7, “luget mustum (i.e. lugent uvae,”) but this in no wise unsettled the proper meaning of the term. Stress

has been laid by the author of Tirosh lo Yayin upon Micah 6:15, as if it established plainly and beyond cavil the above distinction. “Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.” To use the argument stated by Dr. Lees in its most pointed form, “Thou shalt tread tirosh, (not drink it,) for the thing trodden out was what usually was drunk. The first was grapes, the second wine — fresh, unfermented wine.” But the Christian turns to the written Word, and finds the specious but shadowy structure dispersed into thin air by the touch of a single verse. The argument from Micah is that, though the h (yayin) was distinctively a liquid, i.e. wine, h (tirosh) being trodden must be a solid, i.e. grapes. Now, “it is written again” in Isa. 16:10, “the treaders shall tread out no WINE h (yayin) in their presses.” The same Hebrew word expresses the “treading” or “treading out;” and if the one predicates treading of tirosh, the other intimates that it was equally possible in the case of yayin. Thus, the proof in Micah 6 for the solidity of tirosh turns out to be null. Precisely the same reason appears in Isa. 16 for the solidity of yayin, which was nevertheless alleged to be in contrast with tirosh, as wine with grapes! Even yet we have not reached the climax of absurdity. For the same controversialist who pleads the treading of tirosh as proving it to be grapes, in contradistinction to yayin, (or, what be calls “fresh unfermented wine,”) had, only in the preceding page, urged the treading of yayin as a real, not figurative, thing! In other words, what was emphatically a solid in page 31 becomes distinctively a liquid in page 32. And yet this crude and inconsistent reasoning has imposed with talismanic power upon many. Witness the works of

Mr. Mearns, and of Mr. Burne, as well as of the original and more learned authors of the sophism.

Much to the same effect has been built upon the expression “laid by heaps,” in 2 Chr. 31:5, 6. Advantage is taken of the marginal rendering “dates” instead of “honey,” i.e. honey of grapes, dates, etc. It is sought to dispose of the other liquids by making tirosh and yitzhar mean, not “wine and oil,” but grapes and orchard fruit. Now, waiving other questions, is it not plain that the difficulty of applying “heaps” to wine and oil, is not greater than in the case of oxen and sheep? Besides, what more natural than that the liquids (supposing them to be such) should be preserved in suitable vessels and thus literally be “laid by heaps?” Details are not given; they might well be deemed unnecessary where the nature of the thing implies the sense. But to alter the force of words, because of these or kindred difficulties which owe their existence to the reader’s ignorance, is too serious trifling with the Word of God. Still less to the purpose are such texts as Deut. 11:14; (comparing 15;) Deut. 12:17; (if you read verse 16; 2 Kings 18:32; Neh. 10:37; Neh. 13:5; Isa. 65:8; Hosea 2:9, 22; Hosea 9:2; Joel 1:10, 11: they are in no way adverse to the common and correct interpretation. Haggai 1:11 has been cited as more formidable, the argument being that a drought could only affect growing fruit, and, therefore, that tirosh must mean grapes, not wine. But the rest of the verse refutes this slavish literalism. If the drought could affect men, cattle and the labour of the hands, why not wine and oil?

The last criticism I would notice on this head, is that given in Burne’s Concordance, pages 70-73. It originated with Dr. Lees, who has attempted to make the

term shekar (translated “strong drink”) mean, in Deut. 14:26, no drink at all, but solid dates, the fruit of the palm. The opinion is founded upon the supposed analogy of expression in the context. Thus, in verse 22, we have tirosh and yitzhar, and in verse 26 we have yayin and shekar. What more evident than their respective correspondence! It matters not that elsewhere the same writers insist most strongly upon their distinction, nay, contrast. Here it serves a purpose, that yayin, as a specific term, should bear exact correspondence to the generic term tirosh, and even that shekar should correspond to yitzhar! In such reasoning, which is best answered by being simply enunciated, it is hard to say whether positive error or suicidal incongruity is most conspicuous.

Ch. v.

Genesis.

27:28. — And plenty of corn and wine.

37. — And with corn and wine have I sustained him.

Numbers.

18:12. — All the best of the wine,

Deuteronomy.

7:13 — Thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil.

11:14. — That thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine.

12:17. — The tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine.

14:23. — The tithe of thy corn, of thy wine.

18:4. — Firstfruit [also] of thy corn, of thy wine

28:51. — Not leave thee [either] corn, wine; or oil

33:28. — A land of corn and wine.

Judges.

9:13. — Should I leave my wine.

2 KINGS.

18:32. — A land of corn and wine.

2 CHRONICLES.

31:5. — The firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil.

32:28. — The increase of corn, and wine, and oil.

Nehemiah.

5:11 — The corn, the wine, and the oil

10:37 — Of wine and of oil; unto the priests.

39. — Of the new wine and the oil unto the chambers.

13:5. — The tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil.

12. — The tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil.

Psalms.

4:7. — Their corn and their wine increased.

Proverbs.

3:10. — And thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Isaiah.

24:7. — The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth.

36:17. — A land of corn and wine.

62:8. — The sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine.

65:8. — As the new Wine is found in the cluster.

Jeremiah.

31:12. — For wheat, and for wine, and for oil.

Hosea.

2:8. — And wine, (margin, new wine,) and oil.

9. — And my wine in the season thereof

22. — The earth shah bear the corn, and the wine, and the oil.

4:11. — Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart18 7:14 — Assemble themselves for corn and for Wine.

9:2. — And the new wine shall fail in her.

Joel.

1:10. — The new wine is dried up.

2:19. — I will send you corn, and wine, and oil.

24. — The fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

Micah.

6:15. — And sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

Haggai.

1:11. — Upon the new wine, and upon the oil.

Zechariah.

9:17. — And new wine the maids.

§ 3. Chamar, RED WINE.

The Chaldee chamar and the Hebrew chamar appear, in slightly varied forms, in the appended texts. According to Prof. Stuart, the word comes from a root which means to ferment. So Gesenius, “a fermentando dictum.” In Ps. 75:8, the root is found, which Stuart and De Wette view in the sense of “ferments;” our translators preferred “is red;” and Gesenius, “aestavit, ferbuit,” though he also gives “rubuit” as a secondary sense. In Deut. 32:14, Stuart understands it to mean “fermentable liquor,” the LXX οἶνον, the Vulgate merum, and De Wette Wein. Khamr is the name in Arabic for ordinary wine, as distinguished from Nebidh, a home-made fermented raisin-liquor, but so mild that its alcoholic quality is often undetected.

Ch. v.

Ezra.

6:9. — Wheat, salt, wine, according to the appointment of the priests.

7:22. — And to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil.

Daniel.

8:1. — Belshazzar the king drank wine before the thousand.

2. — Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded.

4. — They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold.

23. — Thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them.

Deuteronomy.

32:14. — And thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

Isaiah.

27:2. — A vineyard of red wine. [Some copies read Daleth for Res which, if right, would alter the meaning to “pleasant vineyard,” but most read as given in the text.]

§ 4. Soveh, WINE DRINK.

The word h soveh is found thrice, and evidently means an intoxicating liquor. It seems analogous, in many respects, to μέθυ (Lat. temetum,) which competent scholars say was perhaps at first any strong drink. Gesenius explains it “1) vinum Jes. 1:22; Nahum 1:10. 2) compotatio Hosea 4:18.” It is formed from a verb meaning to swill, (“potavit, idque intemperantius, ingurgitavit.” Gesenius) and is a different thing from the debash or mel uvarum, i.e. must boiled down to one half (defrutum) or one third. (sapa.) Pliny and Columella treat these preparations not as wine, but as allied to it. They were syrups used as medicaments for their wines, and, naturally enough, are described in the treatises which discuss the nature and kinds of ancient wine. We have already seen that, even if the word meant a boiled wine, such a liquor inebriates.

The author of “Anti-Bacchus,” (p. 97,) in the face of the Bible, maintains, from what he calls science, that the alcoholic wines of Palestine, if they did exist at all, were too weak to make persons reel, and therefore that, in such a case, they must have been drugged. Nevertheless, he regards soveh with suspicion. It is

never, says he, “recommended in Scripture.” Not so the “Concordance of Scripture and Science,” though the author confesses “it is somewhat remarkable that such an innocent preparation (!) should bear a name derived from a verb signifying to ‘guzzle.’“ In Tirosh lo Yayin, it is treated as the “most superior wine.” But sapa and defrutum, with which various Teetotal writers would identify the Hebrew term, refer to grape jellies. “They were nothing else,” says Prof. Ramsay, whom they are bold enough to cite, as if he agreed with their view; whereas, in fact, he destroys it.

Ch. v.

Isaiah.

1:22. — Thy silver is become dross; thy wine mixed 19 with water.

Ch. v.

Hosea.

4:18. — Their drink is sour. (margin, gone20)

Nahum.

1:10. — And while they are drunken [as] drunkards.

§ 5. Asis, SWEET WINE.

Besides occurring once as spiced wine of the juice of pomegranate, it is found in four places and translated sweet, or new wine. It is unquestionably derived from a root which means to tread: “succus, calcando expressus, spec. succus uvarum, mustum.” (Eichhorn’s Simonis.) In its origin, then, the word may have denoted no more than “trodden juice.” Its usage is a different question.

Thus, it was employed to express the juice of fruit irrespective of treading; and the context of Isa. 49:26, and Joel 1:5, is decisive as to its intoxicating quality where it denotes wine: Prof. Stuart himself admits this, as regards the former passage. Lowth, in his Notes on Isaiah, gives it as his opinion that even Cant. 8:2 means wine, made inebriating by the mixture of more powerful ingredients.

Ch. v.

Canticles.

8:2. — To drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

Isaiah.

19:26. — Drunken with their own blood, as with sweet (margin, new) wine.

Joel.

1:5. — Howl, all ye drinkers of wine because of the new wine.

3:18. — The mountains shall drop down new wine.

Amos.

9:13. — And the mountains shall drop sweet (margin, or new) wine.

§ 6 Mimsak, MIXED WINE.

The word occurs twice. It is explained by Gesenius as “vinum aromatibus mixtum. i.q..” The mingling here was not, as in some cases, to dilute the liquor, but rather to increase its strength, like Pliny’s “vinum aromatites,”21

and the τρίμμα of Athenaeus. Accordingly, in the the LXX we have κέρασμα in Isa. 65:8. The Vulgate is more like the authorized version, “libatis.” The meaning seems to be “preparing the mixed wine for Meni,” i.e. Fate. De Wette adopts Mills’ view of the word here, as “the goblet” in which the mingling took place; in Prov. 23 he renders it “the mixed wine.” The word mezeg occurs in Cant. 7:2, where it is vaguely rendered “liquor,” but better represented in the margin as “mixture.” “Vinum mixtum, i.e. aromatibus conditum,” is the explanation of Gesenius. So also the kindred mesek “mixture,” in Ps. 75:8. The verb-form occurs in the sense of mingling spice with wine in Prov. 9:25 and Isa. 5:22, which Gesenius classes together. One is a good, the other is an evil connection. Nor is the word mesek, but mimsak, in Prov. 23:30, contrary to the statement in the “Concordance of Scripture and Science,” pages 62, 63. It is also the strange assertion of another writer (Temperance Topic, page 129) that the Greek ἄκρατος answers to the Hebrew mesek in reality, the latter means “mingled;” the former, “unmingled.” The same writer gives merum to another Hebrew word, whereas it is the Latin term for ἄκρατος.

Ch. v.

Proverbs.

23:30. — They that go to seek mixed wine.

Isaiah.

65:11. — And that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

§ 7. Shekar, STRONG DRINK.

Shekar h to which the Greek

σίκερα evidently corresponds, is connected by Fürst with ker, a Sanscrit root, signifying to burn; by others, with an Arabian word, (whence our sugar,) which denoted a saccharine substance, whether in a liquid or in a concrete state. The verb-form22 is frequently used in Scripture (as in Gen. 9:21; 1 Sam. 1:14; 2 Sam. 11:13; Isa. 29:9, etc.) to denote intoxication. Accordingly, Gesenius explains the term, “temetum, potus inebrians, sive vinum Num. 28:7, sive potus vini instar inebrians,” etc. The ancient versions, the Greek and Latin fathers, and the lexicographers of early and recent times coincide in representing it as a liquor possessed of inebriating properties. See especially Prov. 20:1, and Isa. 28:7. In one passage only it is clear, if we compare Num. 28:7, with Ex. 29:40, that wine is meant. Elsewhere, it was an artificial wine made of barley, wheat, honey, or any fruits, excepting grapes. So Jerome says: “Sicera Hebraeo sermone omnis potio, quae inebriare potest, sive illa,” etc. In Eichhorn’s Simonis it is explained as an intoxicating drink, 1) a sort of ale. 2) palm-wine. Bishop Lowth prefers the rendering “sweet drink,” yet considers that its name is “from its remarkable inebriating qualities.” De Wette agrees with the English translators, in rendering it “strong drink,” which is obviously better than “sweet drink;” because the latter does not, and the former does, convey the idea of the intoxicating power which the very best authorities connect with shekar. It occurs in Scripture twenty-three times, where its force is evident. That it refers to sweet fruit in Deut. 14 is, as we have seen in § 2, a mere and groundless fancy. The word “eat” (akal) is no valid

objection to the liquid interpretation, as the reader may gather from Isa. 55:1. See also Eichhorn's Simonis and Gesenius on Isa. 7:15, 22.

Ch. v.

Leviticus.

10:9. — Do not drink wine nor strong drink.

Numbers.

6:3. — He shall separate [himself] from wine, and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink 28:7. — In the holy [place] shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD for a drink-offering.

Deuteronomy

14:26. — For wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth.

29:6. — Neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink.

Judges.

13:4. — And drink not wine nor strong drink.

7. — And now drink no wine nor strong drink.

14. — Neither let her drink wine or strong drink.

1 SAMUEL.

1:15. — I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink.

Psalms.

69:12. — The song of the drunkards. (margin, drinkers of strong drink.)

Proverbs.

20:1. — Strong drink [is] raging

31:4. — Nor for princes strong drink.

6. — Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish.

Isaiah.

5:11. — Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink.

22. — Men of strength to mingle strong drink

24:9. — Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

28:7. — Through strong drink are out of the way: the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink they are out of the way through strong drink.

29:9. — They stagger, but not with strong drink.

56:12. — And we will fill ourselves with strong drink.

Micah.

2:11. — I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink.

§8. Shemarim, LEES.

The term is twice (Isa. 25:6) translated “wines on the lees,” twice “lees,” (Jer. 48:11. Zeph. 1:12,) and once “dregs.” (Ps. 75: 8.) It is said that a kindred word is found in the Coptic, where it means “fermentation.” In the first of these texts De Wette gives Hefen-weinen, and in the others Hefen, which means lees, as well as yeast. Most lexicographers derive the Hebrew word from a root meaning to preserve, but their explanations are various. That rich old wine is figuratively referred to in

Isa. 25:6, they admit, as many accurate versions have done. The link is easy between lees and wine, not so with “sweetmeats,” whereby some would render the word.

§ 9. Yekev, WINEFAT.

It may be well to notice that h yekev, rendered “wine” in Deut. 16:13, means “wine-press,” or specifically, “winefat.” (ὑπολήνιον, lacus torcularis.) See Num. 18:27, 30; Deut. 15:14; Judges 7:25; 2 Kings 6:27; Job 24:11; Prov. 3:10; Isa. 5:2; Isa. 16:10; Jer. 48:33; Hosea 9:2; Joel 2:24; Joel 3:13; Haggai 2:16; Zech. 14:10, which are all the other passages of the Old Testament where the word occurs. The vat is used figuratively for the wine it produced, as the floor is for the corn. De Wette preserves the figure thus: Wenn du einsammelst von deiner Tenne und von deiner Kelter, as the LXX and the Vulgate had done before him. The margin of the English Bible gives the literal force in the only instance where the text departs from it.

§ 10. Ashisheh Anavim, GRAPE CAKES.

In Hosea 3:1, we find the expression h Ashisheh Anavim, which is rendered in our version “flagons of wine.” (Margin, grapes.) Gen. 40:10, 11; Gen. 49:11; Jer. 25:5; Num. 6:3; Num. 13:20, 23; Deut. 23:24; Deut. 32:14, 23; Neh. 13:15; Isa. 5:2, 4, Jer. 8:13; Hosea 9:10; Amos 9:13, are all the passages where the former term occurs, and thereby the marginal translation is justified. This is confirmed by the connected word which means, says Gesenius, “liba, spec. qualia ex uvis passis in certam quandam formam constipatis parare solebant.” “Cakes of grapes,” or “raisins,” would appear to be the

right rendering. So De Wette gives Rosinen-kuchen, not only here, but in 2 Sam. 6:19;1 Chr. 16:3; Cant. 2:5.

§ 11. Devash, GRAPE HONEY.

Besides this confection of dried grapes, a kind of grape-jelly, or jam, is mentioned in Scripture. (See §4.) For this the Hebrews employed the term h devash, which was used to denote not only common and wild honey, but also an artificial syrup made of grapes, dates, etc., as probably is meant in Gen. 43:11, 2 Chr. 31:5, and Ezek. 27:17. Gesenius adds, that it was must boiled down to one-third or one-half — Gr. ἕφημα; lat. sapa, defrutum, etc. “The finest grapes” (says a modern traveller in Palestine, Dr. Robinson,) “are dried as raisins; and the rest being trodden and pressed, the juice is boiled down to a syrup, which, under the name of dibs, (debesh in Hebrew, signifying honey and syrup of grapes,) is much used by all classes, wherever vineyards are found, as a condiment with their food.” There is no reason whatever to confound, either with this syrup or with the grape-cakes of Hosea 3:1, any one of the terms for wine which have been already explained These preparations of the grape, whether solid or liquid, were probably unintoxicating.23 Not so the soveh, the asis, and the shemarim, with which some modern writers have sought to identify them. (See §§ 4, 5, and 8.)

While upon this we may refer to Mamtakkim, the plural of a word which means “sweetness.” Besides in Cant. 5:16, which is not to our purpose, it occurs in Neh. 8:10, where our Bible gives “the sweet.” It is used to express sweet drink, without defining any particular kind, and so may have included yayin and shekar. Some may be inclined to view it as οἰνόμελι of the Greek, or mulsum

of the Roman. This was of two kinds; in the one honey was mixed with wine, in the other with must. The latter, therefore, says Prof. Ramsay, was merely a very rich fruit syrup in no way allied to wine. The context, however, seems to favour the less determinate sense.

§ 12. Dema, LIQUORS.

Moreover, in Exodus 22:29, we have another word which is as yet unnoticed, h dema. In the text, it is rendered "liquor," and in the margin "tear," which is its literal force, though, being here used metaphorically of must and oil dropping from the press, our version gives the sense. De Wette has Mit der Fülle [deiner Tenne] und dem Ausflusse [deiner-Kelter] as the LXX,with equal indefiniteness, ἀπαρχὰς ἄλωνος καὶ ληνοῦ. A similar application of "tears" occurs among the Arabs, as well as in Latin and Greek authors. Thus Theophrastus has τῶν δένδρων τὰ δάκρυα, and Pliny, arborum lacrimas. (N. H. lib. xi. c. 6.)

§ 13. Chometz, VINEGAR.

Prof. Stuart has attempted, but in vain, to disturb the common rendering of h chometz in Num. 6, where the Nazarite, it is said, "shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink." So the LXX ὄξος ἐξ οἴνου καὶ ὄξος ἐκ σίκερα οὐ πιέται, and the Vulgate, "acetum ex vino, et ex qualibet alla potione." It occurs also in Ruth 2:14, Ps. 69:21, Prov. 10:26, Prov. 25:20, and in all is translated "vinegar." But in the Nazarite's case, the American Professor would have it to mean fermented wine, or fermented shekar, because of its derivation. Now, it is clear that, if this notion had been well founded, it would destroy his own main position, that

yayin and shekar are generic terms, including fermented as well as unfermented liquors. Again, it is certain, first, that fermentation is equally predicable of acetous as of vinous liquors; and, secondly, that if, strictly speaking, h chometz means acidification, then acidulated wine or strong drink, is a phrase more applicable to the acetous than to the vinous fermentation. Thus, then, the true restriction laid down in the chapter respects: 1, the fermented liquor of grapes, h (yayin) and of other fruits or of grain, etc. h (shekar); 2, the vinegar of these liquors; 3, any liquor of grapes24 ("potus ex uvis solutis s. maceratis," Gesenius.) This might include such a liquor as is described in the dream of Pharaoh's butler, which certainly was not wine25 or vinegar, and was called neither the one nor the other in Gen. 42; 4, moist grapes or dried; and 5, any thing made of the vine, from the kernels even to the husk.

It remains to notice the corresponding words in the New Testament.

§ 1. OINOE, WINE.

Οἶνος, (vinum,) is unquestionably "the general term for the fermented juice of the grape." (Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, page 1044.) When accompanied by qualifying terms, it was, like our own "wine," capable of being applied to wines made of palm-juice, lotus-juice, etc. Similarly modified, it was even used of the fermented juice of apples, pears, etc., and of barley, wheat, etc. There was, besides, a large class termed οἶνοι ὑγιεινοί into which drugs were introduced for medicinal purposes. Not only, says Prof. Ramsay, were spices, etc., steeped in wine or incorporated during fermentation, but even the precious perfumed

essential oil (unguenta) were mixed with it before it was drunk. In Rev. 6:6, οἶνος is used, by metonymy, for the vine-fruit.26 But such a case affords not the slightest ground for the notion that it ever does or can denote, properly, anything else than wine, i.e. fermented grape-liquor. Such reasoning would unsettle the basis of all language. And yet this is the ground on which some27 have ventured to assail the ordinary meaning which has been hitherto attached to h tirosh and h yayin — to the former in every passage, and to the latter in certain texts of the Old Testament! Here, as there, we have the corn (distinguished, it is true, in a remarkable way) and the oil. And it is the association of the corn and the oil with the wine, which, among other considerations, has led to the fancy that their Hebrew equivalents, so often joined together, mean really, and not metonymically only, the solid produce or ingathering of the field, the orchard and the vineyard. Nobody denies that we may so understand the words by the familiar figure which takes the wine and oil as the chief representatives of all the other products. From this figurative application to argue that ἔλαιον and οἶνος really mean olives and grapes respectively — from a similar premise to draw the same deduction as to yitzhar and tirosh 28 — is a sample of the critical ingenuity of our day, which makes up in temerity what it lacks in truth and even the appearance of reason.

Ch. v.

Matthew.

9:17. — Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles.

Mark.

2:22. — And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

15: 23. — They gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh.29

Luke.

1:15. — And shall drink neither wine.

5:37. — And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles.

38. — But new wine must be put into new bottles.30

Ch. v.

7:33. — Neither eating bread, nor drinking wine.

10:34. — Pouring in oil and wine.

John.

8:3. — And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto him, they have no wine.

9. — The water that was made wine.31

10. — At the beginning doth set forth good wine thou hast kept the good wine until now.

4:46. — Where he made the water wine.

Romans.

14:21. — Neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine.

Ephesians.

5:18. — And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. 32 Ch. v.

1 Timothy.

3:8. — Not given to much wine.

5:23. — Use a little wine [or thy stomach's sake.

Titus.

2:3. — Not given to much wine.

Revelation.

6:6. — Hurt not the oil and the wine.

14:8. — The wine of the wrath of her fornication.

10. — The wine of the wrath of God.

16:19. — The wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

18:2. — Drunk with the wine of her fornication.

18:3. — The wine of the wrath of her fornication.

13. — And frankincense, and wine, and oil.

19:15. — And he treadeth the wine-press.

§ 2. ΑΚΡΑΤΟΕ, PURE WINE.

In Rev. 14:10, we have the expression

τοῦ κεκερασμένου ἀκράτου, more fully describing "the wine of the wrath of God." Lowth and others consider it to convey an antithesis which does not appear in our version — "the mingled unmingled;" that is, the figure is taken from wine unmixed with water to weaken, but mixed with drugs to increase, its strength. See § 6. The reader may compare an illustration in the Septuagint

version of Ps. 75:8, οἴνου ἀκράτου πλῆρες κεράσματος. Here, as in Revelation, the word is an adjective, and so understood in the best translations. Since, however, it is beyond doubt used substantivally, like the Latin merum, in classic authors, it seems well to notice a word, which is included in most Teetotal lists of New Testament terms.

§ 3. ΓΛΕΥΚΟΕ, SWEET WINE.

Γλεῦκος appears to be used properly and ordinarily in classic Greek to denote the sweet unfermented juice of the grape. Nevertheless, it is certain, from Acts 2:13 compared with verse 16, that this is not its New Testament sense. That a word may bear a meaning here different from what it has in classic authors is confessed. (Temperance Topic, pages 95, 96.) The context shows that a wine which was familiarly known to possess intoxicating properties, is meant. Mere irony! exclaim Dr. Lees (M. D. Discussion, p. 18) and Mr. Burne. (Concordance, pp. 100, 101.) But if the insinuation of the Jewish scoffers had been ironical, would an apostle have gravely replied, “These are not drunken, AS YE SUPPOSE” — not merely as ye say? Do men in these days pretend to understand the taunt better than St. Peter did? Or if he be allowed to have understood, do they mean that he chose to allude to it as if he had not? Alas! what is such reasoning; if it be not taking pleasure in unrighteousness? The sense is perfectly simple to those who believe the Word of God. Mr. Burne tells us, that “no part of Scripture is better calculated to support the wine question doctrines of Total Abstinence, than this.” It may be so; but the Christian will thence conclude how far the Bible sanctions Teetotalism, and

how far such interpretations inspire him with confidence in the judgment of its advocates.

Ch. v.

Acts.

2:13. — These men are full of new wine.

§ 4. ΕΙΚΕΡΑ, STRONG DRINK.

Είκερα is explained by Liddell and Scott as “a sweet fermented liquor, strong drink.” As it is clearly the Hellenistic form of h shekar the reader is referred to the Hebrew word. Like γλεῦκος, it is found but once in the New Testament.

Ch. v.

Luke.

1:15. — And shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.

§ 5. ΓΕΝΝΗΜΑ ΑΜΠΕΛΟΥ, FRUIT OF THE VINE

‘To these we may add a phrase used by our Lord in Matt. 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18, τοῦ γεννήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου, “the fruit or product of the vine.” Those who consider tirosh to mean all vintage-fruit, treat γ. τ. ἀ. as being synonymous with that Hebrew term. (Market Drayton Discussion, p. 26.) Now, every text where the Greek expression occurs gives a clear and decisive negative. The three Gospels prove that “this fruit of the vine” was a liquid capable of being drunk, not a solid, as the grape or vintage-fruit is. Yet this gross inconsistency appears, not only in the same page, but in the same line of the leading Teetotal champion! Nor is this all. The

same individual, in the Temperance Topic, p. 130, affirms that the language of our Lord is only applicable to old unfermented wine, or to raisin-wine! Does tirosh mean either, even on his own scheme? or on the scheme of any body else?

Having now, expressly or tacitly, exposed the character of the principal statements, reasonings and criticisms, put forth by those who claim Scriptural support for the Teetotal Society, I would gladly close. But it is my painful duty to warn brethren in Christ, who may be here and there among them, of two baleful heresies which appear in the recent expositions of the extreme school. One is the impious folly which seeks to undermine the plenary inspiration of God's Book. They assert that Genesis e. g. is not a literal inspired history of creation, that it opens with a fable which is the vesture of great spiritual truths, that it is a book with distinct and composite elements — its Elohim and Jehovah documents dovetailed in the history. (Temp. Topic, pp. 118-120. See Burne's Concordance, pp. 10-12, 78.) Hence the change of the common rendering of 2 Tim. 3:16, without a reason or even a notice to the unsuspecting reader. Thus, the author of "Anti-Bacchus" (p. 112) silently reads "all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable,"33 etc. Obviously the object is to turn the edge of the text, nay, to make it appear to sanction an error which its correct sense utterly condemns! The practical consequence also is clear. Man sits in judgment upon that word which shall judge him at the last day, and censures with various degrees of incredulity the Pentateuch of Moses, Canticles, Daniel, the Gospels, Hebrews, and the Apocalypse. He cannot find what he expects a priori, and at once stigmatizes such and such

books as at issue with his ephemeral notions, and therefore not given by inspiration of God. That is, his poor, proud mind, constitutes itself the umpire of what God ought to be and to reveal, and condemns whatever is against or above itself!

The real question, then, is between the present day, and (not the Jews nor even Moses, but) the Holy Ghost. And what do these self-blinded men? Fairly scouting what they slightingly call the doctrine of verbal and scientific inspiration, they decidedly maintain the superior certainty of modern science, where it ventures to speak. Let us be thankful at least for their candour, and pray that God may be pleased to rouse such of His sheep as have listened to a voice far, far different from that of the good Shepherd. When men are fallen to such a depth of rationalism as to ridicule divine inspiration as divine ventriloquy, and to deny the exactness of scriptural history, which they would sublimate into a myth, it is time to remember that all men have not faith, and to shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

Still more deadly is the second heresy. It is the open denial of the divine glory of the Lord Jesus and of his atonement. One clear passage may suffice where a doctrine is so revolting and blasphemous. It occurs in a critique on a volume of Rhymes, the theology of which is characterized as execrable and immoral. On what ground? “By a gross misunderstanding of Scripture, [it] represents the God of truth as charging one man’s sins upon another! i.e. Adam’s upon us! ours upon Adam!! and all upon Jesus Christ!!! Does not God look upon things as they are? Deals he in legal or theological fictions?” (Temperance Topic, p. 136.) Most readers

probably know as little as I do about these Rhymes; their doctrine may not be unexceptionably propounded, but ever, Christian will feel the sentiments just quoted to be the slander of an enemy upon the cross and personal honour of Him who is God over all blessed for ever. To reason upon it would suppose an amount of ignorance and indifference about the Saviour's glory, which cannot be presumed in any who really know and love Him.

Such are the doctrines of accredited advocates of Teetotalism — not of all, but of some who rank as the ablest, the most active, and the most acceptable in the society, excepting perhaps the well-known Popish priest, Father Mathew. Alas! Romanism, Infidelity, and Latitudinarianism are rapidly finding and taking common ground against all who value the doctrine of Christ. But can you, dear brethren, countenance, in any way, those who hold, publish, preach these soul-destroying errors? If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And what fellowship hath light with darkness? Remember, he that biddeth such an one God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11.) To those who are still in the darkness of nature I do not address these exhortations, but to you who are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS.

1 * Will it be said that the use of either is, abstractedly, wrong? was John the Baptist more pure than his Lord and Saviour? Note well, too that he abstained from

bread as well as from wine. Are we, therefore, to abandon either or both?

2 † Hence the fallacy of reasoning upon such words as “Pagan,” “Knave,” etc., which are known to have shifted their meaning, This cannot he assumed as to yayin. Besides, the alleged parallel does not hold good. When “Pagan.” was first used, it had not the sense of “idolator;” whereas, when yayin is first used in Scripture it has the sense of “fermented grape-liquor.” (See Gen. 9:21; Gen. 19:32 35.)

3 * Writers on Toxicology include alcohol in the list. But so the ablest consider the chloride of sodium, or common salt. See Taylor on Poisons, pages 2, 3, 291. is then the use of salt, as a condiment of food, evil or immoral? — The same principle applies to vinegar.

4 * Who is it that appeals to the priests or the Nazarites, Samson or Daniel? Is it not the teetotal advocate? And who, then, is chargeable with the fallacy that the record of a Jewish practice establishes its propriety as a Christian principle?

5 * See the “Scriptural claims of Teetotalism. By Newman Hall, B.A.,” pages 4, 10, 11, 15, 16, 24. (1848.)

6 * It is worthy of note that the passage which Dr. Lees cites from the same author (N.H. xiv. c. 9) proves the reverse of what it is quoted for and corroborates what I have stated in the text. “Medium inter dulcia vinu mque est quad Graeci ἀεὶ γλευκός vocant hoc est, semper mustum.” Clearly, we have wine and sweets discriminated with care, and not in the least confounded with the intermediate substance, “always-must.” Does this show that vinum is applied to unfermented things? Does it not prove the contrary!

7 *In this note are presented the definitions of “wise” given in all the correct dictionaries of the English language to which I have access. The term is explained in its popular sense, as our adversaries demand That it may, by a natural license of speech, be transferred to the liquor which is going to be fermented, is readily allowed. The mind, anticipating that process, may thus, with a certain logical inexactness, give the name to the juice where it is just pressed from, or even while it is still contained in, the grape. Such is the plain usage of the term in the sentences which Dr. Lees has culled from the writings of Greek and Latin poets, etc., and of certain modern travellers, naturalists, lexicographers and others. Candid men, who have read passages with their context must be aware that the meaning grafted on them by the too ardent defenders of Total Abstinence, differs from what was intended by the authors themselves. In the above use of the word, there is moral if not physical accuracy. It is a metaphorical application, which leaves the real import undisturbed. Where this import is departed from, it is incumbent upon any correct writer to supply by the context, plain, indubitable evidence of the sense in which it is employed. So we do nowadays in speaking of “home-made wines.” Save in exceptional cases where the contrary is clearly implied, the original import, the popular usage and the scientific definition alike agree to include fermentation in the idea of wine. Thus it is explained: “1. The fermented juice of the grape. 2. Preparations of vegetables by fermentation, called by the general name of wines, have quite different qualities from the plant; for no fruit, taken crude, has the intoxicating quality of grape.” (Johnson’s Dictionary, and so Walker.) — “The fermented juice of the grape,” etc. “A

liquor drawn from vegetable bodies and fermented: but more especially the fermented juice of the fruit of the vine." (Maunder, — "The fermented juice of the grape; the juice of certain fruits prepared with sugar spirits, etc., as raspberry-wine, gooseberry wine," etc. [Of course, this latter clause applies only to modern liquors.] (Craig's Univ. Etym., etc, Dict vol. ii., page 1075.)

8 * See Burne's "Concordance of Scripture and Science," where, speaking of Isa. 16:10 and Jer. 48:33, the author says (in page 42) that yayin, being applied to the juice while issuing from the press, must of necessity have been unfermented; and in page 46, that these same texts seem, upon mature consideration, to refer, in reality, to grapes. That is, we are allowed our choice of meanings, provided we give up the real value of the word! So in page 41, Gen. 9:21 and 14:18 are compared, and the word is confessed to me" intoxicating wine in the former, but in the latter "the probability is great that it was unfermented." In page 45, we are told a different tale: "It is not improbable that the 'bread and yayin' offered to Abram (Gen. 14:18) was bread and grapes." The remarks on Eccles. 9:7 and Cant. 2:4 need no reply.

9 * In Lam. 2:12, the swooning children say to their mothers, "Where [is] corn and wine?" (yayin) There is no more reason here to confound wine with grapes than corn with the food which was made of it. In 1 Sam. 25:18, 2 Sam. 16:1, 1 Chr. 12:40, Neh. 13:15, yayin is distinguished from grapes or raisins, which is enough to show the fallacy of the reasoning.

10 * In the face of their own canon that the Bible is not a modern book we are referred by a Teetotal Essayist to

Mr. Buckingham's Travels' who informs us that the wines of Lebanon and Helbon are the principal wines of the present day, the former being a boiled, and the latter a rich sweet wine." Hence, it is evident (!) that the two wines most esteemed in the Holy Land were boiled wines, were thick and sweet, and consequently (!!) were not alcoholic: and these wines were the liquors which the Psalmist says make glad the heart of man," etc. !!! But even if we let pass this last assumption, Mr. Homes proves as a fact, in the face of "Anti-Bachus," (page 102,) that boiled and sweet wines are intoxicating. Teetotal writers constantly and most confidently state the reverse — that the boiled and the sweet wines of ancient times could not intoxicate.

11 † Let those who desire to know how far the statements of "AntiBacchus" are trustworthy, compare pages 60, 76 77-88, where it is constantly reiterated that sweet wines are necessarily weak, and that boiled wines are destitute of strength It is supposed to be certain. But the supposition is unfounded, as appears from notorious facts stated by a Missionary, who seems to be friendly to Total Abstinence.

12 * The gathering does not refer to the wine in this passage, any more than the treading refers to the vineyards in Judges 9:27. In both texts our translators have supplied "the grapes" as needed to complete the sense in English. To a Hebrew it was implied. The version of De Wette adheres rigorously to the original.

13 † Even Dr. Grindrod ("Bacchus," page 237.) cites the mothers of Samson and John the Baptist in order to prove the pernicious influence of alcoholic drinks during gestation. As usual, Mr. Parsons goes still lower in his

remarks. “The command given to Samson’s mother was not arbitrary, but physiological.... Alcohol might have made a weakling and a pigmy of Samson, and therefore (!!) God enjoined ‘total abstinence’ both on him and his mother.” (“Anti-Bacchus,” page 33.) “God works by means: and, in performing a miracle, rarely acts contrary to his own natural laws.” (Ibid, page 112.) Passing by the medical view as foreign to our discussion, I am sure that spiritual men will resent these statements, because in truth they deny miracles. For that which is according to natural laws, cannot, for that reason, be a miracle. What are these manifestations of divine power, but effects contrary to the established course of things? — a suspension of, or departure from, knows physical laws? To attribute them to such laws is just to explain awry all that is really miraculous. Nor can any notion be more opposed by fact. Thus, what was the link between the all-over coming strength, and the uncut locks of Samson? “If I be shaven,” said he, “then my strength will go from me.” Is this a sequence of which physiology takes cognizance?

14 * It has been said that yayin and shekar have a generic sense so as to include unfermented liquors. But our text shows the contrary. In the strong sententious style of the book, a caution is given about wine not a hint drops about a particular sort. “Yayin is a mocker, shekar is raging.” Most Teetotallers who cite or reason on it, alter the phrase to “the ‘wine’ which is ‘a mocker.”‘ This obviously perverts the meaning. The passage warns against being” deceived by any wine or strong drink. vague terms as these are said to be, and, quite unrestricted seem inconsistent with the hypothesis. On the other hand, the warning agrees well

with these two words, if they are the general terms for the fermented liquors of the grape, and of other fruit or grain, known in ancient times. And such is precisely the definition of them given by the most unbiased and the best judges.

15 † The reader will scarcely be prepared for the strange version and the still stranger interpretation of this verse which Mr. Walters (“Alcoholic Wines,” pages 32, 33,) adopts from the Truth Seeker. “Look not then upon the wine, ‘when it is turbid, when it giveth its eye in the cup when it moveth itself upwards,’ that is, when it exhibits all the signs of having become alcoholic; and what is the reason assigned? ‘For at last,’ the process being finished, and the fruit of the vine being converted into alcohol, ‘it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.”‘ Now it is enough to observe here that the words translated “moveth itself upwards” might, as regards the sense, be far better rendered “goeth down sweetly,” “smoothly” or “straightly.” see Cant. 7:9. Hence, in the former text, the Vulgate gives “ingreditur blande,” etc.; in both texts De Wette has sanft hinunter gleitet. The verse portrays the process of intoxication, not of fermenting; the seductiveness clearly belongs to the wine-cup and not the slightest allusion is made to the signs exhibited by the liquor in the vat. Assuredly it does not become alcoholic after it is poured into the cup, as this extraordinary gloss insinuates.

16 * In the Report of the Market Drayton Discussion, published by Dr. E. R. Lees, that gentleman (p. 29,) “begged to say he entirely concurred with Gesenius as far as his definition went, for he interpreted this same tirosh by the Latin mustum.” This statement is most astonishing, especially when it is added that, in p. 26,

the same speaker had defined Tirsosh to be “fruit of the vine,” in its natural or solid slate, comprehending “wine in the cluster,” vinum pendens, grapes, raisins, etc.; in short, all “vintage fruit.” Greek — “Genneema tees ampelou,” So elsewhere Dr. L. has said, “That tirosh ranked amongst the class of fruital produce, however, we have not the slightest doubt.” (Temperance Topic page 64, and passim.) Now, the definition of Gesenins right or wrong, is entirely different. He held tirosh in itself to mean a liquid Dr. L. holds it to he a solid. The one defines it as must, the other as grape fruit. And yet many, never seeing so plain a discrepancy, have swallowed this bold affirmation of entire concurrence with Gesenius’ definition! Dr. L. does not interpret tirosh by mustum, unless he alter the recognised meaning of the Latin word to suit his explanation of the Hebrew, which is utterly unwarrantable. Where does mustum signify solid grapes. It was applied to the grape Juice when expressed and passing through the process of fermentation, which usually lasted for about nine days When that subsided, the mustum became vinum. (Dr. Smith’s Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, page 1045.) It is notorious that the fumes of the liquor, while fermenting, may inebriate.

17 * Even the author of “Anti-Bacchus” (page 95) and Prof. Stuart have bowed to the force of these Scriptures and rejected this chimera unless they have changed their mind since. The former, it is true, like others or the same school, is rather self-contradictory. Thus, in pp. 94, 95, he says Tirosh supposed to come from a root meaning head, chief, or beginning “ may refer to the head or berry of the grape, or to the first or chief-juice that begins to flow, from the fruit; it is, therefore, (!)

promiscuously rendered in the English version by the terms “wine,” or “new wine.” In Isa. 65:8, it alludes we are told, to the juice in the ripe fruit before it was expressed, in Ps. 4, it refers to the growth of the unripe grape so other Scriptures which associate corn and tirosh. But in Joel 2:24, and Prov 3:10, it is, according to the same writer, the fresh juice which bursts from the winepress.

18 * In the body of “Anti-Bacchus,” Mr. Parsons observes, (page 95,) that “it is classed with wine, and certainly (!) may mean clusters of grape, eaten with the wine which the sensualists there mentioned were drinking at their luxurious feasts;” and in a note he adds, that “to say wine and wine take away the heart, would be tautology.” But this is not what Scripture says, and it is hard to see the impropriety of classing wine and must together as instruments in the seduction of the heart from God. The text shows, first, that yayin no more includes tirosh than tirosh includes yayin; and, secondly, that the effort to distinguish them as “Tirosh lo yayin” attempts to do, is fallacious. They are distinct but not to be set the one against the other, as if the former were good and the latter evil: for as many texts elsewhere show the either may occur in a connection of blessing, so this Scripture proves that both may be the occasion of sin. It is singular that “Anti-Bacchus” has the same text cited thus in page 13: ‘“Wine and strong wine,” says Hosea, “take away the heart.” That is, what was “strong wine” at the beginning of the essay may mean clusters of grapes at the end. In truth, the term means neither the one nor the other. The authorised version is right, and these proposed but conflicting renderings are both of them baseless and untrue.

19 * The word above rendered “mixed.” means “circumcised,” “cut:” a mode of expression common to the East and West, even to the present day. Prof. Stuart admits that the liquor in question was, in its original state lively and sparkling, and perhaps alcoholic; but if so, a chemist would say there was no doubt of the latter. — Let me take the opportunity of saying that, in the Teetotal publications I have seen, the references to the profane writers of antiquity are not a whit more accurate than their use of Scripture. A partial view of the author cited is ? day; of frequent occurrence, and not the gravest fault. Thus, In “Anti-Bacchus,” much emphasis is laid upon the wine described by Homer. It was μελιηδής, and therefore! free from alcohol. But, how comes it that the reader is never told of the praise lavished on the vine of these times, because it was αἶθοψ, i.e. fiery or sparkling? Does the latter epithet prove that the wine was not fermented? or that it owed this characteristic to drugs? — Again, it is said, all writers seem to agree that the Greek wines were lusciously sweet. Now, without multiplying proofs to the contrary, we are assured by Prof. Ramsay that “there is no foundation whatever for the remark that the finest Greek wines, especially the products of the islands in the Aegean and Ionian seas, belonged for the most part, to the luscious sweet class. The very reverse is proved by the epithets αὐστηρός σκληρός, λεπτός, and the like, applied to a great number, while γλυκύς and γλυκάζων are designations comparatively rare, except in the vague language of poetry. ‘Vinum omne dulce minus odoratum,’ says Pliny. (H.N. 14:11, and the ancients appear to have been fully sensible that sweet wines could not be swallowed either with pleasure or safety, except in small quantitles. The mistake had arisen from

not perceiving that the expressions οἶνος γλυκύς and οἶνος ἡδύς joys are by no means necessarily synonymous. The former signifies wine positively sweet; the latter, wine agreeable to the taste, from the absence of acidity, in most cases indicating nothing more than sound wine." (Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, page 1050) Further, what unbiased person could argue from the expressions of a Roman poet that Lesbian was absolutely without alcohol? That it was among the weakest wines, and therefore termed comparatively "innocent," all admit but that it was an unfermented liquor is mere assumption. Those who assert it are bound to adduce something like evidence.

20 * There seems to be strong reason to prefer, with the margin, the natural sense of soor, as "departed," "past.'' ("recessit, i.e.transiit," Geseniuis Compare Amos 6:7. So the Vulgate, "Separatum est convivium eorum," and De Wette, Ist ihr Zechgelag vorüber.

21 * When the same writer says that "the most wholesome wine is that which has nothing added to the must," he does not mean that the liquor in its unfermented state, was wine, properly so called; but that the mixture of drugs (which, according to the Roman custom, was previous to or during fermentation, and not, as with the Greeks, afterwards) is injurious. Neither does he intimate that this most wholesome wine would not inebriate. Again, the filtering which he describes was meant, not to make the wine more moral, if we may use the absurd term of Theophrastus, but more useful to debauchees who wished to drink an immense quantity with the least possible danger of intoxication.

22 * It is thus explained by Gesenius, “1) bibit ad satietem (i. q. ravah) Haggai 1:6, ad hilaritatem usque Cant. 5:1; Gen. 43:34. Saepius est 2) inebriavit se,” etc.

23 * Nevertheless, Mr. W. E. Lane, author of “The Modern Egyptians,” speaks of zebeed as a name given to an intoxicating conserve, as well as to raisin-liquor.

24 * Green grapes are, to this day, used in various ways in making a sour-sweet drink, as we are informed by the Missionary Homes. — In Eichhorn’s Simonis, we are told that F. M. Lufft understood it to be the sherbet of the Arabs.

25 † “Aegyptii enim (says Rosenmüller) ante Psammetichi regis aetatem neque ipsi biberunt vinum, neque Diis libarunt, docti a sacerdotibus vino inesse pestiferum aliquid.”

26 * Just so, we speak of “a wine-grower,” instead of employing the more literally correct phrase, “a grower of vines.” But no sensible person would say, on this account, that “wine” means “vine fruit.” The same principle applies to the figurative usage of vinum (for grapes) in Plantus, or Varro, and to vinum pendens in Cato: it explains the remark of Gesner, that vinum, vitis, uvae, and vinea, as kindred terms, are sometimes used synonymously. If unlimited there is no sense in it, but this the learned critic never meant — While upon the point, it may be observed that Livy does not speak of any invaders being ‘‘captivated by the lusciousness of the fruits, especially of the grape.” His real words are: “Eam gentem, traditur fama, dulcedine frugum, maximeque vini nova tum voluptate captam, Alpes transisse, agrosque ab Etruscis ante cultos possedisse: et invexisse in Galliam vinum illiciendae gentis caussa,” etc. No

scholar can have the least hesitation as to the meaning of the historian. By vini and vinum, he means “wine,” and nothing else. Dr. Lees has no warrant for asserting that “the grape” is meant in Livy v. 33. Compare ix. 30; x. 23; xxv. 23; xxvi. 14; xxix. 8; xxxvi. 11, 14; xl. 19; xli. 4: xliv. 30, where, as in the passage so needlessly questioned, the word has its ordinary sense.

27 † See, for example, Dr. Kitto’s “Physical History of Palestine.” page 324., and the articles by another, on Drink, Fruit, and Wine, in his “Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature.” It is only fair to add, that in his “Pictorial Bible” (Standard edition, 1848) the author is understood to have returned to the older and sounder view, if we are to judge by the note on Micah 6:16.

28 ‡ For a specimen of the inconsistency which goes hand in hand with error, compare, as to yitzhar and shemen, Burne’s Concordance, pages 44, 43, and 56. The real difference between the two words is, that the latter means oil in general, the former means new fresh oil — “oleum,” says Gesenius, “maxime recens et hornum.” The relation is similar to that between tirosh and yayin. Pliny’s phrase — mustum olei — may illustrate this.

29 * The corresponding text in Matthew 27:34 seems to show that the wine in this case was a sour small liquor, ὄξος, translated vinegar, and occurring in verse 38 of the same chapter, Mark 15:36, Luke 23:36, John 19:29 (bis), 30. The mingling with myrrh was to produce stupefaction, and the Lord refused that cup.

30 † In commenting on verse 39, the author of “Anti-Bacchus,” (pages 107, 108,) first urges that it may simply allude to taste, some preferring old wine, and

others new. This notion at least derives no countenance from the text, which seems to insinuate the reverse. But another explanation follows, — “Old wines, among the Romans, signified week wines, very thick wines, wines that had not fermented and would not ferment. Pliny says, etc.... A sweet weak wine was therefore (!) the old wine most sought alter,” etc. Now, without pausing more than to state that the opening and closing remarks of the same paragraph are at open war, a citation from Prof. Ramsay’s art. VINUM, is sufficient to show how far the second explanation is more successful than the first. “The ancients considered old wine, not only more grateful to the palate, but also more wholesome and invigorating, (Athen. i. p. 26. a. ii. p. 36. e.) and, curiously enough, Pliny seems to suppose that it grew more strong and fiery by age, in consequence of the dissipation of the watery particles.” (H. N. vii. 3.) From the preceding page of Dr. Smith’s Dictionary, it will be seen that the great majority of inferior wines were thin, watery and contained little alcohol. See pages 1047-1049. After this it is needless to expose the many wild statements of Archdeacon Jeffreys in his sermon on the wine made and used by our Lord. Of these, two may be cited as samples: “the unfermented wines of the ancients were the only wines that would keep.” “The most esteemed and highly valued wines of the ancients, were totally different from what we now call wines.... were unfermented and unintoxicating.” Even Dr. Lees, extreme a partisan as he is, admits that the unfermented liquor was best when new, while of fermented wine we say “the old is better.” (Temperance Topic, page 130.) This frank avowal; will also dispose of Prof. Moses Stuart’s argument in page 53 of the same publication.

31 * Is it right to quote Augustine (in Joann. tract 8) as a Teetotal witness in any way or degree I In truth, he argues against the Manicheans, and taxes them with perverseness in attributing wine to the devil whilst they would eat grapes. The reasoning may be indifferent, as the language is overstrained. Of this, advantage is taken to prop up the delusion which the illustrious Bishop of Hippo was exposing! For what is the theory of “Tirosh lo Yayin” but the Manichean error in new dress? Nor was it confined to these heretics. Theodoret, Epiphanius and Basil the Great describe other sects which maintained views about wine similar to those held by modern Teetotalers of the ultra ranks. Dr. Grindrod admits the fact, but denies the analogy, on the ground that these ancient parties were heterodox in matters of faith. Now, first, the analogy is in reference to wine, and this does not depend upon other matters. Secondly, it will be shown presently that, as in ancient so. In modern times, heterodoxy in matters of faith accompanies these views.

32 † Two words in this verse have bees subjected to no little violence. First, it is said that μεθύσκεσθε means drenched rather than “drunk;” secondly, that ἀσωτία means danger, not “excess.” Now, it is certain that In the New Testament the regular word for drunkenness is μέθη, for drunkard μέθυσος, for making drunk μεθύσκω, and for getting drunk μεθύω, or, what is equivalent the preceding word in Mid. as in our text. That μεθύει, in 1 Cor. 11:21, means “plentifully fed,” is the mistaken notion of Mr. Ewing in his N. T. Lexicon. But πεινᾶ compels us to no such violence. Our own version faithfully represents the original, and makes good sense, in spite of the strictures of Archdeacon Jeffreys, The Septuagint translation of Ps. 36:8 is not parallel,

because wine is not in question, and the expression is certainly figurative. The Vulgate also has the same — Inebriabunter ab ubertate domus tuae.” Here, on the contrary, it is a question of literal eating and drinking. All admit that μ. may metaphorically mean “soaked,” “steeped,” as in oil or water. Hence it may also be transferred from the effect of wine to that of passion. But all this does not in the least weaken the proper meaning of the word. Accordingly, even in 1 Cor 11:21, we have the same idea given in the versions of Wiclif, (1380,) Tyndal, (1534.) Cranmer, (1539,) Geneva, (1557,) Rheims, (1582,) and the authorized. (1611.) It is the same sense in John 2:10, save in the Bible of Wiclif, who has “fulfilled.” The ruler evidently did know the good wine from the had: he is merely describing the custom of substituting a worse wine when men could not discern the difference. That is, the context favours the common rendering. — Next, that ἀσωτία in the New Testament, means “excess,” “prodigality,” “dissoluteness,” is manifest. It has just the same force in classic Greek. He who has read Aristotle’s Eth. Nicom. may remember the sentence (ii. 7) — περὶ δὲ δόσιν χρημάτων καὶ λῆψιν, μεστὴς μὲν ἐλευθεριότης, ὑπερβολὴ δὲ καὶ ἔλλειψις, ἀσωτία καὶ ἀνελευθερία. Not danger but waste is the thought. So in Rhet. ii., where it is contrasted with φειδώ. This may justify our translators: though “riotousness” as given in the Rhemish, accords well with their own version of Titus 1:6, 1 Peter 4:4 and of a kindred word in Luke 15:13. Wiclif translated the last clause “wherein is lechery.” But to say that he understood the evil to be a property of the wine, is as unwarrantable as to say that our translators meant “the excess” to be in the first drop. Just apply this notion to 1 Tim. 5:23, and we should have the Spirit of

God advising Timothy to use a little “danger,” or “excess,” or even worse, for his stomach’s sake. Their absurdity is not the worst thing about these pseudo-criticisms. It is evident, I think, that ἀσωτία refers to μεθ. οἴνῳ, not to one only, but both.

33 * I am prepared, if this were the proper place and, season, to prove that the authorized version contains the only right translation of the verse: that for the proposed alteration there is no warrens either in Scripture or (so far as I know) in any correct Greek writing; and that the Holy Ghost elsewhere, by a similar construction, owns the common rendering with approval and shows the change to be the offspring of man’s meddling semi-erudition.

The Sabbath and the Lord's Day

“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” Acts 20:6, 7.

We are about to consider at this time, as most of you know, the testimony of scripture to “the Lord’s-day,” a term which is no invention of man. Indeed that very phrase of itself, given as it is by the Holy Ghost, to one who has an adequate sense of the force of scripture, would be conclusive for the object now in view; which is to assert its authority, to explain its special place in God’s word, and to enforce its claims on every Christian heart. It is scarcely needful to say that I am not about to present it as having anything to do with the sabbath. Such a reference must always weaken and obscure the Lord’s-day. In fact, it tends to destroy the character of an institution which those who love the Lord desire to hold firmly and enjoy with all their hearts.

Of course I am aware that there are many pious men who think that there must be a sensible loss, if we exclude from the Lord’s-day the place which the sabbath possessed of old; and this indeed justly in the minds of those saints of God who had peculiar associations with Israel before our Lord came, and all through His earthly ministry. It is not, again, as in the least degree denying the importance of the sabbath that this distinctness of character is asserted; for it will fall within the scope of

what I am now about to open if I a little draw out the contrast between the two days. But I say “contrast” advisedly. It will be my place to show that it is not simply a question of what is expedient, or what the church has inaugurated, or what the world acknowledges in the codes of law. I claim for it divine authority, although that authority be exercised in a characteristic manner. This may strike the minds of some Christians as singular, for the simple reason, that they have been habitually accustomed to regard the law as the only expression of divine will.

One understands that such should be the thought of an infidel. I remember sometime ago reading — an unhappy task, but still it did come within the scope of my duty to read — the essay of a well-known freethinker of our day, who takes this very ground — that the only thing which is authoritative, definite, and even positive, is the law. This we can understand of course in an unbeliever, for the sad and sufficient reason that Christ is no more than a blank to him. He may admire this or that in Christ, but he sees neither His personal glory nor the perfection of His ways as displaying God and man here below. Still it does seem an egregious thing that any person looking at the Ten Commandments should say that there alone, not in Christ, we find what is positive, and that what the New Testament furnishes is only negative. For any one to read, “Thou shalt not do this,” and “Thou shalt not do that,” and then declare that this is positive, on the one hand, and on the other to behold the revelation of God in Christ in the New Testament, and then tell me that this is negative, is certainly strong. Yet one can understand an infidel saying so; but it is no less singular than painful that children of God in our day should be found

on the same platform as far as this is concerned. They at least ought to know that Christ alone, not the law, is the perfect expression of God in man. It does not become the saint of God to be thus blind to His moral glory.

I hope to show at this time, then, that there is not the smallest need of endeavouring to supplement what the New Testament lays down as to the Lord's-day. There is a clear and ample intimation of God's mind and will as to it; for though it may come in a way which to minds accustomed to the law, and owning no other rule, must certainly seem strange, it will be their great gain if disabused of so serious an error. The truth is that the manner in which the Spirit of God has brought out the Lord's-day in the later revelation is in exact keeping with the fullest unfoldings of divine grace and truth. It is bound up with Christ Himself, and yet more manifestly with His work. Hence, it is lack of faith and of spiritual intelligence, as well as a slight of revelation, to rest it on abstract grounds, especially on one so low and foreign to Christianity as the law of nature. It is in striking contrast with a perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages. It is not true that one day in seven is the sabbath but the seventh day, any more than the dream of a change in the sabbath to the first day to constitute the Lord's-day.

I shall proceed to show that the Lord's-day is an essential part of Christianity for the believer while here below. It is not a human or ecclesiastical arrangement that comes in, desirable in its way, and to be accepted with thankfulness but destitute of a divine claim. I believe, on the contrary, that, while given of the Lord no less than the sabbath, its nature, association, and object are far higher. No Christian man can intelligently put a

slight on the Lord's-day. I know there are those who, affecting a kind of ultra-spirituality, will tell you that, for their part, all days are alike the Lord's-day to them. My answer is, that it would be more true to say that to such no day is the Lord's-day. Such is the effect of not owning the Lord's-day as pre-eminently His. The theory of making every day to be His ends in the practice that no day is really so. It is want of faith as a starting-point; and where faith is lacking, all else fails. By little degrees, perhaps with rapid steps if they are bold, such men will begin to treat every day as being theoretically the Lord's; but they will soon allow themselves such a latitude on the Lord's-day as is, in my judgment, disgraceful to the Christian, and a dishonour to the Lord Jesus.

It will be apparent, on the contrary, that, though the day was brought out as a fact, just as with other characteristics of the New Testament, there was light enough for faith to act on and understand from the very birthday of Christianity. From that moment when Christianity had its proper being and impress, the Lord's-day was marked out by the Lord Himself, and all through from beginning to end the Lord's-day has assigned to it, by the distinct sanction of the Spirit of God, a clear and distinctive and momentous place for the heart and conscience of every Christian. Further, it is well to press the grave observation, that those who confound the Lord's-day with the sabbath invariably and necessarily lose the true idea of the latter, if not of the former also. Certainly the height of the truth that is connected with the Lord's-day is never appreciated under that confession, whereby you descend from its heavenly character to an earthly one. Again, to put it on

sabbatical ground is to forfeit the light which shines so richly in it when duly understood. For what people call "the Christian sabbath,"1 as it is a term entirely unknown to the scripture, so also is a plain confusion of the law of God with His grace.

But let none suppose that I mean by this that the sabbath was not a most important institution. A large part of scripture refutes such a notion. Further, I wish to guard all from the mistaken thought, that what God instituted with such solemnity as the sabbath, from the beginning of man's earth, is really done with. Not so. Scripture is distinct that the sabbath will have a place again; that it will yet be a day of gladness and joy in the earth; that it is associated with the blessing that is coming upon all the creation; that, in short, it will not be the Lord's-day but the sabbath, when Jehovah shall fill the world with the goodness that is natural to Himself. When evil has been put down, when Satan has been dealt with, when the Lord will have His way manifestly from sea to sea — at that glorious period the sabbath will have its own proper and honoured place. Hence we find, in the book of Ezekiel for instance (which gives us most interesting glimpses into the future that is reserved for the people of God, and for their land here below), that the sabbath comes forward once more into prominence. So also one may see in the prophet Isaiah. There is no need of accumulating such scriptures now; but those referred to plainly prove that, not in some figurative sense, but in all strictness, the day is at hand when God will vindicate His people for Himself — when Israel will be no longer a remnant of deceitful tongue, abandoned to the grovelling acquisition of gold and silver, but when, contrariwise, they will be Jehovah's

witnesses. Poor alas! has been their testimony hitherto — false witnesses against the only True and Faithful! But they are yet to be bright witnesses of divine mercy in the reign of Messiah's glory. And when that age comes, the sabbath, I repeat, will resume its place for the earth.

Israel shall then observe their new moons also, and, as we are told, they will celebrate the feast of Tabernacles, as well as Passover, but, remarkably enough, not Pentecost. Look at the book of Ezekiel, and you will find a striking absence of the latter feast in the picture of the future. If his visions had been a figure of what God is doing at this present time, Pentecost must have been, I do not say, the exclusive but assuredly the most prominent feast. Instead of this, the prophecy of Ezekiel shows us conspicuously the absence of Pentecost, the reason of which seems to me as manifest as it is beautiful. The types that were given under the law had a bearing on, the heavenly people as well as on the earthly. Pentecost in particular and confessedly sets forth the gathering of a heavenly people; and that heavenly people, now in process of gathering, has, if I may say it, so absorbed the feast to itself, that Israel will have no Pentecost in the day that is coming. They will have the Passover; none can do without that sign of Christ sacrificed. It does not matter whether it be earthly people or heavenly, the Lamb and the Lamb's blood are essential for any to be in living relationship with God. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed" not merely "for us," but for them also. They accordingly will have the great foundation feast of Passover. But the distinctive feast for them in that day will be the feast of Tabernacles, as we have seen, because it is the day

when glory shall dwell in the land, not merely be seen in heaven, but descend and dwell in the land — when God therefore is accomplishing His glorious thoughts and plans for this long groaning but then delivered earth. In that day then, along with all this, there are naturally the new moons. She that, ruling the night, had given her light, and had long faded away, will shine out once more with renewed brightness. Israel will again become the great vessel of reflected glory here below.

But we, Christians, in that day shall enter into the glory itself. We have to do with Him whom we are permitted to see with unveiled face even now; for meanwhile the power of the Spirit of God has brought us into this nearness, and has made true the feast of Pentecost so completely in the heavenly people, that there is no place by-and-by for the earthly people to keep it suitably. Such is the way in which God has arranged with the utmost skill these remarkable shadows of good things to come.

In that day the sabbath too will resume its place on the seventh day as of old. Meanwhile a new creation in Christ has come in, and I will presently show how this has linked itself with the Lord’s-day, and in what its character essentially differs from the sabbath.

The sabbath was instituted, as we know, at the beginning. It formed the close of the week devoted by God to making the heavens and the earth which now are. It set forth the precious truth, that He who had deigned to work in forming the earth for man always looked onward to a rest which the renewed creature should share; not merely a rest for us, but for Him and us together, when there will be no more working. The sign of this was the sabbath or seventh day.

Nevertheless it is not exactly true that the sabbath was made a command at first. God sanctified it; but no man can prove that the sabbath was taken up and acted on in any formal manner. Scripture is silent about it, and it is wise for us not to go beyond scripture. But this we do know, that the Lord sanctified the sabbath, and there are tokens here and there that it was known by men. Even the very heathen were not without some traces of it. But the word of God bears the remembrance of the six days of creation and of the sabbath in the institution of weeks. This we find appearing every now and then (as at and after the flood, for instance); so that it is plain that, more or less, the sabbath was known from the beginning. But here it was connected with creation. And what was the state of creation? Man had fallen, and all placed under him was ruined before God. I am aware that man tries to cover that ruin, not daring to face the solemnity of such a fact. Even godly men sometimes try to patch it up. But the way of truth is always to own the havoc that sin has brought in, confessing it to God, and looking for His deliverance, not men's effort to conceal, deny, or remedy it.

But now we must open another book; we come down to Exodus. There is a change. A people in flesh are called out by and to God; everything accordingly is regulated by His law. Their whole life — private, public, social, religious — everything comes under His legislation and authority.

This then gives occasion to another step on God's part as to the sabbath. It is not only the sanctifying of it as the pledge of His rest for creation, but, further, God imposed the keeping of the sabbath on His people, binding, it up as an essential part even of His ten words.

Even before this He had marked its importance when the manna was given distinctly and solemnly. There was a direct infraction of that which God made so apparent, that His people were without excuse if they did not heed it, not that there was a command even then, we may notice. But if there be a true way of learning God's mind, it is in weighing what He does as well as what He says. And the God who had given Israel the manna gave them a double portion on the sixth day, but none on the seventh. Was this in vain? Was it not for the express purpose of guarding against any activity on His people's part, even in gathering manna on the seventh day? The sabbath, and the people's rest on it, were thus made sufficiently apparent to any who wished to learn what God's will was about the matter. All the rulers came and told Moses that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread; but they are told that this is that which Jehovah had said, "Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto Jehovah," when the manna, though kept, did not stink nor breed worms. Yet were some bold enough to despise His ways and words; but the Lord as yet contented Himself with a solemn reproof, without as yet making His people to be the executioners of His judgment because of those that regarded not the works of Jehovah nor the operation of His hand.

Soon after, however, it was not left to a sound judgment formed on what God did, nor to such words as we have heard, but He blended it with the law, and indeed made it to be the one special exception to its general character, for all the rest of the law is moral. The sabbath has another nature quite distinct. The very heathen would acknowledge that no man should steal, do murder, or commit adultery. Every human

conscience, unconverted or not, recognizes these and the like. Indeed it may be mentioned here, that a great enemy of Christianity, the Emperor Julian, in speaking about the law, acquiesced in all the rest but the denunciation of idols and the keeping of the sabbath. He owned that the moral commandments were perfectly right, but tried to make out that they had all known them before. And if he classed along with the sabbatical law the command against idols, he need not; for there were not a few Gentiles who knew the wrongness of such objects of worship. Heathen conscience could easily feel the absurdity of an idol; but the sabbath is purely prescriptive, owes its existence to the revealed facts of creation, and hence derives all its authority from God's word. This is what gives its particular importance.

If there is any commandment of the ten, therefore, that rests on God's claim simply, it is the sabbath. Thus because the child does the will of his father, and shows far more the spirit of obedience, if he obeys him, not merely abstaining from or hating what his own conscience knows to be wrong, so the Jew proved it much more by simply bowing to God's command about it. If one were merely to cleave to the moral commandments, it might be no more than honouring one's own conscience. If I bow to God's command, where my own conscience says nothing apart from His word, it is evident that His authority is dear to me. Therefore this was what gave the sabbatical law such immense force, and justly so, to an Israelite. For this reason the sabbath acted as a test, rather than the other nine commandments; so it was the special sign between Jehovah and Israel. None of the other commandments could have been, or was, such a sign as the sabbath-day.

It was the peculiar and easily recognized badge that distinguished the Jewish people from all others, and hence in the law and prophets it is thus referred to. But you see it, in fact, constantly brought forward by God, and attached to all other things — what it did not matter. We have already noticed how with the giving of the manna the sabbath was marked for the observation of Israel; so, if God set up a tabernacle, the sabbath came in afresh. Indeed, as has been remarked by another, it followed, no matter what the dealing or institution might be. If He appointed feasts, the sabbath stands in the very front of them, the first and foremost of them all, as it points to the crowning result for God and man. It differed essentially from all the others, in that all the other feasts came but once a year, whilst the sabbath was recurring every week. Nevertheless, if God was giving His people an account of the feasts, not only did the sabbath come within the list of the feasts, but it came as the foremost of them.

There was nothing therefore in the legal system that had a more pointed and constant importance in the mind of God for His people Israel than the sabbath, and accordingly by this day they were tried peculiarly. (Comp. Lev. 26:34, 35) They were surrounded by jealous neighbours; but who ever dared to take advantage of the sabbath as long as Israel walked in any measure with God ? When they fell away from Him, when they had broken down in every particular in which His honour was concerned, when they had been swept away into captivity because of their idolatry, God did not sustain them in the sabbath. It is remarkable that, when they returned from captivity, and when they had enemies to contend with, the Gentiles took advantage of the

sabbath, and pressed it craftily against the Jews by attacking them on that day because they knew that there would be scruples on their part to fight on such a day. While under the direct government of God it never was attempted.

All this is surely striking enough, as showing the ways of God and His modes of dealing with His ancient people. But we come now to a still more solemn crisis, when our Lord came into their midst; for never do we get the truth fully about anything until we connect it with Christ. How did He then act as to the sabbath? And how did the Jews use the sabbath-day as to Christ? The answer will be fully and clearly found in the Gospels.

First, How did Christ use the sabbath as to men? He pointedly wrought miracles upon it He walked with His disciples through the corn-fields; and they in their hunger rubbed the ears of corn to satisfy it. But there were watchful and jealous eyes, which viewed it not so much with hatred against them as with suspicion against Him; for He it was that bore all reproaches. As the reproaches that fell on Jehovah fell on Him, so on Him came all the reproaches that fell on the disciples. He was the constant butt and object of all attacks, yet was He the ever present shield for the faithful in their weakness and exposure. So He pleads for the guiltless, reminding them how little their own law was understood by those who wrested it against His disciples.

Did the Pharisees talk about this act of His hungry followers as an infraction of the sabbath? They had better turn to their temple, and look a little more closely at their priests. Did they not bring their sin-offerings on the sabbath? For if sin were known, it could not be put

off till another day. The Israelite that was burdened with the sense of a wrong to the Lord, or his neighbour must own it at once, if he feared God. The priests might be in a bad state; the sabbath was holy: but to put off was perilous; for to slight sin is to ensure worse sin. Therefore he that had a defiled conscience brought his offering, and thus owned his sin. And the priests that offered, as well as the person that brought the offering, were all guiltless before God. Why then did not those zealous sabbatarians find fault with God's provision on the part of the priests and the people when offering for sin on the sabbath?

But further our Lord refers to a most remarkable case in the past, a type of Himself. David, the beloved of God, when he too was cast out with his hungry followers, did once on a time partake with them of the bread set apart for the priests alone. Was this a sin? It was Saul's and the people's sin that there was no bread for David. It was their sin that the true anointed was an outcast. And the bread that was holy at a holy time was profaned in the hour of their wickedness. If it had no sanctity in the presence of a rejected David, how much less in the presence of a rejected Christ? This was the argument; for assuredly a greater than the priests and a greater than David was there. Hence a greater sin was done than in the ordinary days of Israel, or even in the special days of David. Thus the Lord retorted the conviction of sin on the heads of those that would have condemned the disciples.

But on the very next sabbath after the Lord Himself acts; it is not merely that He defends His disciples. He goes into the synagogue, and in full congregation singles out a man with a withered hand. And there He not only

heals the man in the presence of them all, convicting the hypocrites that would have condemned Him once more, hating Him for the grace that ever flowed out to the miserable; but, further, He told the man to do an act which, had there not been a divine object in view, could have been dispensed with readily. He particularly marked it therefore in such a fashion as to show that it is no question of God's having complacency in their sabbath-keeping, but of His acting for His own glory in a ruined world. This work of love is what God deigns to be about. Now this was exactly what they resented. So the Gospel of John gives just the same truth, and with yet fuller evidence. A man that lay impotent in the presence of Bethesda, waiting for an angel to come down, found that a greater than all angels was there, who needed not to trouble the waters. A word was enough; for power accompanied it, and the man was healed. But Jesus directed him to arise, take up his bed, and walk, sabbath though it was. Could he not have left his bed there, or at least then? Yes; but so to act at His word who healed him was a plain and much galling testimony that God had no communion with their Sabbaths. Was not God thereby showing that, if there was to be the blessing the sinner needed as he is, He must work, and this on the sabbath; for man was waiting in sin and misery without His blessing? What folly to talk punctiliously about the sabbath from amidst the ruins of sin! If sinners were to be saved, there was no time to be lost. If the Blesser came, would He not give the blessing at once? So grace reckons, even as Christ then wrought. But what so offensive to self-satisfied man? Accordingly therefore the Jews were filled with hatred against Him who thus judged their thoughts and ways, bringing in God in this

full opposition of His own grace to man in his selfish hypocrisy.

Thus the Lord showed how He used the sabbath against Israel in their pride.

I have now to speak of a darker page: what indeed more solemn? How did the Jews use their sabbath against Jesus?

The sabbath, sad to say it, was the only day right through, evening and morning, that the Lord Jesus spent in the grave. Yes, and that sabbath was a high day! Thus over the grave of the crucified Christ did unbelieving, guilty, rebellious Israel keep holiday. They had to their own rejection rejected the Son of God. He lay in the grave; and they kept their sabbath. And where was God? and what were His thoughts? Where His affections and His glory? In that grave that they had made for His Son. They had cast Him down into death, and He had taken all from His Father's hand — the worst and most ignominious of deaths. But God was there in the cross accomplishing for ever His greatest work. No sabbath was He keeping, but working in the depths of His grace, that salvation might flow not from His mercy only but in His righteousness. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The counsel of peace was between them both. The work of the Father and the work of the Son had testified to man's sin and God's grace all through His ministry. We now look on the deepest point of all — not only the Christ, the Son, abandoning Himself to do God's will, but abandoned of God because He was bearing the judgment of sin on the cross; and this in order that God might be for ever vindicated and glorified even in respect of sin. And now the work is done. "It is finished."

The hour then was for the Son of man to be glorified. God was glorified in Him; but if glorified in Him, God would glorify the Son of man in Himself, and would glorify Him straightway. Instead of waiting for the kingdom, and for Israel to be gathered for the millennial day, God would glorify Him at once. The people were not ready, nor the land either. What in short on the creature's part was ready as it should be? On God's part, however, all things were ready. But new counsels come in when Israel still rejects and God carries out His great heavenly work. The efficacy of Christ's work is first of all applied to what was unseen. Only faith sees the heavens opened and the Son of man at God's right hand. For Son of man He went up, as He came down Son of God (as He is now, and was from eternity to eternity). Then it was in perfect grace; now He goes up in accomplished righteousness, and sits on the right hand of God. In due time follow the glorious consequences of that work. And grace forms in Saul of Tarsus a suited witness: but I will not anticipate further.

On the day, however, that Jesus burst the bonds of death and rose from the grave, He first of all sends out a message by Mary Magdalene, whom He had previously delivered from the complete power of demons. She is now sent to the disciples with the message of the risen conqueror of Satan. He that had the power of death was conquered for ever. Accordingly on the day that speaks of light and life from the grave — that proclaims the mighty work of redemption accomplished for ever — the Lord Jesus sends a message to His own, who thereon are gathered together, and in the midst of them Jesus finds Himself. It was the first day of the week, the day of His resurrection. Such beyond doubt is its character. It was

no longer creation-rest: for this had been broken. Nor was it any longer legal rest. For where was this now? Man ought to have learnt from the ways of God; for he might be commanded as he was in the law; but the very aim of all was to prove that sin had made him altogether incapable of doing God's will or of answering to His nature. The dealings of God were as excellent as His commands were all righteous. It is man that is all wrong Here lay the real difficulty and the constant dead-lock in Israel. It was from no fault of the law. The failure is entirely from the sin of man, not excepting the chosen and favoured people; and the divine object in the law was to bring this out distinctly in Israel's history, and make all that have ears to hear feel their sins and confess them to God — the very last thing the Jews (like any other self-complacent men now) thought of doing. What they themselves used the law for was simply to make out an appearance of righteousness of theirs; what God gave them the law for was to demonstrate that they had none of their own.

But now the gospel shows and proclaims another thing — the righteousness of God; for it is He who in Christ has interposed now. The law demanded man's duty to God and man, compelling those who are thus convicted of sin to own their ruin and cry to Him for remedy. Alas! Israel were hardened. Yet under the law man had done his worst. Instead of really producing fruit for God, according to the parable in which the Lord set out their history, they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him," and slew and cast out the righteous One. Thus had man not only broken the law, but rejected utterly and absolutely God come in goodness in the person of Jesus. Man had put the Son of God to death on the cross;

and what does God next? He interposed, and from that lowest abasement to which His Son become a man could be subjected God raised Him up and set Him at His own right hand, far above every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

Thereon comes in Christianity. Evidently it is based on the rejection by man of the Lord Jesus, in which God has accomplished atonement. For in the cross sin has been judged. It may not be put away in fact; but it all is to be, and on the basis of that mighty work. But sin is judged before God in the cross, and those who believe are entitled to know all its consequences gone for their souls; that is, their sins are forgiven, and sin itself is already dealt with to faith. But, as we know, none of this great deliverance as a matter of fact appears outwardly yet. That is to say, the evil of the world goes on as badly or worse than ever; nay, in the saint the old nature is there, and will surely break out if unjudged; and Satan, instead of being dethroned, is still the god of this world; and this was manifested at the cross of the Lord Jesus. Christianity does not mean in the slightest degree that the world, or human nature, still less that Satan, is better since then. I need not say that the truth is far from that. It is not even that Satan is put down from his access as an accuser before God (for this awaits another dealing at a future day), but that God is glorified, and has accepted meanwhile an infinitely efficacious work for the believer. Not only has a divine person been manifested full of grace and truth, but before God is that accomplished work, whereby the believer stands in the acceptance of Christ. It is no longer a mere hope grounded on a divine promise; but the work is done, and the present efficacy is perfect before God, so that the

Holy Ghost is come down to be the witness of this to the soul of the believer, the seal of redemption, and the earnest of the coming inheritance when we shall appear with Christ in glory.

Such is Christianity; and the consequence is therefore that God at once inaugurates a new day. It is no longer the last day of the week; for they speak not truly who say that the sabbath is a seventh day; that is, any day of the seven. There might be rest for man all the same, but in that no memorial of God at all. A seventh day blots out all record of God's past, and all hope of God's future. The very idea of it destroys from the sabbath every atom of what is divine. Such tampering with scripture, and in particular with the sabbath, makes it to be no more than a human thing. Those that think that any day would do equally well, show that they know nothing, heed nothing, of God's intention in the sabbath. They are alive to the human need and boon. Its place in the mind of God, and for man's highest welfare, is lost to them. On the contrary, I maintain that it is of the very essence of the truth as to the sabbath that it is the last of the week, or seventh day; not a, but the, seventh day, and no other. This is the day that God sanctified, the remembrance of creation and the type of His rest. But then the rest was not yet. Creation-rest was ruined; law-rest, though commanded, never had a real footing for sinful man. What is the consequence? On the ground of creation or law there is no hope for man, because of sin. But grace, God's grace, enters; and now it is a question of God's giving rest for the soul, if not yet for the body, in Christ the Lord.

There is no rest from labour yet, as we see in Hebrews 4; the rest of glory is of course future. It will all come,

but only when Christ comes. There is rest given in Christ to the weary; there is rest which the Christian finds who takes Christ's yoke, and learns of Him who is meek and lowly of heart. These are respectively suited to the Christian and to the heavy laden; but what rest can rightly be as yet from the labour of love in such a world as this? For the spirit there is perfect rest in Christ and peace before God, but at the same time no rest from toil or sorrow, no settling down in the world which cast out Christ save to the selfish and unbelieving.

And here I may observe that it is a mischievous thing to apply Hebrews 4 to the question of the soul's present rest by faith. This is not at all the point that the apostle Paul is there discussing, but rather the danger for the believer of seeking present rest, seeing that we are passing through the wilderness and have not yet reached Canaan. We are as yet pilgrims and strangers. He is warning the Hebrew believers of their danger in valuing present ease. This is not our rest. Some might take things quietly because they knew themselves justified. But the believer is really redeemed to serve and suffer for a season here. Every one knows that there is a danger of turning to the folly of present ease for souls when relieved from fear; and a very particular danger it is for those that have gone through a great deal of sifting at their conversion, lest they forget that this is but the beginning of a course of trial and testimony on earth. No bad thing either for any one so to judge self; but the danger is that there is apt to follow a kind of reaction, unless grace keeps one simply looking to Christ. When persons have gone through much trouble of conscience, and have found themselves saved by nothing but grace, they enjoy peace thankfully; but it

is very possible for them to think that after this they are free to take all else easily. Not so. It is after this that they are set in freedom of heart to labour for the Lord, as those who are still in the desert. Far am I from saying that they are not to enjoy His love more and more. They are free, and need, to draw near in thanksgiving and praise surely; for there are two distinct ways in which divine life works: the one is upward toward God in worship, the other is downward toward man in love; and grace gives us both now. But we, if wise, wait for rest when God rests in the scene and day of glory. Now is the time to fear and to labour.

Hence therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, he who believes in the Lord Jesus now is called into this blessed participation of the mind of God. Having been set free in virtue of the work of Christ from guilty fears (most just and real), being delivered from that sense of condemnation which the Spirit of God had lately pressed on his conscience, he has peace with God, and rests in our Lord Jesus Christ. But he is only for that very reason guarded against taking his ease in the world. And this belongs to the very nature of Christianity and to God's object in it. A Jew naturally expected that, when Christ came, he would himself have ease and rest. There would be neither evil to avoid nor enemies to contend with, all being put down for him at least at the beginning of Messiah's reign. Then would every kind of blessing be brought in for his enjoyment. For danger will not then lurk in the earth and the things of the earth; but men, Israel especially, take all good freely from God. And so it will be; for the millennial kingdom will ensue a time of ease and joy here below, when good will be at peace and evil must hide its face, banished from the scene by the

power of God, then manifestly the possessor of heaven and earth. But this is not the experience which Christianity is now forming, while we await Christ from heaven and suffer with Him on earth.

Now, on the contrary, the Spirit brings in what is heavenly and unseen into the midst of a visible state of things where all is contrary to God, and faith has to make its way against the current, living by the word of God. It is now a state of things characterised (let us not forget it) on the one hand by the utter rejection and cross of God's own Son, on the other by His exaltation at God's right hand on high. The cross was the expression of the world's extreme hatred to God, Christ's session above of God's perfect satisfaction in the work of redemption. Christianity is based on the one and displayed to faith in the other. There is for the sinner the cross of Christ; but there is more for the believer. Christ is risen: what is the meaning of it? Has His resurrection no voice to the Christian? It is not simply that He who brought all grace and manifested all righteousness was ignominiously and in hatred rejected; but that in His death and resurrection my sins are forgiven, sin is judged, righteousness is established, and a new and intimate relationship (His own) with His God and Father are given me by faith in Him. He is coming soon to have me with Himself in the Father's house; but meanwhile He has for a season left me in this world while He is gone out of it into heaven. Consequently He has given a heavenly character to me, to my standing, worship, walk, testimony, conflict, and hope, to everything in short with which grace puts me in present communion. For this is not our home or abiding-place; for the Christian it is where Satan reigns. Am I then to have

communion with things that are around me here? If a Christian, through the grace of God my communion is with the things that belong to Christ at His right hand. All that is of the world is not of the Father. Christ, and now He is on high, is the test of everything. But it is there that the secret lies; it is in Him who is gone to the right hand of God. Hence therefore Christianity is essentially heavenly. It is built on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Hence the first day of the week at once becomes the characteristic day for the Christian, and whenever this is not kept in view, a man always tends to slide down into Judaism. Such is the effect of talking about a Christian sabbath, especially if it is a sober judgment, and not idle talk. People who so think and speak have a distinct view neither of Judaism on the one hand nor of Christianity on the other — little more than a wretched medley of the two systems. Is not this too sadly and surely just what we find in Christendom at the present moment? Hence therefore not unnaturally the prevalent confusion — I was about to say the unholy, but one may call it without exaggeration the unhappy alliance — between the law and the gospel.

Do not, however, mistake my mind as to this grave subject. The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just, and good. Every whit of God’s requirements in the Old Testament is worthy of the utmost reverence on the part of the believer. No godly man of intelligence that values grace will ever disparage law. But it is one thing to give each its place and application, quite another to confound them. For this there is no warrant whatever in the word of God. The law has its own function, and its due application is to deal with man fallen and wicked. It was a wholly different thing when He who had no sin,

the Son of God, deigned to be born of woman and to come under law, and made it honourable, glorifying Him who gave it by His servant Moses. And a different thing there will be in the day of Jehovah when it is written on the heart of Israel according to the new covenant. Then will His mighty hand maintain His own when Satan is bound, and a new heart is given to His people, the heart of stone being taken away. Indeed, they are happy if only unhappy, for I confess that in too many cases this misuse of the law is associated with positive unholiness, and this not merely personal failure but in principle. For when they know they have sinned, they fly to Christ's blood as a Jew to his sin-offering, and thus by fresh application to His sacrifice try to maintain an intermittent peace, thus proving how little they, though believers, really know the gospel. Their standard of practice is proportionately low. They do not understand what it is to walk in the Spirit. They have not submitted to the truth that they are dead, nor entered thus into the deliverance of Christ.

But now that man is dealt with as lost, and the believer as saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, what is it for the righteous to take up the law as their rule? As far as my experience goes, darkness ensues, and with it weakness and failure. Sense of grace comes to ruin for the soul. For it is invariably found that, when God's children take up the law as the rule of walk, it cannot but gender bondage.

I dare say many remember as well as myself what it was to be endeavouring to keep the sabbath in olden time. What was the consequence? Holy, happy peace? Not so; but the soul anxious, self-condemned, and unhappy. The most solemn and grievous result of all was, that under

this mistaken system, the more righteous people were, the less happy they found themselves. What a strange conclusion if it were God's will and word! most simple if it is not. Those who took things easily (I may call them free and easy, perhaps without offence) got through the sabbath pretty well, as far as they themselves thought doubtless; but it was a grave and sorrowful matter for such as strove to keep this law in the midst of the inconsistencies of Christendom, and with such conscience towards God as the law and the prophets inspired. They might fast and pray, but the more they strove, the more miserable they were. They might endeavour and try to guard it in the simplest things, but it always ended in failure; and therefore they never were happy under it, but often if not always ill at ease; and no wonder, for the whole principle was a mistake for the Christian.

But now comes the positive side; and a very important question practically arises — What does scripture connect with the Lord's-day?

I answer, first of all, let us see its true character. It is not the day that was sanctified by creation rest. It is not the day of law which the law commanded Israel to keep the main test amongst them of God's authority. What is it then? What is emphatically connected with the first day? I answer, resurrection-life in Christ and the grace of God. In contrast with creation, the Lord's-day tells of the new creation; in contrast with law, it speaks of the grace which has brought salvation. Christians therefore have no reason to be ashamed in comparing the first day of the week which God has given them with the sabbath which He imposed on Israel. On the contrary, I claim for the Lord's-day a higher sanctity, deeper principles, and

the strongest, yea, an immutable, foundation. If the sabbath can boast much, the Lord's-day incomparably more; for as the one is connected with the first Adam, the other is with the second Adam; and as much as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is the Lord's-day higher than the sabbath. The sabbath, I repeat, was for man — for man in the flesh — for man as he was under probation — for man dealt with as living under the law of God. Undoubtedly there are many who think that man is under probation still, and that the Christian is under the law of God, just as a Jew used to be; though they may add that the law is not to justify him but to rule the walk — that we are under it for the latter, and not for the former. Well, it may be convenient for you to say what the law is to do; but let me tell you this, that if you are under the law, God does not allow you to say what the law is to do, and what it is not. If you are under the law, and you fail, what can the law do to you? It can do nothing in justice but condemn, curse, and kill you. This is its declared object — this its necessary function. If you are under the law, and you fail to meet the law, what can, what ought, the law to do but punish you? And what is its punishment but death? Are you to alter all this too? But theology is bold, demurs, and says, "Oh, I am not under the law to be punished!" But the question is not what you say about the law, but what the law says to you. Theory, or theology, cannot stand against scripture. The truth is, your thought is an imagination of men, and a mere attempt to get out of a difficulty. They see in the gospel that the believer in our Lord Jesus is justified, and then, though they put him under the law as a rule of life, they try to get out of the dilemma this throws them into by pleading that they are only under the law for walk, and not for condemnation. Do they not mean that

the Christian is under the law to break it with impunity? What sort of a rule of life is this? It is not the gospel but a mitigated, emasculated, sanctionless law. It is not Christ and the truth. Where do they get such a thought in the word of God? Nowhere.

There I do find the question raised and answered in one of the most important and simple and withal comprehensive epistles of the New Testament. I am not speaking now of those to the Ephesians or the Colossians — it is no wonder that such men do not understand Ephesians or Colossians — nor yet of the Book of Revelation. But let us take Romans; and surely every Christian of moderate light ought to be familiar with that epistle at any rate, and to rejoice in the truth the Holy Spirit has there furnished for every day's need. Now what is there laid down as to the law? Where it is a question of the life exercised in the walk of the Christian, he is formally declared not to be under the law but under grace. Such is expressly the doctrine of the apostle Paul. In the sixth chapter of Romans the discussion is not how a sinner is to be justified, but how he being justified is to walk. Does the mercy of God in the gospel leave the soul free to live in sin? The answer is, Not so; for he is dead with Christ to sin, and he is not under the law, but under grace. It is substantially the same truth everywhere else, as in 1 Cor. 9:20,2 21; 2 Cor. 3; Gal. 5:18; 1 Tim. 1:7-10. Never do we hear the theological or at least the Puritan fiction, that the Christian is freed from the condemning power of the law as a question of justification only, but under the law as a rule to live by. Such a notion is clean contrary to the apostle's teaching, who declares that we are dead with Christ to the law as well as to sin. These theologians do

not know what death with Christ means; they do not understand their own baptism in His name.

Now the Lord's-day is the day of grace, and not of law; and this is manifestly consistent with the power and ways of grace. The reason why no Christian is absolved from what is due to God is illustrated by that day when grace triumphed in a new creation through our Lord Jesus.

And look at the beautiful way in which the Lord Jesus introduced it. There is no command in the New Testament such as — "Thou shalt keep the Lord's-day." Why should the sabbath be in the Old Testament, not in the New? Why the Lord's-day in the New, and not in the Old? If you look over the Ten Commandments, you will find that the principle of prohibition runs through them generally. The people to whom they were uttered had no inclination to keep them. Hence the command ran in these terms — Thou shalt not do this, Thou shalt do that — because they wanted to do the contrary. Is this the case with the Christian? Has it come to this pass, that children of God do not really desire to keep the Lord's-day? I should be sorry to think one counted it a burden. They are sanctified to obedience; they are called to the law of liberty. If it were a question of imposing the first day of the week on the world, I can understand a command given to keep the first day; for it is and must be irksome to all who know not His grace. But this is not at all the intention of the Lord as to those who know Him not.

With the sabbath the ground, nature, and end were altogether different. It must be repeated that it formed part of the law, and was distinctively a sign between God

and Israel. The sabbath was never given to the Gentile as such, whatever may be the reasonings of men. If a Gentile came and put himself under the wing of Israel, of course he kept the sabbath; but as a Gentile he had nothing to do with it. The sabbath was Jehovah's sign to Israel; and the effort to prove that it was imposed on all alike does no less in principle than deny that fact, and the scripture which declares it. It could be no longer a sign to His elect people: if it was equally binding on all, it was not peculiar to Israel. How could it be a sign to one if it was the common duty of all? But the fact is, that the Lord has decided that question clearly, and so do the law and the prophets. "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah that doth sanctify you."… "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." (Ex. 31:13, 17) "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctify them." (Ezek. 20:12.)

Now look at the Lord's-day. How different from the sabbath! The latter was a day that involved yourself, your family, your servants, even your very cattle, your ox and your ass. As to them all, Jehovah the God of Israel and the Creator had a care, and brought them within the beneficent scope of the seventh day; and no wonder, for it was the sign of the rest of creation, and man, and all animals subject to him, were a part of creation. It might be the lower part; but still it was a part which God did not forget in His law. But what has an ox or an ass to do with the new creation?

This radical distinction of the sabbath as expressive of creation and law, and of the Lord's-day as expressing resurrection and grace, is what people do not seem to see, and hence they are apt to make mistakes in practice. The ground of the difference is evident. The moment one gets hold of the principle of the Lord's-day, not only must all the inferior part of the creation be left out but those that are unconverted also. These beyond doubt are not overlooked by God, who sends them the gospel; but He does not place converted and unconverted on the same footing of relationship, nor consequently require the same duties. What do unconverted men with grace and the new creation, but pervert or despise them? I do not deny their obligation in presence of the great facts and truth of the gospel. They have and read the word of God; they own the duty of prayer and of praise. This may all be, while the believer must know that it cannot be such prayer and praise as faith presents in the Spirit. But if the question be the true principle of the Lord's-day, and the intended scope of its application, the answer is, that the Lord's-day essentially is for the Lord's people. May I not go farther, and question whether a Jew could understand its meaning? Certainly even in the days of the kingdom he is not called to its observance. Of course I am speaking of him who not only is a Jew but abides in his unbelief of the gospel. The Lord's-day is naturally unintelligible to the unconverted now. Nor will it be a question even for Israel in the millennium; for they will never have it as we have now. There will be an arrangement altogether different for them. Of course they will see it in the New Testament, and will understand that there were saints before them who kept that day, and how they kept it; that they gathered together on it, and remembered the

Lord’s death, worshipping their God and Father, edifying each other. They may understand all this; but as to the deep principles involved in it, I doubt much whether they will ever enter into them, at any rate with any real intelligence; whereas to understand the truth of them in Christ, and walk faithfully in accordance with it, should be the distinctive characteristic of the Christian.

It may have been noticed, for instance, in the verses read at the beginning (Acts 20), how the apostle Paul loved to spend seven days in a place. Can there be a doubt what was in his heart? Was it not to cover the Lord’s-day? He loved to spend at least one such day with the saints; so we see in more than one passage. It was the great day of assemblage for the children of God. Not that they never assembled on other days; but there might be no small difficulties in those early times. It may have been so indeed sometimes even for the Lord’s-day. Still this was the day that commanded the hearts of the disciples. It is evident that, if there had been no distinctive day, the brethren could not be so justly blamed for forsaking the assembling of themselves; but such a fault would at once be felt if there was a known day, and a day not merely chosen by the church or sanctioned by all but one that the Lord had stamped with His own resurrection image. Such certainly is this day; and so marked is it by the presence of our Lord Jesus, that I will just refer to the point for a moment before we touch on the statements of the apostle Paul.

Our Lord is shown to have revealed Himself repeatedly during the course of the resurrection-day to disciple after disciple, from His appearance to Mary Magdalene first of all until He stood in the assembly of the saints on the evening of that day. Thus there was a succession of

manifestations throughout. Nor do I doubt that a Christian is entitled to know an especial presence and enjoyment of the Lord Jesus on the same day of the week that is not vouchsafed on any other day. If his faith does not take this in, so far there will be loss for his soul. The word of God must be the ground of it, and to make this the more marked, what do we find there? Does the Lord appear on the Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, etc., as we call them? Not a word about it. He passes over all the intervening days, but the next first day following He appears again. What could more significantly mark that day to all who remember Him and delight in His ways?

This to me is most expressive of the mind of the Lord, not in the shape of a command or even a promise which would have called one back to the relationship of Israel. At any rate a formal pledge might suppose a kind of unwillingness or want of intelligence on the part of the saints of God. What the Lord looks for is love that understands Him. A single eye gives entrance into His mind. He rose on that day: we understand it. He comes again and again on that day: we understand it all. That day remains fixed for us as “the Lord’s-day,”3 even as the Holy Ghost designated it expressly in the closing book of the New Testament. (Rev. 1:10) The time was come so to stamp that day long familiar to the Christian heart, now designated as pertaining to the Lord no less than His supper. From first to last there is no command, nothing like a legal claim; but the more, not the less, do both appeal to the faith and devotedness of all who love Him. As the supper is His, distinct in character and aim from all others, so is His day to the Christian.

Let us now consult once more the Book of Acts. When the disciples were brought into their blessed place as the church of God, the Holy Ghost came down, and they were so filled with joy and gladness that they could hardly keep away from one another. So we find them meeting every day; and I have no doubt from Acts 2:46, that they then partook of the Lord's-supper every day. It was not merely what people call, and indeed what scripture calls, a love-feast. They did this too. But a love-feast meant nothing more than that the saints united in partaking of a meal with the word of God and prayer. They did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people, even as the Lord at first. (Luke 2:52.) That is, they enjoyed every sort and measure of communion with one another as fully as they could. But the Lord's-supper was far more than this since, it is the communion of Christ's body and of His blood. It was not a mere token of brotherly intercourse, but the most solemn though joyful act of Christian worship. They also broke bread at home. This is the Lord's supper.

Accordingly, at first, they used to break bread together day by day. And so far, is there anything contrary to scripture in taking the Lord's-supper on any day whatever? There is a principle laid down which justifies it whenever circumstances of an extraordinary kind call for it. Acts 2:46 is the clearest proof that under such a claim (of which spirituality alone can judge aright) it is no unauthorized thing to take the Lord's-supper every day.

But from Acts 20:7 we may assuredly gather a little more. We learn thence that there is one day above all others appropriated to the supper of the Lord. No doubt

other acts of worship or divine service may accompany it, such as prayers and praises; and if there be present any that need a word from the Lord in the way of a discourse on the grace of Christ or the truth of God, there is the fullest openness for it. The assembly of God is free to receive not only all that falls in with her own thanksgiving, but also everything that might contribute to the real edification of the saints of God. And therefore, as we find in 1 Corinthians 14, all these different elements are in exercise there, singing, prayer, thanksgiving, and blessing, but also speaking to edification and comfort. Yet the central object and chief motive for the heart in thus coming together is the remembrance of Christ in the breaking of bread. So we find it here: — “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.”

I am sorry to be obliged to point out a necessary correction here. But you will understand that the change has already been made from the truth. I am only seeking to bring souls back to the truth. The real words4 of the Holy Spirit here were: “When we came together.” Now no doubt at first sight it seems a little harsh. I will read to you how it runs, and you will see that it is a little difficult. In the most authoritative text of this verse, according to the oldest and best MSS., it reads thus: “Upon the first day of the week, when we came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” One can readily conjecture how the change took place. The copyists, seeing “preached unto them,” thought that “when we came together” did not well harmonise, that there must be some mistake, and that “we” had probably slipped in instead of “the disciples.” The truth, however, is, that “we” is right, and that the real intruder is “the

disciples." It was the apparent jar of which the correction sought to get rid. This was wrong. Always accept this, my beloved brethren, as a true canon in such questions as to the word of God: never cut the knot of a difficulty in scripture, but wait till God untie it for you. There are difficulties in His word. What is to be done with them? Submit to them; own that you do not understand; pray to God till, in the use of all right means, He clears them up. But never force the word of God. That appears to have been done here. Some of the scribes cut the knot of the difficulty by changing "we came together" into "the disciples came together;" thus they thought that the latter would agree better with "them."

But now let us simply take the clause as God wrote it; for there cannot be a legitimate doubt, to any competent person who has examined the matter, that I am giving the true form of the verse. Thus it will be found in every critical text of value, no matter whose it may be; and so you will find it in every correct version of the critical text — "Upon the first day of the week, when we came together." Why we? Because all had a common interest. Had it been said, "when the disciples came together," it might possibly have been thought that it meant no more than the disciples in that place, who had the habit of meeting together on the first day of the week. But as it is "when we came together to break bread," the principle takes in all saints. All are found here in a common character. The family word, "we," so familiar to the Spirit, is used — "when we came together." It is not merely the mode adopted by the disciples in Troas. It is the habit of the saints wherever they might be — of Paul, and Luke, and every one else. The only question that

could be raised is, whether the writer does not mean by this to put himself along with the rest when he says, “When we came together to break bread.” This I doubt not he does; but that the phrase goes farther we see from the context, which implies the fixed and regular habit of all the saints of God, wherever they had the opportunity, to meet together for the Lord’s-supper on the first day of the week.

Thus we have a by no means unimportant truth, with historic simplicity, conveyed in this verse. There had been a time when every day, under the peculiar circumstances of the Pentecostal assembly, was devoted amongst other things to breaking bread together; but that state of things soon passed. The saints were scattered. Persecution drove them from Jerusalem, some here, some there, to other lands. We see no more the meeting to break bread day by day among the Jewish Christians; but we do hear among the Gentiles of an established fact to which the apostle puts his seal as one of those that had authority to order and arrange things in the name of our Lord Jesus. To meet and break bread was the settled habit of the saints then for the first day (not of the month or quarter, but) of the week.

Further, take notice, that “Paul preached.” It is not “unto us” — this is not said — but “unto them.” The propriety appears at once on reflection. Paul did not exactly preach (ἐκήρυσσεν, or εὐηγγελίζετο); for it is a totally different expression from that of preaching, and had no reference at all to proclaiming the gospel. It is simply “discoursed” (διελέγετο): no doubt it was upon profitable truth for any servants of God that might accompany him; but it was particularly addressed to the disciples that were in Troas. This seems the reason why

it is said “to them,” rather than “to us.” Of course all the rest profited; but it would at this time have been a less appropriate word to say that Paul preached to us. It would not have so correctly expressed the address of Paul to the saints there. When it is said, “We came together to break bread,” Paul, etc., are included. When the writer says “Paul preached unto them,” he points to the apostle discoursing to these saints who rarely enjoyed such a privilege. Thus, I think, the propriety of the change is sufficiently manifest, though at first sight it might seem a little difficult. Indeed it is always the truest and wisest way to accept scripture according to the best authorities, and to wait on Him till we gradually see the beauty and fitness of every word of the living God.

It appears to me then that from these scriptures we have gained some very important points as to the Lord’s day. We see that the Lord did not leave His saints isolated. By His will is the gathering of the members of His body to worship. So it was the Lord had begun with the disciples; so it is the Holy Ghost continues now that the assembly is formed in unity. How beautifully harmonious is the truth! We do not find that the risen Lord met with them every day during the forty days before He ascended. The Spirit records at any rate His meeting with them on two successive first days. So when the day of Pentecost was now accomplishing, they were all together in one place. It was the Lord’s-day again. Then if in the joy and fellowship of Pentecostal blessing we hear among other peculiar but suited effects how they broke bread day by day, we learn that things afterwards recurred to the Lord’s institution. He Himself had met with them, not merely with one or more, but “with the

disciples;" and again on that day of the week following He stood in their midst. (John 20:19, 26) The same thing becomes the regularized method which the Spirit of God records for us, sanctioned by an apostle's presence, and this too among the Gentiles. There might be other gatherings together; for it is in no way meant that the wants of the saints of God could be satisfied with simply gathering together to break bread on the Lord's-day, weighty as this may be. Still it is presented so as pre-eminently to include the heavenly family; even as the Lord's-supper is what appeals to all Christians, and no wonder; because His death brings before us that which is of all things the most momentous before God, humbling for man, and affecting to those who remember Him. In the Lord's death what is there for the heart! What there is some of us perhaps know a little — all of us, I am sure, far too little. Yea, rather what is not there? I might challenge the universe to say what there is not in the Lord's death; and sure I am that heaven would only bring out the answer to the call with incomparably greater appreciation of it than by earth. For the Spirit, though here, is sadly hindered by our feeble faith.

But still the Holy Spirit is here to give us power in the face of all hindrances. And it is precisely while we are passing through the wilderness, whilst we prove what the world, flesh, and Satan are in their enmity to God, that grace gives us this day as a witness of Christ's resurrection and the pledge of our own. It is not now a command to rest on the sabbath with the consequence of death for those who despise it. This is law. Far different is the way of grace. Now that through our Lord Jesus we are brought out of death by His death, we have entered into life. We stand on wholly new ground in Him

risen. We are put on no probationary trial to see whether we shall stand or fail. The grace of God has delivered us. Already saved, we are in Him blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. And as of old visibly, not less truly does the Lord now deign to be in our midst. The Holy Ghost is come down to give us, among other privileges, the enjoyment of Christ's presence; and this is what pre-eminently is our portion when we assemble in His name. How precious to read God's word together! What a mercy to have liberty and opportunities for proclaiming the good news! How many ways of serving the Lord with old and young, the sick and the poor, in which Christian life may express itself and be exercised!

But the first day of the week has a character of its own, a blessed and constant call for every saint, where Christ is all; and here it is accordingly where, if it were an apostle, he finds himself one of God's family. It is "we," not I and you. "When we came together to break bread." Doubtless, the Lord's-supper apart, the apostle had his special place. Having the first of all gifts in the church, he exercised it as the Lord guided. A blight is on the assembly that would silence any gift which the grace of God has given for common profit. A blight is on all the individuals that say or feel so satisfied with what they are and have attained that they want nothing more. Those who know so well in their own conceit, be assured, know nothing as they ought. Whatever edifies is most appropriate for us when gathered together. The Lord would soon blow on the self- complacency that declines what He is pleased to give.

Here we find the apostle not only discoursing freely to the saints, but using his liberty to so great a length that

it proved indeed a danger to one present that was heavy. Yet it furnished an occasion for the display of the power which the Lord had given, not for destruction, but for His own tender mercy and gracious power.

I have already shown the main object of the Lord's supper; but it is not the only one. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians there is another connection with the Lord's day which must not be passed by. It occurs in the last chapter. The apostle says, "Concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the assemblies of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him [or at home] in store whatsoever he may be prospered in, that there be not gatherings then when I come." (vv. 1, 2.) Here again is a duty of love associated with the first day of the week. If it were a mere question of the saints remembering their poor brethren, there seems no reason why the collections might not have been from time to time as need was made known. Nor is it certainly a bare question of laying by at home, though it is well known that some learned commentators declare this to be the meaning of "by him." As if it were some great matter, they tell us that "laying by him," as a phrase taken by itself, means nothing more.

Supposing this to be certain, and I am not going to dispute with them about it, is this all? Did the apostle mean nothing more? It does seem to me that the truth greatly supplements what they say; for one may justly ask the question, Why, if so, stress should be laid on the first day of the week? Why not on any other day? Why was the collection (for this it was) on that day above all others? Beyond a doubt it is good and wholesome for a Christian to lay by at home for the need of others. It is

well that he should consider gravely, and not on mere impulse or when he is on the spot, what he is going to give in the Lord's name. It is evident that the Lord meant each believer to challenge his heart in view of any prosperity he may have had in the course of the week. But that each was to accumulate a separate store in his own house from week to week appears to me the merest assumption, and indeed mistake. The apostle would have it to be a grave matter of enquiry before the Lord, and of course therefore rather a question raised at home than, as is common in modern times, an emulous act when people flock together, or perhaps at haphazard, whether they be duly provided or not, and often under moving appeals to act on their feelings. All these are but poor ways of giving, and by no means answer to the intention of the Spirit of God here for His saints on the first day of the week.

The apostle wished giving to be a grave habit, and one that should be settled, as we have been prospered, with one's self or at home. He wished to avoid a special collection at the time of his visit, not merely, as it seems to us, because his time could be better employed than in such diaconal work, but because he felt it to be an affair for the Christian conscience and heart, not for influence of his own, still less for emulation, nor yet the gusts of some passing impulse. What a contrast is the getting a popular man to come and preach a moving sermon in order to work upon people's feelings! Far different is the principle laid down here. He urges on the saints to consider gravely before the Lord, and each by himself to lay by at home, not to act on impulse, but conscientiously, according as he had been that week prospered.

Accordingly the saints at Corinth, as elsewhere, are called in the name of the Lord to give on the first day of the week. “Let every one of you,” i.e. each of them. Is this always remembered? It is not the rich alone. Is there not sometimes the thought that they are to give that can out of their abundance? Is Christ in this thought, or self? Not a word about wealth is breathed here, but “as he may have been prospered.” The poor man may be prospered just as really in proportion as the rich; perhaps it might be even more sensibly. Many a rich man has nothing in particular different one week from another, but the poor man may often have; and the Lord thinks about the poor. The Spirit of God takes care to give him who has been ever so little prospered during the week a living and personal interest in everything that is connected with the name and saints of the Lord. Certainly it is not meant that those who are always in prosperity, and may not have any special abundance, should think themselves absolved from their duty of gravely considering with a view to giving. God forbid! Thus did the Lord ordain, that the poorest might not conceive himself left out, that the simplest might know that he has an integral interest in all that concerns the glory of God. There is too the gracious wisdom that connects all with Christ and His resurrection, and thus with the joy and the deliverance and the eternal blessing into which we are brought and know we are brought, and which we are intended to manifest in gathering together to His name, breaking bread in the remembrance of Him. What an association for our little contribution to the poor saints!

This then is the meaning of the first day of the week as here introduced, showing plainly that, as in the verse

stated, there is a laying-up by each at home, so on the first day of the week they contributed when they came together; for we have already seen they always met on that day. Be it so, then, that the laying-by was at home, the day on which it was done implies that whatever might be thus separated to the need of the saints was not to be kept there. As they came together then, so they had fellowship in casting their offerings into the common treasury of the church in the name of the Lord. This appears to me the point here in connecting all together. Where would be the force of pressing the collection for the saints on the first day of the week, if it went no farther than each laying by at home? Why might it not be as well done on any other day? We can see its importance if they contributed on that day what each laid by at home, when they came together to break bread. Thus was communion best maintained among those that belonged to Christ; especially as it was also for the express purpose of avoiding collections when the apostle came. He would not mix it up with personal feeling. He desired not that money should be drawn out because Paul was there. He would have souls exercised in love and liberty but withal conscientious care, and the motive Christ for the needy that are His. And He is always there; and this especially, let me repeat, on the first day of the week. No doubt withal there is liberty for every holy service in prayer, preaching, and visiting; and we may well thank God for all. But these are not confined to the Lord’s-day, having their place as God gives opportunity on any if not on every day; whereas the breaking of bread is the standing institution of the church’s communion; and the Lord’s-day is the standing day for it, though it might be every day. The Lord’s-supper and the Lord’s-day answer to each other, being

mutual complements in the witness of Christianity; and as the one is especially the expression of Christ's death, so is the other especially of His resurrection.

Thus too is all duly kept in its place and tone. For we are not meant to come together in sadness, in a spirit of mourning, or with garments of heaviness. There is set forth then the most affecting sign of our Saviour's humiliation in unfathomable love, the most solemn witness of our sin and shame and ruin. How overwhelming the evidence in His death that we were sinners, and what sinners we! But no less is it a demonstration of our blessedness through His infinite work as believers. God is not only satisfied as to sin and our sins, but glorified, and ourselves by grace washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. And our Lord, though on high, deigns to be with us till He come again and take us to be with Him.

Meanwhile the Lord's-day,5 where the grace and truth expressed in it is understood, and the Lord's-supper, observed as it should be in its original integrity as the central institution for the gathered worshippers in spirit and in truth, have their own appointed and appropriate aim — the best means according to God's wisdom — for the testimony and enjoyment of Christian privilege here below in His assembly to His glory. May our part, if indeed we are Christ's, be holily and happily in it all evermore. Amen.

1 The Westminster Confession expressly declares that the Lord's-day "is to be continued till the end of the world as the Christian sabbath." One can only grieve that godly men should be bound down to so palpable a

departure from the truth of God, and forced while under its authority either, like most, to remain ignorant of scripture as to this weighty matter, or to defile their consciences if they know better, like a few.

2 I call the reader's attention to the omission in the commonly received Greek text, as well as in the Authorised Version, of the important clause, μὴ ὸν αὐτὼς ὑπὸ νόμον, "not being myself under law." The passage reads thus: — "And I became to the Jews as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to those under law as under law (not being myself under law), that I might gain those under law; to those without law, as without law (not being without law to God, but under law to Christ), that I might gain those without law." (Compare Rom. 8:3, 4.)

3 I am aware that the late Dr. S. R. Maitland, followed by a very few others, ventured to deny that the expression ἐν τῆ κυριακῆ refers to "the Lord's-day," and to argue that it means "the day of the Lord," into which he supposed the prophet was carried forward in Spirit. The fact is however that, first, the expression is pointedly distinct from that prophetic phrase, ἡμέρα κυρίου with or without the article (for it is used either way according to the exact shade of thought intended); secondly, it is the form constantly and regularly used from the earliest ages to express, according to Christian feeling, the first day of the week, as Jews would say, or Sunday, as Gentiles said. Hence Justin Martyr, wishing to defend Christians and their faith before heathen, uses their term, but in a sort of apologetic way, τῆ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ (Apol. i. 67, ed. Otto, 1842, i. 268- 270.) Where no such motive operated, the phrase of St. John is employed, as in the alleged Epistles of Ignatius to

Magnesians, ix., μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες; so also in Clem. Alex. Strom. v. vii. 12; in Iren. Fragm. vii., ed. Bened. 342, and in Euseb. H.E. iv. 23, 26, v. 23. There is no need to multiply later references, nor to prove that it was so understood by the Latins or by those who spoke in other tongues. It is as certain as any such matter can be that the meaning is “the Lord’s-day,” and nothing else. On that day it pleased the Lord to give His servant John in the Spirit those visions of the future which make up the book of Revelation and close fittingly the canon of scripture.

4 It is a question of the true Greek text, not of our version only. Ἡμῶν is read by the Sinaiticus ABDE, twenty cursives, all the ancient versions of value, save perhaps the Coptic, and several of the Greek fathers, as against HLP and most cursives.

5 I reject, it is scarce needful to add, the broad church laxity of such Presbyterians as the late Dr. N. Macleod, who put the Lord’s-day on human, not on divine ground; and the criticism of the late Dean Alford on Rom. 14:5, 6, who confounded the question of Jewish days, which some wished to impose on the Christian, with that of the Lord’s day. The essence of the modern school is to take away the Sabbath, without leaving the Lord’s-day — in my judgment, a grievous error and sin. The truth is that they, like too many others, have superficial thoughts on the one hand, of man’s ruin on the other, and of God’s grace in redemption and the new creation; and hence their slight of its sign. How few Christians really understand Christianity!

Christian Ministry

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, [let us wait] on [our] ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:6-8).

I have purposely taken a scripture in an epistle familiar to us all, where we have gifts brought into prominence which were not on one hand for mere signs to the world, nor on the other that character of foundation gift which was limited to the earliest days of the church of God upon the earth. At least no apostles are specially named among the gifts of our chapter. Thus it is evident that our list differs on both sides (whether looking at the world as the sphere of God’s remarkable manifestations of power, or looking at the church as requiring what was special in order to its first establishment on the earth); and this because of a design here different from that of 1 Cor. 12 or of Eph. 4. We have what is called the ordinary ministry required for the good of the saints, rather than the manifestation of God’s power in man by the Spirit in witness of the risen Lord, or of Christ’s love to His body in its fulness, and in principle too till the completeness of His work on the earth. From the choice of such a scripture every one will see that my object is a practical one. It is to search simply and honestly, as in the sight of God, into the true nature of Christian ministry, — of ministry such as we need to know it and

to have it freely exercised in our midst, — such as we ought to acknowledge, if we are to be found faithful as the children of God in presence of so great a blessing.

You will see therefore, that it is here assumed — as, I trust, unnecessary to be proved particularly now — that Christian ministry is a permanent institution. It is agreed that Christian ministry, not in all its forms, but in substance and in its essential nature as it was given from the beginning, was not intended to be withdrawn till the close of God's work here below as now known in Christianity. We are not going to enter into curious questions as to what preceded Christianity, nor to occupy ourselves with anything that is to follow after Christianity has accomplished its mighty task. For the present I hold myself, and would direct your attention, to that which is connected with our constant place of privilege and duty every day. As this will greatly simplify the subject, so at the same time it is quite evident that it concerns every Christian.

I define Christian ministry, then, to be, according to the word of God, the exercise of a spiritual gift. Ministry in the word is the exercise of a gift which has the word for its subject-matter. It may embrace, no doubt, different spheres, but it brings the word of God to bear upon souls, whether converted or unconverted. Confessedly, when we look at the converted, ministry has by no means the same simple character as the gospel addressed to the unconverted. If then Christian ministry in the word be divided into two great departments, namely, towards the world on the one hand, and towards the church or Christian body on the other, it is clear that, whereas towards the world it is really summed up in evangelizing or proclaiming the gospel of the grace of

God towards men, towards the church it is a more varied and complex matter. Here we must leave room for distinctions of very great importance.

That these are the two greater departments of ministry in the word, few Christians will be disposed to question, or to require proofs at length. The thing is all but self-evident. Thus the word of God is perfectly plain as to evangelizing. Our Lord Jesus, before He left the world, directed His servants to preach the gospel to every creature. He told them to go and make disciples of all nations — the Gentiles, "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He bid them proclaim repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. He charged them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all the creation. Is it not evident that this was ministry to those without, and that it has for its aim the making known the name of God, as now fully revealed in Christianity, and the glad news of redemption to every creature whom they could reach? Accordingly, among the most prominent of His servants, are seen the apostles themselves. Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost to the thousands that gathered after the astonishing sign was shown of the sending down the Holy Ghost from heaven. This arrested universal attention: men flocked to know what this wonder was; and the apostle Peter explained all from the Jewish Prophets and Psalms. But he did more. He preached the glad tidings. He showed them the way to be saved; he set forth Jesus as the one and only possible means for a sinful man, and then of course, to men of Judæa and of Israel. He was addressing such as had gathered at that time to the great feast of Pentecost — strangers from every nation

under heaven, but still Jews; to whom he set forth Jesus as the Messiah (above all His death and cross, resurrection and ascension) made Lord and Christ; for all these and more are brought before us in one way or another, and are substantially the same great truth of His rejection by Israel and His exaltation by God, though it is quite admitted that the whole subject is testimony to Jesus and hence of far larger bearing than simply the way for a sinner to be brought to God.

In preaching we should avoid too nice distinctions. It is wise to be direct, simple, and thorough, in affectionately pressing with solemn earnestness the broad facts of Christ and redemption. It may be all well among the children of God to point out the various lights and shades in the truth of God; but, in my judgment, refinement in evangelizing spoils the message of Divine grace. As God is simple in His dealing with souls, so should we be as servants, not seeking to please men or ourselves. The same apostle Paul, who was inspired to lead into all the heights and depths of God’s counsels and ways, when helping on the children of God, appears in the Acts of the Apostles, coming down to a gospel of such simplicity as many preachers would hardly think of giving out. He takes his stand on the facts of Christ, His death and resurrection; but he also takes care to meet them exactly where they were, where for instance he cites the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons as witnesses of God’s goodness, against degrading and selfish demon-gods, even when all the nations were suffered to go their own ways. These suffice to tell of His beneficence who now sent them the glad tidings of Jesus. For we are not to suppose that we have all reported, but some special point urged in divine

wisdom: the wants of a sinner's heart cannot be met by rain from heaven; nor can a soul now, still less in view of God and eternity, be satisfied by present goodness in this world, however rich. Nevertheless it is wholesome and important to note how the apostle takes up the poor heathen, and presents to them (from what was before their eyes, or in their own consciousness) testimony to a power infinitely superior to the creature. To a heathen, who had not the written word, the analogy of God's care for the body was no mean argument from which to proceed to tell the love of God to the soul, and thus the whole story of Divine grace. To my mind there is no less wisdom than simplicity in such a method, which we might do well to cultivate.

The same apostle Paul, speaking to the Jews, does not enter into the question of the outward creation, or the nature of man here below, forgetful of his truest dignity (Acts 14, 17, end). He takes them up to the Old Testament (Acts 13, 17, beginning), shows them the Messiah, His death, resurrection, and kingdom, required by the positive word of God with which they were so familiar, and then compares the facts of the life and death of the Lord Jesus, as the only answer to what the Law and the Psalms and the Prophets prepare us for. All this clearly shows the singleness of purpose, and consequently the union of depth and plainness in the presentation found in scripture. For it is a mistake to suppose that those most profoundly taught are necessarily the hardest to understand. The reverse was true in the apostle's case.

When people are imperfectly instructed, they are apt to be in a cloud both of thought and words; and often fancy that, because they are scarcely intelligible, they must be

very deep. The truth is that, where there is the certainty of the known truth, you can afford to be simple; and where there is adequate power to give out as the rule, so the hearers will find it. There will be real depth according to spiritual power and acquaintance with God. It is inconceivable, when one enters really into what God is, as revealed in the glorious person of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and His work and His position, that there will not come out what is of God above the thoughts of flesh and blood. Ordinarily however, the greater the intimacy with God, the more will there be simplicity with man; and although simplicity can very well cohere with depth, we must remember that depth is a very different thing from obscurity.

Now the apostles were not muddy, but perspicuous and plain. Their manner was direct, personal, positive. They had before their souls the most momentous truth from God for man, and this distinctly seen. They had the deepest conviction of man's ruin and of God's grace; they had before their eyes in the fullest and the clearest light who Jesus is and what the Rejected of men did and suffered in atonement, and what God could, would, and did work, through Christ the Lord, for poor sinners. This formed the staple of their teaching. This is the gospel. This is the glad tidings of a Saviour, and more particularly of Him displayed in the mightiest work, the only one indeed, which could at all, which does fully, meet the sinner's wants, namely the work of redemption.

But this clears the way at once. There is first of all the ministry of the gospel, next there is the ministry of the church. But when we come to look at the ministry of the church, there are many different kinds of it. Take for

instance what we have in the verses read. “Having, then, gifts differing,” as it is said, “according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith, or ministry, [let us engage] in ministry, or he that teacheth, in teaching; or he that exhorteth, in exhortation. He that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity (or, liberality); he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Any thoughtful mind will see that this is not at all the way in which man would have written of Christian ministry. Is it too much to say that not a single individual in all the world would of himself have written as the apostle has done here? If so, do you think that this was not meant to instruct us? Is it not a notable fact, while he introduces that which no one could dispute to be of the highest character of Christian ministry (for instance, prophesying), that at the same time he brings in exhortation; and again he mingles with this a kind of ministry which has nothing directly to do with public instruction in the word, while nevertheless, it is emphatically called “ministry;” and again he adds to them, yet distinct from all, ruling or taking the lead. Many Christians seem to be greatly afraid of ruling. They are jealous lest its admission might compromise what they consider the scriptural principles of Christians. They would do better to sink every principle which cannot face the word of God. They would do better simply and fully to trust what God has given and revealed. Be assured that the Lord knows how to keep up principles for us far better than we for Him. He classes ruling along with the other forms of ministry. This should be enough for the believer. It is in no way

bound up with an authority which does not exist any longer.

But there is another matter to which I call your attention. Giving is a kind of ministry that is often deficient, not receiving, but giving. Again, it is another gift to show mercy. They are both admirable kinds of ministry. At the same time they are not assuredly the forms of ministry that men would have joined with prophesying and ruling: nobody would have thought of such an association. What are we then to infer from all? This at least, I think, that God is much larger, simpler, more real, than we are — that He counts as a part of the wondrous work that He is carrying on in the church a great many services that we do not call ministry and have not in general regarded as any gifts at all. Ought we not then to be guided in these things by God's word?

This brings me to an important principle that I desire to press and always hold fast as well as to urge on others; that ministry is not any mere qualification which we have naturally — that no ability that any man can have is what constitutes the force of ministry. Ministry always depends on a positive gift from the Lord. Do I mean then, by this, to set aside natural abilities or acquired qualifications, more particularly since we have been Christians? In no wise. It is an equal error to confound gift with qualification, and to deny that qualification is of any consequence to gift. Let us believe both, but maintain, according to the word of God, that gift is entirely in itself distinct from those qualities which nevertheless may be necessary for the due working of the gift. The Lord has Himself set this forth in a remarkable parable (Matthew 25:14-30), which may be referred to for a moment, because the matter is put with

such decision that it is hard to see how any one can fairly evade its force. We learn thence that Christ was as a man travelling in a far country who called his own servants and delivered to them his goods. It is not merely God in His condescension making use of our goods, which is also quite true. He knows well that the Lord does so. But this is not the point of the parable. The Lord delivered to these servants His goods. This was when He went up to heaven. For His country, according to the style of Matthew's Gospel, is the land of Israel. He is regarded as Jehovah-Messiah from chapter 1. Palestine therefore was His land. Accordingly heaven, in the point of view of this Gospel, is the far country. Going away, then, He delivered them His goods, "and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, — to every man according to his several ability." Two things are here evidently distinct. The ability of the servants is recognised in its place, but the goods of Christ are still more manifest on the other side. In short the Lord does not give the same kind of gift to different servants. Who ever yet saw two men that had the same? Far from fighting with these differences, it seems to me in beautiful harmony with Christianity, and has immense practical importance. Every servant of the Lord has a gift suitable to his own ability; and hence, as the ability of servants differs, so also does the gift. Thus, even though for instance the Lord might give the gift of evangelizing to many, as He does, they do not receive it in the same form or measure. Every evangelist has his own line of work, according to his peculiar gift, in presenting the truth. Is this a matter to find fault with? Much rather should we thank God for it. Miserable is the ministry of one man following another. I grant you it is the constant tendency of narrow minds. They have got

an ideal before them, such as it is — good, bad, or indifferent — some favourite of theirs by whom each is judged, and to whom they would like every one else to be conformed. Their norm for the church and for those who minister would be to resemble a regiment of soldiers, of the same height, or as nearly the same as possible, and with the self-same dress and drill. But this is sadly discordant from the will of the Lord, who gives in no case the same gift in mode or degree, but to each as He will. The right working of Christ's ministry depends on this — "Having then gifts differing," followed by its different forms. And this is so true, that, even though the gifts may be to the same end, yet take any one of them — evangelists, pastors, teachers, — and it will be found that they have each their own individuality as servants of the Lord. They have each their own ability, to which grace adapts the gift of the Lord Jesus; for His gift is evidently suitable to the particular vessel in which it is placed. This serves a weighty purpose of God in the church, on which I may touch a little more when we come to see how it has been abused and perverted. For thus man always tends, under every possible circumstance, to trench upon, and hinder, and spoil the blessed work the Spirit of God would carry on for the glory of Christ. Let it suffice to point out the broad principle at the present.

It has been shown, then, that gift is not to be confounded with ability; that ability is not to be denied because of gift; that the two things are perfectly consistent; and that our Lord Himself is the authority for both. Our Lord intimates that He gives His goods according to the several abilities of the servants. We shall find there is more than this, important guard as it

is against both unbelief and fanaticism; but we must reserve each for its own place.

This, then, is the first element I desire to press as to ministry in the word, that there are “gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.” It is not therefore according to the education of the man, or the will of others. Popes and patrons, prelates and congregations, have no voice in scripture as to ministry in the word. Its title is directly and immediately derived from One immeasurably above them all. As to the source of the gift, everything depends upon the Giver. This is of immense moment. The gift comes from Christ — from Christ alone — not from the church in part, anymore than wholly. Nor should the church presume to sanction formally what comes from the Lord Christ, as if He needed her countersign.

But further, this principle decides its place in another way; for, properly speaking, Christian ministry began with Christ’s ascending up to heaven. He designated apostles while He was upon the earth; He sent out seventy persons with a last message to Israel; but the same New Testament which tells us these facts declares that, when He ascended up on high, He gave gifts. Both facts are true; they are not to be arrayed one against another, which is what infidelity does, though sometimes well-meaning ignorance does so too. But if we do not know, we should seek to learn; for ignorance in divine things often exposes souls to the assaults and influence of infidelity. Though far from being the same thing, we should bear in mind that ignorance of the mind of God does expose to the inroads of the enemy, who takes advantage of it.

However this may be, we see what a place Christian ministry has. It began when Christ had done with the earth, consequent on the accomplishment of redemption. He had come down to the earth, but it was to test man. A man, He lived among men here below, manifesting the Father in the midst of darkness; but it too surely proved that man would not have Him — yea, hated both Him and the Father. The end of that was the cross. Risen from the dead, He acts in power — not merely in testimony, but efficaciously; and this too, not only in power over the body, but in full delivering energy, first for the soul, by and by for the body, conforming it to Himself in the glory of resurrection. Meanwhile, exalted above, He works by the Spirit of God sent down to maintain His glory and give effect to His grace. In the practical working out of this He gives gifts as He will, and these constitute the ground of true Christian ministry. When He rose from the dead, He commenced a new thing; as it is said — “Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” At the right hand of God He inaugurates an entirely new work, and in connection with this work He provides a fresh and suited instrumentality. The operation of this instrumentality is Christian ministry.

The first part of this service of the Lord is His dealing with men by the word, gaining their attention, and drawing them out of the world to God, through His name; but then, when souls are converted, by much the greater part of Christian work remains to be done. They are quickened indeed, but only brought within the threshold of divine blessing. It is not that one doubts or slights the reality of this blessing. God forbid that we should disparage the new birth! They have Christ as

their life; but how much they have to learn of Him whom they now possess! Hence the main work of Christian ministry in the church is to lead those converted into a deepening practical acquaintance with Christ and delight in Him and His glory, into the application of the truth (found only in its fulness in Him) to all the difficulties as well as to all duties and the energetic purposes of His love, while we are passing through this world. Hence the need of various forms for the due fulfilment of Christian ministry; as we see in the passage read.

The apostle begins with prophecy. It is indeed the highest character of instruction from God. It is not necessarily predictive. Prophets do predict, but this is not what constitutes prophecy. On the other hand, it is a great mistake to suppose that prophesying is merely edifying men in a general way. Prophesying does edify men in the most important way; but the verse to which I have referred in 1 Corinthians 14 is not a definition of prophesying but a description; that is, it does not tell us what prophesying is, and nothing else; but it describes what prophesying is as compared and contrasted with speaking in a tongue. To speak in a tongue does not edify people, but prophesying does. Yet there are many who might edify without prophesying. He surely edifies who strengthens souls by holding up Christ and making His love better known; and so does he who exhorts or teaches well. But none of these things is prophesying, which means that character of truth which puts the conscience of a man in the presence of God, which gives the soul the certainty that His mind is in that which is uttered, stripping and laying bare thoughts, motives, feelings, everything. Such is prophecy. There may be

what approaches it, no doubt, elsewhere; but this is its proper force. In that same chapter (1 Cor. 14) we see the proof. Going into a Christian assembly, where they were talking with tongues, a stranger might think they were mad. What a reproof to the Corinthians! In very childish spirit they were reasoning after some such human way as this: “If God has given us tongues, we ought to use them: but there is no place so important as the Christian assembly; therefore tongues should be used in the Christian assembly.” One thought of Christ, one right feeling about the church, would have preserved them from that mistake. How did the talking with tongues promote the glory of the Lord Christ in the assembly? How did it edify those that came together in the name of the Lord? Not in the smallest degree: consequently, had there been singleness of eye in thinking of Christ and those that were Christ’s, they never would have thought of it. They went astray owing to the commonest source of error: they were thinking of themselves and of their own importance. Having the gift of tongues, they thought they were to use them because they wished it. Who could forbid them? Did not the gift come from God? Thus, we see, it was independence of action, not perhaps without human arguments as to their duty, but without the express word of God, or even that instinctive sense of truth which requires a certain spirituality to apply aright. They were walking like men, and even children; they were carnal, not spiritual; they were reasoning instead of believing. All was wrong.

This led the apostle to suppose another case. Let a person come to the assembly, and hear them, not talking in a tongue that nobody could understand, but prophesying; and what a different result! Then all the

secrets of the heart would be revealed, and the effect upon the unlearned person, or even the unbeliever, would be, that he would fall down on his face and feel that God was in them of a truth. In this case his conscience would have met God through the word thus brought to bear on him.

We must remember that in those days the Christians were surrounded by the heathen and the Jew; the one brought up in the follies of many gods and many lords, even below the consciences of man, instead of above them; the other accustomed to the driest and coldest possible moralizing on the law and the prophets. What a change it was for them to see the true God brought into contact with the heart of man and his conscience! The effect was immense on them, more particularly on the poor Gentile. Accordingly such an one fairly broke down prostrate before the living and true God who thus dealt with the secrets of his heart. But this shows us the true nature of prophesying. It was not predicting something that would have to be waited for, to see whether it would come to pass: this is not the prophesying the apostle means. Prophesying applies to the future in peculiar circumstances. Not that one looks for such a character of it now: I do not believe that a person predicting things now would be in the order of the action of the Holy Spirit, for the simple reason, that the predictions of importance for God and for man are already given in the written word. But there remains the other sense of it, — namely, the bringing out the truth of God so as to deal with man’s conscience, and give him the full conviction that it is God who is speaking to him by man. I see no reason to doubt that God still vouchsafes this — in feeble measure perhaps, and in rare cases; but still, that

the principle of it is true I cannot doubt, and that it will not fail as long as God has work and testimony on the earth.

But next we find what is called here “ministry;” and by ministry I apprehend is meant serving the saints — kindly, loving, self-denying interest in their difficulties, snares, sorrows, wants, and trials. It is not preaching nor teaching, but helping the saints otherwise. This is set down as a real gift. Do you not feel and know that there are those who teach admirably, to whom you would not think of going if in any strait? I am sure there are not a few who can preach and teach too, yet do not possess that kind of spiritual power needed to advise in case of any trouble or difficulty. It is part of the fallen state of the church to concentrate all in one; as on the other hand there is no disrespect if one simply own each according to what is given from above. Scripture alone gives the certain truth, and sanctions the right man for the right place.

Is it asked how the reality of these gifts can be known? May there not be mistakes through vanity on the side of some claiming beyond their measure, or through the pride of those who disown and thwart what eclipses their self-importance? I answer that all that is good in divine things is by the Holy Spirit, by whom God decides for us these difficulties. Undoubtedly prejudices may hinder for a time; but those who know God can trust Him to make known how He would have us serve the Lord, or to whom we should look for loving succour in things too hard for us. Power of the Spirit in any way proves itself; especially where souls are habituated to test all by the word of God, as the Christian and church always should. Were there no such person as the Holy

Ghost in the Christian and in the assembly, the difficulty would be insuperable; and the objection has weight in exact proportion to the objector's unbelief in the real presence and gracious guidance of the Spirit, alas! the characteristic sin of Christendom. But the Spirit is here to care for the saints of God, to draw them out in worship and to direct them in service. Does He fail in this? Never where faith is at work. That unbelief cannot see how these things can be, is but natural. It is His function to glorify the Lord in all, but especially as regards public testimony by those to whom He has given special gifts for the general good.

Gift, then, of whatever kind it may be, is not an official status, nor a name by courtesy, but a real power which Christ gives by the Spirit, and which is made good in practice, as conscience guided by the written word will own; and this is just as true in "the ministry" or service of the saints, as in prophesying or anything else. The chief difference is, that "ministry" in this sense may not be a public gift at all, whereas prophesying in the case of man is, of course. Those engaged in preaching and teaching may also have this gift of "ministry." I am persuaded some have it in a very eminent manner; but it is well always to give the fullest breadth to gift, and to give the utmost value to what one does not possess oneself. Grace delights in honouring others. And, be assured, this the Lord would have us cultivate somewhat more. It is always happy when those who themselves preach or teach are earnest in maintaining the place and value of those who do not, and when those who have other gifts, such as serving or ruling, stand up for those who teach or preach. "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the

hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body." (1 Cor. 12:14-20)

It is in this way that God works for welding all together by His Spirit. His is no system of classes, each jealous of another. All that was found abundantly in heathenism, if not in Judaism; but it is not so in Christianity. There are "gifts differing," and each servant of Christ should maintain those of others, trusting the Lord as to his own; for there can be no course less worthy than for a Christian minister to be contending for himself under the plea of Christ's honour. For sometimes excellent men fail in this, through a mistaken notion of not allowing the Lord's gift to be despised.

This is all well; but am I the right one to see to it in my own case? or should I strive to stir up others on my behalf?

It is clear that there is always plenty of evil going on; but as a rule, true wisdom, if you are ill-used, is quietly to bow, and, if you must, to fight the Lord's battles, confiding in Him to espouse your cause, but in no case to fight your own battles. You may have done so; perhaps we have all done so; but have we not learnt, if so, that the route is cheerless, and that not thus can we gain the victory that shines to the praise of Jesus in His day? Your defence provokes aggression, and, as long as

you defend yourself, you will have, not one only, but many, who will for this reason suspect and oppose you.

Such is human nature, and the children of God are not free from its effects. The path of faith gives deliverance from these difficulties, though it has its own, in which the Lord shows the sufficiency of His grace. Therefore leave these matters with Him. Our business is to fight His battles, not our own — to look at the things of others, which are really of Jesus Christ, and not our own.

Hence we return to the great theme now before us. “Having, then, gifts differing” does not mean valuing our own gifts, or of those who accept particular views on given points of an external character — the surest sign of a party spirit. In the church of God, in order to faith’s full blessing, the Lord gives gifts various in measure, and differing in kind and aim. Hence the plain duty of all the saints, and more particularly of His servants, is to take care that there is nothing on their part, and nothing sanctioned by the saints in this or that servant, that would hinder the free and full operation of whatever the Lord has given for the church’s good; for if He gives, it is ours to receive, and, as we value His love and authority, to receive all in their place, as He has set each in the assembly. This is the ground of ministry, and the true principle on which depends its due working to His glory.

But every reflecting Christian will observe how this clears the way immensely. The church of God is neither the source nor the channel of ministry. Without speaking of the monstrous sin of accepting the world’s interference, or accrediting a mere sect, which of

course, like the world, can only give an authority within its own circumscribed limits (for sects, like nations, are mutually jealous, and only recognise each other by courtesy), the right of the Lord — the free action of His service in grace throughout the entire assembly of God — is ignored by both, and as impossible to be heeded in sects as in the world.

But supposing you look now at the brightest and fairest scene that God ever made on this earth — namely, His own church, the body of Christ — it is most certain that ministry never did find its source or authorization in the church, but from the Lord Jesus acting by the Spirit; and this can be readily proved by the word of God. It is a truth indeed of capital importance, yet little seen, and less acted on, but indispensable to every saint, and above all to every one who serves the Lord in the word.

First of all, then, it is clear, according to the scripture already referred to (Eph. 4), that ministerial gift is attributed to Christ as the Giver. If it be said that Christ is away, I answer, that this was true when Christian ministry began. There is no essential change in this; for although, before proper Christianity was seen among men, the Lord had chosen apostles and others, like the seventy messengers sent throughout Israel, we must remember that they had an exclusively Jewish mission before He (Christ) went to heaven. They were Messianic envoys, who testified of the kingdom only, not of redemption by His blood, still less of Christian standing or the assembly of God; and their testimony was armed with peculiar powers, revoked before He suffered (Luke 22:36).

But my subject tonight is not Jewish but Christian ministry, which followed on Jesus taking His place on high, as Lord of all and Head of the church. Ascended on high, He gave gifts unto men. Those first named are no doubt the most important: He gave some apostles. So great is the change, that previous appointment is quite passed by; even the apostles are set on new and heavenly ground. But He gave some prophets also, either distinct from apostles as here, or associated with them in the foundation of the new building, when the same term was met with. Then we hear of some He gave as evangelists; that is, individuals specially fitted to spread the glad tidings to every creature. Lastly, He gave some pastors and teachers; that is, such servants of His as were qualified privately as well as publicly to enforce the truth of God, both doctrinal and practical, on His children. The object of all this was “for the perfecting of the saints,” with a new ministerial work, with a view to edifying the body of Christ. Thus the proper effect, and the shape taken, are clearly laid down.

This then is plain, and at the same time of weighty consequence; because we have certainty from the word of God as to the Giver, and the most important kinds of ministry; but, besides that, as to its aim and object. May we not add too, from the context, the implied perpetuity of Christian ministry, peculiarly expressed so as not to clash with the constant expectancy of Christ, but enough to comfort faith; for if Christ has given in each case “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” it cannot be suspended — still less terminate and fail — till the whole end is accomplished. Assuredly the Lord dies no more.

He died once, and for us, blessed be His name; but this was before He ascended and became Head of the church. He is living at the right hand of God, and, as the unfailing Source of supply, He gives these gifts.

This again is another exceedingly important consideration. To faith it supplies the answer, whatever the questions that arise. Let us conceive the present company to be a true, however faint, representative of the church on earth; and the question to be started by any, How ministry is to be appointed in our midst, and how what is real is to be distinguished from pretension.

Must we not look to the Lord, and search His word? To form our own thoughts and theories is natural, but human, and the way of sure error. Does the Lord leave us without instruction? Certainly not. He who gives the gift (which, when exercised, constitutes Christian ministry), secretly deals with the souls of the saints whom He would build up with His grace and truth, and of the servant who is in a given way stirred up and strengthened of the Holy Ghost to go forth in the work, whatever it may be, to which he is called. How often and how various the exercises and conflicts between heart and conscience; love for the Lord and for souls; fear of one's own nature and perhaps of others!

I remember myself, for instance, a person in whom the beginning of his work in the ministry of the word among the saints was of this sort. Found just in such a company as is here this night, he had strongly enough the word of God laid on his spirit. He was timid; he did not wish to speak; he dreaded a mistake about the Lord's will in rising, but he did not like to risk the appearance of forwardness. Was there not pride in this? He really

shrank from what people might say, and consequently kept back. There is sometimes as much of self in cleaving to one's seat, as in too great eagerness to leave it. There may be flesh in both ways — the vanity of coming forward, and the pride that shrinks from being thought vain. Both are wrong. Were there more simple occupation with the Lord, and hearty exercise of love in seeking the good of souls, most of these difficulties would disappear. However he had not the faith to go forward. The meeting proceeded. The very scripture so heavily pressing on his heart was read by another. Then he felt constrained to rise, and ventured to speak out boldly the word of God, who was pleased to carry home the message to the hearts and consciences of the children of God then present. This was used to teach him to confide in the Lord, and with quietness and simplicity to go on in the face of difficulty, opposition, detraction, hindrance — everything which the enemy excites wherever there is a gift from Christ exercised in dependence on Him; for assuredly he will never leave undisturbed those who are really raised up of God. He may not harass thus where natural or worldly plans reign, but he knows how to sift, thwart, and trouble where Christ is sought to be served. Thus the fact of such opposition and difficulties ought rather to reassure and cast on the Lord where there is faith to look to Him and His word.

But it may be asked, "May not believers be mistaken?" Certainly; but where simply gathered to the name of the Lord, and instructed in the word of God, it is rather a critical experiment for an individual to get up and minister. Vanity and pride may be found everywhere, and are always evil; but assuredly of all places it is

hardest to speak where the word of God is really weighed and intelligently applied. He who has not something from God is pretty sure to be found out there; and, if there is Christian plain dealing in love, he is sure to be discouraged. Not that it is right or gracious to be hard on any man in such circumstances. Indeed it always strikes one as deplorable to hear of the readiness of some to bear hard on the comparatively young and the ardent, still more on older men who have been under less favourable conditions for knowledge and free service. It seems to me an altogether mistaken line of criticism to be sharp on worthy labourers who could know little, and at the same time to be timid enough in presence of mistakes in those who ought to know more and better. Where persons have somewhat of experience, they might be expected to have patience; and where thoroughly grounded in the scripture, they can afford to hear all the difficulties and bear that which would be severe and crushing to young men. It is beneath the dignity of those matured in the mind of God, to be oversensitive with such as are apt to have their stumbling blocks, prejudices, and objections. Bear in mind as to this the language of the great apostle. The first sign of an apostle Paul puts forward is “in all patience.” If that was a goodly index of one extraordinarily sent by Christ, I am sure for other reasons it ought to be the accompaniment of a true minister everywhere. The more you have the consciousness of the Lord putting you forward, and being with you in the work, no matter what may be the form of your ministry, the more be encouraged to bear with the froward, to compassionate the ignorant, to help all that need it. The more you are assured of the truth and of the Spirit’s power, the more you can put up with

that which would be otherwise trying. This is plain, that, if not simple in faith and strong in the Lord, you will in the same ratio be touchy, which is anything but a badge of Christ's service. It is well to bear this in mind, for things are sadly changed in this as elsewhere. The church of God is not a place for avoiding difficulties, or displaying what we know and would make known. Ministry in the church, whatever is of God, whatever is holy, true, and good, must be fully tried, so as to put men to the proof. To faith this is just one of the privileges which the Lord turns to His own glory and the very great blessing of those who cleave to His name.

But this at once shows us that the idea of being what is called "educated for the ministry," or taking it up because one happens to be a fluent speaker, is vain. I do not mean to say that as a question of ability this may not have its value in its own sphere. It is admitted that, if ability is not forgotten by our Lord, His gift is required in order to real ministry. So true is this, that we may easily see, not only men in the world, but Christians in the church, possessed of considerable ability but having no gift whatever in the word. You may all have known such, as I have; persons of admirable knowledge of scripture but without spiritual power to enforce or explain the word of God in a proper manner to others; if they attempted it, they would fall into confusion and make mistakes, or at best the word would be powerless for good. Even if what they said were pellucid as water and free from error, there would be no power in it, — nothing to bring Christ before the heart, or to exercise the conscience before God. It is evident that such speaking is not ministry. It may be a pleasing discourse, but not Christ applied to souls. Ministry means far more

than a Christian speaking truly on scripture; it is the exercise of a positive gift from Christ; and what He gives has for its effect, either to bring souls to God out of the world, when they pass from death unto life, or to nourish and direct the life which is already given.

This leads also to another thing. It may be asked, Do we not find in the church of God, according to the account scripture gives of it, that there was a certain form or method of initiation — a public induction of gifted men — into the ministry? There are certainly many men of godly feeling who think much of what is called "ordination," appeal confidently to Scripture for it, and think it is a very serious wrong or defect where it seems slighted or at least absent. Many where they least expect it can appreciate their difficulty. Some of us here can remember the time when we had equally strong prejudices on this head. Confessedly it is a duty to examine scripture thoroughly, and to cleave to it at all cost. It is allowed also that the word of God is quite plain about it.

First of all, as to preaching the gospel, none can dispute that, when persecution broke up the church in Jerusalem, all good Christian men went about evangelizing the world (Acts 8). This ought to settle the question as to principle. It is not only that they scattered and went everywhere, but that scripture proves they were sanctioned and blessed — that the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. It is in vain to allege in the face of Acts 11:19-21 that the action then was irregular and owing to peculiar circumstances. It might have been hoped that those who plead for antiquity and order would show more respect for that which had the

sanction of the primitive church, of one not behind the chief of the apostles, yea of God. For let it be remembered that all this was in the earliest days of holy order, if ever there were such, and of power in the Spirit, if ever this was known in man here below. These were days when truth was proclaimed by holy apostles and prophets; what can be more harsh than to imply a departure from due order sanctioned of the Lord at such a time? The truth is, that the objection is human, and that the collision of scriptural precedent is with an order set up, not by apostles, but by the fathers in the dark days of declension which too soon set in, when through the craft of the enemy another sort of order undermined that of the Holy Spirit, when pretentious form was substituted for power, when Ignatius, and Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria supplanted the apostles, and utter departure from the grace and truth of Christ ensued far and wide.

But it is only fair to weigh those scriptures which are commonly quoted against freedom of preaching and teaching, always bearing in mind that the question is exclusively one, not of spiritual competency, but of liberty to minister among those assumed to be competent.

One of the passages chiefly insisted on is the beginning of Acts 13. There it is alleged that even Saul of Tarsus, the apostle of the Gentiles, himself submitted to the rite of ordination. He and Barnabas, it is said, were then ordained at Antioch. Were there any real ground for this, the case would be closed. But the passage disproves that for which men produce it. There was no ordination whatever. Look at it well: the truth has nothing to fear. If it were the revealed will of the Lord for every preacher

or teacher to be ordained, the right course would be clear; for one must expect His gracious wisdom would make due provision for giving effect to His will among those who fear and love His name and word. Were the common practice of Christendom sound, it is certainly an easy matter anywhere to get ordained. It nowhere requires learning, and a little piety suffices the very few bodies which require it. Few trades or professions need so short an apprenticeship, so little ability, such slender acquirements; and the mass of clergy, from Rome to Geneva, from Canterbury to the Primitive Methodist Conference, consist of men springing from a comparatively humble position in life. Ordination therefore, if scripturally requisite for all preachers and teachers, is by no means of difficult attainment in itself or in its conditions. The natural heart likes it; for it prevails among Catholics and Protestants; and Mormons or Moravians as rigidly insist on it as Papists or Presbyterians. Quakers make much of their elders, and Congregationalists of their ministers. In short, search Christendom through, and all have in some shape their ordination, and hence their clergy, of which they think no small things. The question is — Is it of God? How far Acts 13 sanctions it, we shall see when the account is examined.

“Now there were at Antioch in the church that was [there] prophets and teachers; both 1 Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

Is this what men think to be ordination? What are the facts, as compared with the inspired history? Barnabas had been ministering in the word for years before this. So had Saul of Tarsus, as we learn from his own account in Gal. 1: Compare Acts 9:20-29. Afterwards for a year together Barnabas and Saul were gathered together in the church at this same city of Antioch, where they taught much people. Thus, not only Barnabas, but he who was an apostle by the call of the Lord Jesus, preached freely among Gentiles as well as Jews, and taught particularly in that assembly and city where, a considerable time after, we are told (but not by God) that they received orders at the hands of their ecclesiastical inferiors. Is this even reasonable?

But this leads us to another point of importance. We have Paul's own inspired answer to the argument. He distinctly pronounces upon the question; for from the first there were not wanting those that found fault with him because he had not been appointed by men, — that is, ordained. As to the twelve apostles, every one knew that the Lord Jesus had either formally or virtually appointed them (formally as to the eleven, virtually as to the twelfth); but there were men of that day who shook their heads as to Saul of Tarsus. Of course he said he was an apostle by divine call, and spoke of the wonderful vision that he had seen outside Damascus; yet nobody saw it but himself, they sagely remarked, and who then could be absolutely sure? Very mysterious man, this Saul, who had suddenly leaped from a persecutor to be an apostle. His teaching too was strikingly different from every one's else, even the other apostles'. Thus doubters appeared among the early Christians, who were stumbled at his immediate call,

irrespective of those before him; and these men were difficult to convince about the matter. Hence in an inspired epistle, and this the most solemn in its form that he ever wrote, Paul told the Galatians that he was an apostle not of men neither by man. He denied that humanity was either its source or its channel. This statement destroys the argument from top to bottom. Ordination, in the common popular sense, must mean that the channel, if not the source, of the ministry in question is human. The apostle for himself denies it as to both. He insists in precise terms, that he was an apostle "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." That is, when God stopped him on the road to Damascus, when the Lord Jesus appeared and told him then that he was a chosen vessel, he was appointed or constituted His apostle from that day. This is what he lets us know, and exactly what he acted on. In the same epistle he says, "When it pleased him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." What did he do then? Go up to Jerusalem to get his orders from the apostles? Not at all. "Immediately," says he, "I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem."

But was it then to be ordained? No; but to visit Cephas, with whom he stayed fifteen days. "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." And so strongly does he feel on this head that he adds, "now, the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I

lie not." He was conscious that, for him and others too, the truth he preached was bound up with his ministry; and as the truth he taught was the development of what the grace of God gives, not only in the death and resurrection, but characteristically the exaltation of Christ in heaven, so his ministry had a heavenly source, not earthly, still less human. Expressly to harmonize with the divine counsels as to Christ and the church, the ministry of the apostle Paul knew no human channel, and not even as its source Christ Himself on earth — for this also it is of importance to affirm. There are many pious souls who acknowledge God as the source of ministry; but then, as they say, for the sake of order man must be its channel. The apostle takes pains to deny the latter no less firmly than the former.

Further this is not to be regarded as an unfruitful exceptional circumstance. It intimates a principle thenceforward to be seen at work in the service of the ascended Christ the Lord. It is vain to say that it does not concern others; for he was an apostle, and had a miraculous vision. And why then did you venture to argue on his alleged ordination (Acts 13)? If you take the ground of treating the apostle Paul as furnishing no instruction for ministry now, why do you throw dust into people's eyes by the insinuation that there was real ordination in his entrance on ministry. The truth is, that you are as wrong in your alleged facts as in denying their bearing on our practice. Saul and Barnabas had been preaching to those without, and they had also been instructing those within, before this pretended ordination, the fact and principle of which is excluded by Galatians 1:1, as far as Paul is concerned, in every

shape, degree, or aim. Has the erroneous use, has the truth, no voice for us all?

Do you ask, “Why then were Barnabas and Saul separated?” It was of the Spirit who was now distinctly sending them on an unprecedented errand among the Gentiles, though regularly even then “to the Jew first.” In this it was important to have the sympathy and prayers of their fellow-labourers. Supposing some one here were marked out in some way adequate, as God knows how to make it to our consciences, to an untrodden field surrounded by peculiar difficulties, such as Tartary or the interior of China, with the danger of ever-present death for the truth’s sake, — would it not be a becoming thing, in those circumstances, that those who had faith in God and fellowship with the work should get together, and with prayer and fasting lay their hands on the head of him that was going out, not pretending to make him anything that he was not before, but rather identifying themselves with this errand of love? The known and ancient sign of identification was the laying on of hands. It was so in the case of sacrifices; so too in conferring a blessing on a child, or a gift on one designated for it like Timothy (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), in praying for a sick person, or in appointing any to a charge like the seven curators of the poor in Acts 6, where the task was exclusively external, though some had also a spiritual gift in the word. It was always on the part of some one presumed to be connected with the source of the blessing, who by that outward sign indicated his desire that God would impart it to him who was its object.

Observe that elders are never said to have had hands laid on them, though it is probable from 1 Tim. 5:22, and

from general use, that imposition of hands may have accompanied the choice of them by apostles and apostolic delegates. But scripture seems purposely silent, as if to warn against making a form of it, there at any rate it can claim no sure inspired warrant.

The case of Acts 13, then, could not be one of ordination; for what is the meaning of this rite? In the generally understood sense among godly men (for I do not speak of vulgar superstition among Romanists or the like) it is this: the Christian may have the power from God (or the gift) for a certain work of a ministerial sort; but he has not thereby title to act, till those who have the authority from the church ordain him, investing him with a proper ministerial character according to the prescribed degree or position he is to occupy. There are differences; but this is the broad notion, divested of abuses and irregularities which abound here as elsewhere.

What a strange disorder, yea, inversion of things, to interpret the scripture so as to involve the conclusion that Paul and Barnabas, two apostles, got their orders from Christians, who were not only not apostles, but in gift, position, and every other respect, inferior to themselves! Is it thus they would prove a valid ordination? Who will pretend to say that, if ordination was meant, any could be thus chosen in a legitimate manner? Even in the world superior officers of government are never appointed by the inferior, unless in a republic. Government ordinarily and properly descends from the higher authority to the lower. Such is the picture according to the word of God; and it always will be so unless where and as the spirit of revolution upsets it. But such is the order most certainly in divine

things. Accordingly, wherever in scripture the question of ordination comes up, a subordinate office is conferred by functionaries of higher grade. Where were such here? The advocates of ordination are in danger of repeating the error of Paul's adversaries, in denying his full apostolic authority, through deriving it from men, and men of subordinate place. Scripture assigns to Paul an apostleship of the highest character and immediately from the Lord.

Thus it is manifest that the attempt to found ordination on Acts 13 is not only a total failure in every point of view, but strikes a blow at his underived apostleship and his testimony of the truth, as well as at the veracity of God's word. Those who imposed hands on Barnabas and Saul never had their important place; and in fact, before this act they themselves had been teaching the church in Antioch as well as preaching to those without. Evidently they had held the highest place among those that were then labouring there.

My conviction then cannot but be, that the imposition of their fellow-labourers' hands in this case was a most orderly act of interest and of prayerful communion; it was in no wise a pretension to confer an authority which they did not possess. But, if this case fails, there is no other as regards Paul; for it is remarkable that, when first brought to the Lord, it was so ordered that a simple brother laid his hands on him, and then the Holy Ghost was given to him. He who baptized the apostle was not an apostle: else it would have been said that it was one in that high position who gave Paul his authority. As it is, nobody can pretend that Ananias conferred anything of the sort on Paul.

How wise are the ways of God! I remember well reading some years ago a book by a living dignitary of the Anglican establishment, in which he speaks of the absurdity of men in office claiming to be the sole persons to baptize. This he argued from this very case of Ananias, as well as from Cornelius, etc. He pointed out that it was a layman, as people would call it now-a-days, an unofficial disciple, who was used purposely to baptize and lay hands on the greatest apostle the Lord ever gave to the church. It seems to have been just the same principle on the day of Pentecost; for, although Peter and the rest of the apostles no doubt baptized many, it may be doubted whether only they baptized three thousand in a day. So, when Peter went down to Caesarea (Acts 10), instead of his baptizing as if it were his sole prerogative, “he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” The other brethren — the unofficial brethren that accompanied him — must have baptized on that grave occasion.

Surely, if anything could destroy the notion of baptism having its validity from the authority of the apostle, such a fact is calculated to do so. What clergyman would think of doing this? Peter, then, was not, and could not have been, a clergyman. Suppose one looked, for instance, at an official in any particular religious system, is it conceivable that such a one would delegate his power or authority to these unknown Christian brethren? Especially, would he act thus on a most novel and critical occasion, without such a plea of numbers or necessity of circumstances as might be said of Pentecost? Has anybody ever heard of such a thing since the clergy began? It is not so that men do now. Their thoughts and habits are altogether changed from the

truth of God in this matter. Far be it from me to say that the apostles Paul and Peter would have thought lightly of one preaching the word out of his own head, or out of unworthy motives — envy, strife, or covetousness. This would be a gross evil, but not unknown of old (Phil. 1). But the clerical principle in no case remedies its worst forms, but rather sanctions by legitimating them. Again, ministry does not mean that Christians have a right to preach or teach; for in truth no man has such a right: the Lord has the right to call and send, as He alone gives the needful gift. It is in this that the true principle is wholly opposed to what men call democratic. For democracy means that all rights flow from man's will. Christianity denies this, root and branch; it affirms that the right is the Lord's entirely, and that He exercises His right by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Hence the choice is for God's glory; and one way in which this is secured, is that, by choosing not many wise or learned or mighty or noble, God puts honour on the Crucified One, not on mere circumstances, as position or possession, family-birth, genius, ability, or acquirements. Rather does the Lord in the face of obstacles exercise His sovereign will, so that He gathers, so to speak, out of every sort. To the spiritual mind which delights in honouring the Second man and not the first, what can be more delightful? In such a state as the present such a choice is precisely the best and wisest possible. What more deplorable than if He chose only from some particular class? No, such is not the way of the Lord. Inasmuch as the church chiefly consists of the lowly, so is it with the greater part of those that minister. Thanks be to God, none is excluded from His grace or the service of Christ for natural circumstances. Thanks be to God, none is to be supposed fit for the Lord's service

because he is learned, or noble, or rich, or anything else in this world. Let us cast off all unworthy prejudices or prepossessions. We must be simply governed by the word of God and the evident will of our Lord Jesus.

The essential principle of ministry is, then, that, as the power is of the Holy Ghost (only just suited in form to the ability of the man who is called, but distinct from it), so on the other hand it is entirely in the Lord's hand. Therefore the assumption of the church to choose and authorize ministers, or to order their action, is a plain direct infringement of God's word and of Christ's authority. It is no question of any particular body; for I am sorry to think that wherever one looks — from the Pope of Rome down to the humblest pastor — this principle has found footing. A minister is regarded as an official of the system or denomination. There is no such thing in Christendom as a servant of Christ left free to do His will. And the reason is obvious: it would not help on the interests of the sect. He must be a priest of the Romish church, a clergyman of this body, a minister of that, and so on.

My brethren, if you are guided solely by the word and Spirit of God, you cannot fail to see that Christ alone calls and makes one His servant. Why should Christ's servant be a servant of man in divine things? Be content to serve Christ alone; you cannot serve two masters, as Christ has warned you. To serve Him only gives singleness of purpose and becoming dignity. This alone puts you in the place of dependence; this produces and sustains the only true and lawful independence. This I hold to be essential to the glory of Christ and our own allegiance to Him. There should assuredly be the freest scope given to that ministry. In the history and epistles

of scripture, never does even an apostle step between the least servant of Christ and his Master.

The evident feeling there is that, as it would be unbecoming for the little gifts to interfere with the greater ones, so it would be still less worthy for the greater ones to absorb or extinguish the less. There is no right sense of Christ's authority, no adequate value for His service, where any of these things are allowed to intrude and hinder. Yet such is the actual state. The apostles were hardly gone before this crop of evil showed itself; for, indeed, the germs were there before.

Take for instance 1 Corinthians 3, already referred to: "I am of Paul, I am of Cephas." There were those who thought that Paul was immeasurably above every one else, as others had a jealousy of all but Peter; others again were swallowed up in Apollos. But what of some who set themselves against the rest, on the plea that we must beware of exalting man, and said "I am of Christ"? I have little doubt that these were the worst of all who thus troubled the church with their fleshly preferences. For the corruption of the best is ever worst; none certainly were flying more directly in the face of Him whom they professed to honour. It was a subtle self-assertion, and none the better because under His name. In vain do they pretend to honour the Master who despise those He has called to serve Him in serving them. In such cases the real object of idolatry is poor and paltry self, and in order to this the enemy suggests the name of the Lord as a convenient cover. For it would never succeed to put self forward: people would reject it of course. But it was a specious self-deceived deceiving to say that for their part they thought it better to be taught of God and not man; that, as for these ministers,

it was well to beware, for it was evident that they all more or less set aside the congregation of the Lord, not giving sufficient place to their brethren and not owning the lordship of Christ. They counted it therefore more spiritual to look away from them all to Christ exclusively. Such thoughts, brethren, though they may look fair to some, are in my judgment based on the hollowest and falsest principle possible to conceive among Christians. For the express way in which the Lord Jesus is now glorified is by His Spirit here below; and the Spirit works by the different members of Christ's body to the profit of all. So true is this that I believe it would be a calamity for the church if it had only the ministry of the apostle Paul; and none would have resented this evil narrowness more than the ostensible object of such spurious homage.

Suppose it were possible to have the ministry of Paul, I do not hesitate to say that the church, if it shut itself from all but Paul, would be robbed of no small part of its food and other necessary supplies. Even the great apostle was not the most suited means of conveying all that grace had to communicate. The ministry of the least gift that Christ confers on the church is as necessary in its place as the ministry of the greatest. I maintain, therefore, that it is just as the arms of the body have a place more imposing than the toes, yet you cannot do well without the lower and lesser members for all that. They too have their place; and if they are wrung or pinched, the whole body suffers not a little. The smallest member, if it gets out of joint or into a bad condition, as we know, may cause excruciating agony to the whole body. So undoubtedly it is with the spiritual body. It is this apostle who gives us the same analogy. The Lord

has appointed these things for His own glory, and He is jealous over His own order. There is not much fear as a general rule that the more showy gifts will be despised; for a powerful ministry in the word will ordinarily have admirers, even though to a great extent it be not understood. On the other hand, wherever the Spirit of Christ works in power, there will be no jealousy of lesser lights, but anxious care that they may not be superseded or despised. What can be more happy than when we see men of greater power leaving room for the less; or, again, the least of these walking humbly, and giving the fullest place to those to whom grace has given more than to themselves?

Thus manifestly the church of God, and the ministry of Christ, are expressly intended to be a place not merely for the communication of gifts, but for the exercise of grace and patience, of the mind and the affections of Christ. Nothing keeps but the eye fixed upon His glory. This is God's aim by the Spirit.

Christian ministry is not a means of living for men, however right it may be that the servant should live by the gospel if he have no adequate resources in God's providence. It is a comely thing that those who minister in spiritual things should not only not want for carnal things, but that fruits of loving care and honour should abound even if there be not absolute need; for one could scarce devise a greater humiliation and loss for the church than to be in circumstances where apparently their affections could not be drawn out. Suppose an assembly where none were needy and only rich men addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints and of the gospel! It were far better for the assembly if the rich moved off, or at least took care not to stifle the activity

of love in their poorer brethren. It is a calamity when rich men patronize and saints sink into clients, — a twofold snare, and a permanent dishonour to the Lord. Let the rich seek objects outside the place they live in, that the poorest brother may not be hindered from knowing the acceptance of his mite, and the value of his quota in all that concerns Christ. It is of prime moment that the heart of all, even to the destitute widow or child, be drawn out in active, gracious, intelligent interest and sympathy as to the church or the gospel. Wherever patronage intrudes and is allowed, there will surely be “death in the pot,” and, in the end, disappointment to the patrons, if not the danger of covetousness to the dependants, who will be apt to feel that there is no good reason why they should practise generous self denial; for wealthier men supply more than is wanted, and why then should the poor contribute? Thus are they taught to count themselves and their offerings of comparatively no moment, whereas grace and wisdom would carefully instil the contrary.

Do not imagine that this is a fanciful picture. I am persuaded that not a little of the kind has too often injured those called “brethren” in some quarters. Occasionally there has been a disposition on the part of men of large means to be lavishly ready and forward in settling everything. They ought to beware and leave room for others — yea, for all. They need not fear for love. The assembly is one, and many places might well and wisely receive a share of what in their own locality would be almost unalloyed evil. Whatever gives undue importance to wealth is as evil as the slighting of the least member of Christ. Ministry according to the world

manages these things, according to Christ it corrects and directs them to His praise.

It is good that those who have the means should use all as faithful stewards, but never so as to stifle love or dignity in the lowliest saint of God. Let us not forget the poor but blessed widow with her two mites. Instead of telling her that it would be more prudent for her to keep the two mites, the rich may learn how poor are their gifts in comparison, and seek to have their hearts drawn out as hers was in devotedness and faith Godward.

Thus ministry is a large theme, and serves to connect the homeliest matters with the glory of Christ, which casts its bright light over all the details, and alone secures its truest honour.

Christian ministry is spoiled if made a question of present distinction in the world and filthy lucre. And do not let us think of danger for other people only; let us beware for ourselves. There are none exposed to greater perils than those who are brought outside the camp to Christ, bearing His reproach. Not that one has the smallest doubt of the right path for the faithful in the present ruinous state of the church. Scripture leaves no hesitation as to this for those who have confidence in it by the Spirit. At the same time it is a path where a careless foot may trip, where none is exempt from the constant danger of being dragged to one side or another. The path of Christ needs the hand of Christ to keep one steady in it. The only guiding star is Himself, seen on high, and soon about to come for us. Shut your eyes to that which attracts nature, and unflinchingly carry out what you know to be the revealed will of the Lord. Do

not join parties or allow party feeling. There is not a little of this sort which we have to guard against.

Exercised according to the word of God, ministry is an invaluable means of helping souls and keeping things straight. But the true principle, it must be repeated, is this: whatever gift Christ gives, He has given for use. If it be asked on this, — What is to become of gifted women; for surely some of them have such power in the Spirit? I answer that undoubtedly they have gifts, and ought to use them too. It is not intended for a woman, more than a man, to put the light under the bushel. The Lord holds us responsible to profit by and use His gifts. Only we must remember that the woman, not being a man, is to act as becomes a Christian woman. We must not forget that it is no question of privileges in Christ, where there is no difference, but of public action in His name, where we must have His warrant. Now there is a propriety in this, and very strongly is this insisted on, and by true-hearted intelligent souls recognised as in the Bible. Never there do we hear of a woman preaching the gospel. In the East, for women to go forth publicly to proclaim the glad tidings in the crowd would seem utterly wanting in decorum. In the West, men do not require such severe seclusion in females; yet is there a wide gap between the happy liberty they enjoy and the forgetfulness that they belong to a sex whose best place is the home circle, or that which approximates to it in visiting the sick and poor, the young and old.

It appears to me then, that the thought of women going forward in public to preach the gospel is unknown to scripture, often as we find women employed in delicate, difficult, and extraordinary errands. Not, of course, that women might not freely declare the glad tidings to

needy souls, for they clearly ought to tell of Christ diligently, and far and wide; but there are bounds prescribed, and a seemliness which may not be sacrificed. For no otherwise speaks the word of God. Never do we hear of a Christian female preaching to the world.

The question might be raised as to the Christian assembly. Surely, as some think, they may be allowed to speak in the church or congregation of holy men and women, where lawless ways are intolerable, and the Spirit acts freely for Christ's glory. But no, says scripture; this is the very place where they are commanded to be silent. As to the world the question is not even raised; as to the church the question is ruled in the negative by the Holy Spirit.

Scripture does not in the smallest degree supersede the value of woman's service, as well as her seeking the good of souls individually. We know (Acts 21) that the four daughters of Philip prophesied. These pious women had the highest character of gift for ministry in the word. Where did they prophesy? Certainly not in the assembly. They probably prophesied in their father's house, which seems a fitting and the fittest place for them. In this case we must remember the principle laid down in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16. For 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35; 1 Timothy 2:11, 12, are conclusive as to that which has been affirmed; and, undoubtedly, the more you search, so much the more you will find in scripture that every truth falls into its proper place. No one duty destroys another; the word of God is in perfect harmony with itself when really understood. Our haste sometimes, flesh's will always, sets one passage in opposition to another. But the believer does not make

haste, and, desiring to do the will of God, knows the truth through grace.

Having but touched upon these important topics, I must not omit to say a word on elders, as it might be thought that the subject was passed by designedly, or at least with negligence. There is not the smallest reason for evading it, inasmuch as the light of scripture enables one to furnish a clear, distinct statement on what is generally misunderstood.

In Christendom elders are habitually confounded with ministers of the word; even Presbyterians, who ought at least to be right in this, make the same mistake here as their neighbours. Hence an elder is never included in any scriptural list of gifts (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; 1 Peter 4). They had a grave and responsible post, but they might never preach. Their business was to lead or rule, exhort and rebuke (1 Tim. 3:5, 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:9). An elder must be apt to teach, and might have the gift of a teacher; but his position as an elder was something distinct from, and other than, a gift. Whatever may have been the fact among the Jews, where the beginning of eldership is not unveiled to us, it is certain from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 14:23) and the Pastoral Epistles that elders were by apostolic authority, personally or by delegate, invested with a local charge or an outward authority of rule within a certain circumscribed sphere (κατ᾽ ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ πόλιν).

In some of the churches of old, as, for instance, Ephesus and Philippi and elsewhere, we hear of elders or bishops, of whom there was always a plurality in the same assembly. They were different names for the same

persons and the same thing. The notion of elders or presbyters and bishops being different is mere ignorance or prejudice, if the authority that decides be God's word in apostolic times, not tradition since. In scripture they are always of the same extent, the same functionary and same function, only with a different name from a different point of view. Hence the comparison of Acts 20:17 with verse 28 proves not merely, as dishonest controversialists say, that bishops are presbyters, but that presbyters and bishops are identical, which is a widely different statement. I doubt that any Christian teacher who is entitled to be heard on this subject, no matter who or where he may be, if he be only possessed of competent knowledge, would venture to impugn what I am saying on this decisive passage of scripture. It used to be contested by divines of the last and former centuries; but although one may not think much of progress in the nineteenth century, I am glad to say that hardly any one would dispute this now; and I am speaking now even of scholars attached to episcopacy. It is all but universally acknowledged that the elders and bishops of scripture were not two classes, but the selfsame persons and office.

It has been already remarked that they were appointed or chosen by due authority. Persons might ask, "Have you then elders or bishops now?" I answer, No. This however is from no indisposition to receive those whom God raises up, but because none can have elders or bishops without apostolic authority in person or by delegate to appoint them. Hence, if we have not duly chosen elders, you have them not one whit more than we. The difference is, that you pretend to what you have not, while we confess the truth.

Nobody at this time has scripturally authenticated elders, not having true apostles to appoint them. You cannot have them because you want the requisite authority for appointing them according to God's word. There are many religious societies which have them in name; but whether it is a gain to have them thus irregularly, without the authority needful to validate them scripturally, judge for yourselves.

We are all familiar with the fact that they have plenty of elders in Scotland, of Established, Free, and I know not how many other sorts. We are at home, too, with the fact that in England they claim to have them, disguised, it is true, under other names; and this not in the national Establishment only, but in the various associations of Nonconformists and even in the Society of Friends. So, too, it is abroad, far off or nearer home.

At the same time I am bold to say that in Scotland as in England, or in any other country, they may be styled presbyters as much as men please, but they are no more presbyters scripturally appointed than the other members of their flock. It is easy enough to call a person a presbyter; but it is another thing to recognise them as such according to the word of God. But it is into this we are now inquiring: — What is the truth of eldership according to scripture? not the value of the name when only given by man in a way altogether different from that only rule of divine authority.

There the essential condition of duly constituting one a presbyter or bishop is, that, besides having the necessary qualifications (personal, relative, and circumstantial), he was chosen as such by an apostle or an apostolic delegate, like Timothy or Titus. Thus

chosen, they were put in that position in the assembly before they exercised their office. This probably was what induced people to imagine the idea of apostolic succession, and to invent it by a fiction, since God provided none. They saw that apostles were necessary to appoint elders or bishops. But scripture gives no warrant for expecting the continuance of divinely-given apostles. Hence they fell upon the theory of succession, yielding to the assumed necessity for a constant appointment of elders. But they have no scripture. The men who are loudest in their cry of order are really therefore convicted of the gravest disorder and presumption.

The fabric of holy orders is built on the sand. They cannot truly defend it by the word of God. In scripture there is no authority for what they are doing, nor anything like it. It is, therefore, however well meant, as mistaken and really rebellious an assumption as appointing magistrates without the seal of the realm.

Such is the fatal net in which most Christian bodies have involved themselves. How much better to do what scripture warrants, using our gifts in the church of God or without elsewhere going a hair’s breadth beyond what it directs or allows us to do?

The Presbyterians, it is true, do not pretend to apostolic succession; they do not claim to have apostles or their delegates; but they fall into at least as great an evil on the other side; for they share between the people and the presbytery that choice and authority which scripture attributes to apostles or their duly commissioned delegates. Will they dare to say, with the New Testament before their eyes, that an ordinary minister was

competent to exercise a function which we see there committed only to Paul or Barnabas, to Timothy or Titus?

It is evident that Timothy had a charge over elders or bishops, and that ordinary ministers at Crete could not do what Titus was authorized to do. Presbyterianism and Congregationalism dislocate and deny this beautiful order of scripture, and, by a gross error, let the congregations choose the elders!

But in the word of God there is no such thought as a congregation choosing elders, and then another man or other men appointing them. Such confusion was unknown where God arranged. Would that all were content to bow to revealed facts and truths, and to learn the wisdom of His ways!

Before the apostles closed their career, the declension of the church was palpable, and its ruin irretrievably at hand, if not come. God would not then provide the highest authority to sanction what was slipping more and more from Himself, or to keep up external local order in presence of such growing unfaithfulness overspreading the church as a whole.

In modern times, when Protestant efforts for truth, honest but unintelligent, added to the ecclesiastical chaos, one can understand how wise was the seeming oversight, but really intentional omission, to provide the means of providing elders, any more than apostles, legitimately; as otherwise they must have legitimated the existing confusions of Christendom, which would be as far as possible from the mind of God.

Is it thought that God does not provide amply for the guidance and blessing of His people in the worst of

times? There could be no greater mistake. His grace abounds in the richest way, but not so as to annul His moral testimony to His own word against man's corruption and self-will. He gives all that is for His own glory, and our blessing, spite of all the church's sin. For — mark it well — to be a ruler, leader, or chief (προι> στάμενος or ἡγούμενος) is quite distinct from being an elder. Thus, in Acts 15:22, 23, Jude, Barnabas, and Silas we see distinguished from the elders, but yet recognised by all as chief (ἡγουμένους) men among the brethren; and so it is elsewhere. These two were even said to be prophets (ver. 32).

Undoubtedly the elders ruled, but many servants of Christ ruled who were not elders, and some of them in spheres incomparably larger than that of an elder. Weigh the very passage (Rom. 12) which has been read, where ruling is maintained without the least reference to elders.

"He that ruleth, [let him do it] with diligence." Is it argued that an elder may be meant though not named? I answer that no apostle had ever been in Rome up to that time, nor any one delegated to do apostolic work in that great city; consequently there was no one to appoint elders. Hence the force of the passage. There were gifts of Christ, and among them some necessarily not as yet, if ever, chosen elders; and yet they were rulers. Such a recognition as this has been a comforting word to many a heart, and often a great assurance to servants of Christ in the present perplexity of the church. There are, and will always be, rulers raised up of God, as long as the good of saints calls for them; although the condition of the church is such that they have not and cannot have the official status of elders, because God has not seen fit

to perpetuate the needed ordaining authority. I would ask any grave Christian which of the two, in his conscientious judgment, is the best — a real ruler, or a sham elder? This seems exactly the point to which matters come on this head — to be a ruler according to the gift of Christ, or an elder according to a spurious apostolic succession, or the equally unauthorized choice of a congregation, with or without a make-weight ceremony of men who have not the slightest authority from the word of God for it.

But observe another ominous and patent fact. So glaringly is the present state of things in collision with the word of God that there is now sprung up a new kind of official never heard of in apostolic days — the individual called “the minister.” Who ever heard of him in scripture?

There is no such person or office there as that which is commonly known as “the minister.” Not to speak of elders, we hear of rulers, preachers, teachers, pastors, ministers in the word, and other ways too, according to what we have been endeavouring to ascertain; and I doubt not that your consciences have gone along with me, led by the word of God. There were gifts differing, and consequently ministers differing in the same church. There might be many; as in the church at Antioch we heard of Simeon, Manaen, Lucius, Barnabas, and Saul, — various labourers having different gifts, and harmoniously using them. Such is the right principle. It requires no little grace among the companions in labour. This can be dispensed with when a man has the place all to himself; which saves from much difficulty, no doubt, but it sacrifices the will of the Lord. What can be more miserable for those who love His name? Who can deny

it? The one-man system is clean contrary to scripture. Is this a light matter? It is to those who deny its Divine and permanent authority. Say not that this is a secondary or impractical question. A bad conscience can plead this because it fears the truth which condemns the course it chooses to follow. Are you prepared to hold to scripture, or will you yield to unbelief and go on in disobedience, because you have been hitherto unfaithful? Why not look to God for grace to follow as He leads from day to day? Why not begin with humbling yourselves for your blind zeal in so long defending human tradition and fighting against the word of God? Are you indifferent to the fact that you have been systematically slighting what so nearly concerns the Lord's glory? Most of us have known the sorrow; many of us have learnt better through grace. We know what it was to have been merely following the track of our fathers or at best what we ourselves were attracted to when converted, before making it a distinct question for prayer and the word of God. Certainly it is a great mercy to think of our parents, as well as our own souls, brought to the Lord; but the Divine object in all mercies, past and present, is that we may be strengthened to do the will of the Lord now, and henceforth grow in it with increasing fervour and simplicity.

I pray you then, hold fast to the truth of God's word. Search the scriptures, and fear not to obey. The things which puzzle most when not understood illustrate His grace and wisdom when once seen. Thus, when the church was evidently breaking up into parties, and there was to be no longer the one manifested assembly of God on earth, the apostles disappeared. After this the mass fell into ever-swelling corruptions through the admission

of Jewish and heathen principles, and sects and parties split off, and at length Popery, etc., and Protestantism with its manifold denominations. In such a state the officials would be only those of a denomination, instead of being bishops set in the flock by the Holy Spirit. The Lord accordingly withdrew the means of imparting a true scriptural charge, when the condition of the church falsified His testimony. So far from finding fault, then, with that which looks anomalous in making it impossible to impart His stamp on that which is spurious, I bless God for the fact that an order which is only human has not the smallest just claim, whatever its pretension, to have God's sanction. From the nondescript minister of a sect, from elders who lack the sole authority which scripture acknowledges, you are driven to reality. It becomes more and more a standup fight between infidelity and superstition on one hand, on the other the word of God and the Holy Ghost. Which, then, is your choice? Infidelity is abandoning scripture as fast as it can; superstition is perverting scripture to maintain the way that it loves; and both will be found united against the written word. The reality is finding its true place in conflict with them both, not without the joy of the Lord and His known will. May we cleave to God and to the word of His grace! Manifold difficulties may be experienced; but He knows how to solve them for us by the Spirit's use of His word.

The subject of ministry is vast and has various points of view, with many details not touched on tonight. I have evaded none; at the same time to enumerate all at once would be impossible. My desire has been, trusting in the Lord's guidance, to say what I could on it at this time with simplicity and earnestness, with the clearest proof

from His word as to His will, on which depends your duty, for they are correlative. May it be yours, then, first to learn what His will is, and then to cleave to it; and this in a spirit of grace and humility, as becomes such as we are, especially in a day of evil and confusion! Is it not true, that many of us have found the truth too much for our measure of practical grace? Have we not been sometimes lifted up, as well as harsh, too ready to find fault with others and to correct mistakes in those who could hardly be expected to receive it, where, therefore, if there had been more grace on our part, we should have allowed many things to pass? For why force good so as to do evil by an unseemly way? On every ground, and more urgently, as things are, should we see to it, brethren, that, holding fast the truth uncompromisingly, we may walk in love and lowliness. The Lord make us more simple and devoted to His own name and glory!

1 The best authorities omit τινες “certain”; and there is no authority whatever for the insertion of “as” in the Authorised Version. Thus the vague impression is removed, that there were other teachers there unnamed. There were really three besides Barnabas and Saul.

Endowment

(B.T. Vol. N3, p. 174-175.)

There is a danger, growing out of the tendency to imitate what is without or the same unbelief which originated that departure, against which we need to watch. Were we realising that we are not of the world as Christ is not, and looking day by day for His coming, the evil would be seen and judged. But herein we are so apt to fail that the exhortation to watch is ever wholesome.

The danger we now refer to is to settle down on earth, and to escape from dependence on God corporately as well as individually. This sometimes takes the shape of acquiring a freehold meeting-room, or at least some arrangement practically equivalent. It saves the trouble of a constant rent to pay, perhaps the need of self-denial and of drawing on the liberality of others to lighten our own burden. Where is there such a scheme in scripture? Where a hint leading to it?

There is nothing to hinder individual grace either in providing a building, or in diminishing rent where poverty is great. But it is a false principle and a dangerous practice for the assembly to possess itself of the room wherein they meet. It cannot in law belong to the Christians assembling there. They must, in order to legal security, become a recognised body with the dogmas and the polity wherein they differ from all others; in other words, they must be a distinct sect, like the rest of Christendom. They must forfeit the position of fidelity to the one body and one Spirit. They must abandon the confession that they are but a feeble remnant cleaving to the immutable truth of the church’s

unity in the midst of ruin. For such a plea could command no tenure before this world's judicature, and would expose those who affirmed it to nothing but derision. If dissension sprang up among those assembling, and scattering ensued, to which would it belong? Those who are under grace could not fight for such a thing; the unruly would be sure to claim it with violence; and those who had too easily desired or consented to the first wrong must find out their error too late.

In our pilgrimage let us be content to hire a needed room or building. To pay the rent is the witness that we are content with a tent and an altar in spirit. Let those who do not wait for Christ possess and build for ever. What if there be difficulty here or there? Have we not God to lean on and expect from? Is there not brotherly kindness on the part of those who have to help those who have not? Besides, those who walk in a spirit separate from the world have far fewer claims than those who love the world and its things. Rare will it be that they cannot pay the rent of a suitable room. In the case of a very few, has no one the grace to the use of a private room? How much true worship has often gone up thence? How many souls have therein heard and received the word of life, to say nothing of the open air and its almost unlimited opportunities?

To frame a title-deed which gives legal safety (the one aim of every title-deed) to the assembly, I do not say to one or more individuals, there must be, especially in the present condition of Christendom, the definite position of a sect. But to assume such a position is to surrender what we have learnt of God about His church. And to assume to be His church in due and full standing,

instead of being the witnesses of His grace and faithfulness as a few of its members meeting on His ground of faith, and no other, would be the abandonment of our intelligent actual duty. Individual property is the escape from the dilemma, where we pay our dues according to the righteous or gracious arrangement with him to whom it belongs. But to seek corporate possession as brethren is a slip from what scripture tells us, an inconsistency with our hope, a worldly or selfish desire, and a temptation to the violent or lawless when dispute arises, as experience shows not without sad example.

Sanctification

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” — John 17:17-19.

I propose to treat with a little freedom the great truth of sanctification, Christian sanctification, not confining myself to the verses which introduce the term in the passage just read, but connecting with them some other portions of the word of God which set forth the same great truth, either as the Lord here introduces it, or as carrying it out in practical detail. That there is a very special sense in the way in which our Lord employs the term must be evident to any one who weighs His words. What I hope to show may convince some (who may not perhaps have perceived it before) of the danger of taking only one side of any truth, let it be ever so precious. We shall also see, I trust, that the subject is larger and deeper in God’s word than anywhere else. This is no disparagement of that which may have been seen by many of the children of God. We ought to delight that it is so; and not least such of us as find out how much more there is to gather than they had even conceived. Why should we wonder if we find the mind of God infinitely rich as compared with our own? We ought to expect it rather, and should constantly bring our little measure of insight into the truth of God with the confident assurance that we shall find that there is far more that had escaped our notice even where we have laid real hold of a truth. I am not now about to dwell

upon that which is erroneous. There are views prevalent at this time in Christendom which diverge far from truth on this very subject. My present purpose is not at any length at least to deal with what I believe to be unfounded, but to attempt the happier task of searching out with simplicity what the plain truth is, and thus of demonstrating with the clearest evidence how much there is in God's word of prime importance which is never found in the measures of man.

Now our Lord, when He says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," seems to me to give a most plain and positive proof that what is commonly the view of sanctification prevailing among the children of God is at any rate defective, — that even those who see what is from Him see but a small part of the truth. In general sanctification is limited to the practical work that the Spirit of God carries on in the souls of those who, though born of God, have much to contend with, but find power in His grace through the knowledge of Christ against their own evil. It is evident that this cannot apply to verse 19; and this on the surface of it. It must be owned therefore that sanctification must have a bearing different from ordinary thought, and incomparably larger than that to which it is usually confined. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," says our Lord Jesus.

Thus at the outset it is happy for a simple child of God to find plain proof that it cannot mean the amelioration of fallen humanity. He has the certainty in his soul that the Lord Jesus does not here refer sanctification to the Spirit's dealing with an evil nature. There was no evil in Him to be subdued or improved: what child of God does not reject such a thought with horror?

Hence it is that many have through ignorance and haste fastened a meaning on our Lord's sanctifying Himself very remote from the truth. Thus some of old supposed that our Lord used it in some figurative way of His sacrifice, if not of other truths. But it can readily be shown that this is altogether a mistake. There is no reason for departing from the radical thought that is always contained in "sanctification." It invariably means the setting apart unto God of those that are concerned. This is its true and simple meaning, from which there is not the least reason to depart here. It does not matter where the word is found in scripture: sanctification when used of a man always means his setting apart to God. How the person is set apart is another matter. In the Jewish system we know the nation itself was so. This was after an outward sort, and was effected by various ordinances, more particularly by that of circumcision; but in fact it was a sanctification that was carried out in all the details of a Jew's life. The whole ritual system of ordinances and judgments which ran through the practical habits of a Jew forms the evidence, measure, and material of his being so set apart unto God.

But the striking thing that we find in our Lord's unbosoming of Himself to His Father on this occasion is, that there is now a new kind of setting apart. Within those of old set apart as Israelites we have the disciples themselves, to be set apart after a fresh sort, nay even the Lord deigning to set Himself apart for their sakes. For His own sake He needed nothing. We must find room therefore for thoughts differing widely from those prevalent among men. Indeed there cannot be a more striking proof of the depth of the setting apart of the Christian to God than the patent fact, that our Lord here

prays the Father that the disciples, already morally apart from the Jewish people, who were themselves apart from all other peoples on the face of the earth, should be sanctified by the truth. He was not content with their being drawn to His person here below; He was about to make them more than followers of Himself, in whom they already had faith. All the rest was true; yet He prays, “Sanctify them through thy truth.” It was no longer therefore on the face of it a question of the law. This should be beyond controversy. From the people who had the law the disciples were to be sanctified. The Jews might be a holy people, but the disciples were to be sanctified not only from men but from Israel — from all they themselves had been. They were to be set apart after a new sort altogether. The law which severed the practice of Israel from the Gentiles is not the rule of Christian life.

But even this is not all. The Lord Jesus in carrying out this setting apart or sanctification of the disciples shows that He must contribute to it personally, and in order to this that He must set Himself apart. “For their sakes,” as He says, “I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

Now the first thing to which I would here call attention is the instrument employed. The disciples were to be sanctified, as He says, “through thy truth.” Then the Lord explains what He means by the Father’s truth. “Thy word [the Father’s word] is truth.’’

Undoubtedly the Father’s word is most directly to be found from the time when, and in the holy writings where, His name as Father was clearly revealed. It is in the New Testament, as we all familiarly know, that the

Father's name was thus declared. We find our Lord Jesus from the beginning, as in the Gospel of Matthew for instance, most carefully declaring that name. But we know too that the disciples did not yet enter into its real power. This could not be in the transitional state through which the disciples were passing with the Lord. All the time of His ministry, and with increasing plainness towards the close of it, He was intimating that an immense change was at hand. In the chapter read (John 17) He says that which a little connects itself with what has been now remarked — "I have declared unto them [unto the disciples] thy name, and will declare it." He had been already doing so through His life, but it does not terminate there — quite the contrary. It was to be declared with still greater fulness afterwards. There were many things He had to communicate which their state forbade. They could not bear them now. When the Spirit of truth was come, He would guide them into all the truth.

It is therefore more particularly in the scriptures of the New Testament that we have the Father's name set out and made known, the Lord Jesus declaring it either in person or by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is the Father's word then that is most manifestly and immediately given us there. And what a mighty change, my brethren, this was! — that He who remains still, as He always is, God, the only true God — that He who had been revealed to the sons of Israel as Jehovah, and even before their immediate parents, to those that are called "the fathers" (to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) as the Almighty, — that He was now making Himself known in the intimate name and relationship of Father. But we must remember that there is something more than this.

It is not merely a nearness of love, but it was as the Son knew God the Father. That is, it was as He is in truth — in the deepest and fullest way in which the only One capable of knowing the Father from all eternity knows Him. And He who had known the Father from all eternity — the only begotten Son — had come down, was a man upon earth, and though born of woman He was still the Son. In this condition He walked in unbroken communion with the Father. All this was really new, and the disciples were permitted to see and know the fruit of this holy fellowship. But now they are told more. The wondrous truth is more clearly made known that the Lord Jesus by the work which He would effect for them, and which He in spirit sees already finished, would bring them, as no others could be, into a most real and profound enjoyment of the same relationship — would bring them, even while passing through this world, to know the Father as none had ever known Him in this world but Himself the Son.

I grant you there was in the knowledge of the Father by the Son that which was ineffable and entirely beyond the creature; but then we must remember, brethren, that our knowledge of the Father is in a certain sense above mere creature knowledge. Not that of course we ever cease to be creatures, even in the glorified state, but that we now enter a wholly new place as partakers of the divine nature, and with the Holy Ghost given that we may enjoy it in power as well as testify it to others. We are now brought out distinctly and consciously as the children of God, being born of God; and, further, the Lord Jesus, having closed the whole estate of the race as such in the cross, and having entered into the new and final condition of man according to the counsels of God

in His presence on high, the time was come for the Father's name and truth to be known in the Holy Ghost, as it was impossible before or otherwise.

It is in view of all this then that our Lord prays that the disciples might be sanctified through the Father's word — through His truth. And indeed the knowledge of Christ has consequences immensely greater than even that to which I have already referred. It is not only that we are now rendered capable by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us of appreciating His mind, but we are said to "have the mind of Christ." It is not only that that which was not revealed of old is now, and that we enter into it, as the same chapter that I have referred to proves (1 Cor. 2); but, more than this, all scripture is sensibly transfigured for us, if one may say so, by the knowledge of the Son of God thus revealed.

Thus, if we but take up the legal ordinances, there is not one of them but what is now filled with a new and heavenly light. It is not therefore that the Father's word is to be necessarily restrained to the full unfoldings we have in the New Testament, but the light of the Son of God is reflected from every part of scripture. The very same portion which is understood by a Jew in one way conveys wholly distinct and infinitely deeper lessons to the Christian in another. This is nothing fanciful in us, nor shadowy as to scripture, but an effect of its own real fulness in the light of Christ. Take a pious Jew reading the law, or the Psalms, or the prophets, before the Lord Jesus came. What he saw was true enough, and had its own importance for the object for which it was literally given; but how immensely enhanced and enlarged and deepened when the connection with Christ as we know Him is seen! Thus the revelation of the Lord Jesus, and

this too as the One who declared the Father to the disciples, affects every part of the word of God, making that which in its primary application is merely an institution of the law to be a witness of gospel truth, of divine grace, of heavenly things.

Take for instance the great day of atonement. A Jew reads Leviticus 16, and has before his mind certain important institutions of the law: the high priest, the bullock, the goats, the application of the blood within and without, and the confession of the sins on Azazel sent off into the wilderness. All this is before him; but to us how different! It is not that we deny or slight any one part, nor that the fuller truth, the Father's word (to apply it to this subject), is such that one loses an atom of what a Jew saw; but that the Jew has not the smallest conception of that which we are permitted to know in fellowship with Christ, as we look on the things that are unseen and heavenly. We see the High Priest going into the holiest, but have its application in an altogether distinct way. We see our Lord Jesus Christ going there, not alone; we see others in Him.

Not a word of this identification is said in the chapter. It is a mystery; and the mystery was not then revealed. Now it is. It is not merely a question of the sons of Aaron, and that we have the force of it made good in ourselves in a new way. Christ is known not merely as a single person, so to speak, but complex. The New Testament gives us to see Him constituting us a part of Himself; we are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Thus in the One who goes into the holiest we behold our own portion as brought into the presence of God. We are not like the people that stood without, waiting for the reappearance of the high priest, when

their consciousness of acceptance is imparted. We are entitled to an incomparably deeper knowledge of this sacrifice, because it enters into that within the veil, instead of waiting for what is published outside. Ours is what is before the eyes of God in heaven; and not merely the measure of acceptance that the people would form from seeing the high priest come out; it is founded on the infinitely more glorious fact of what God sees in the blood and in the great High Priest who presents it before Him. In short, what we are brought into is not the measure of the comfort or of the judgment formed by a pious mind, even though the Spirit of God be working therein. What we rest on is what God the Father sees in the Son and His work, and what the Holy Spirit testifies accordingly.

Thus therefore for us all is changed. Hence, we know, the great force of that word which I do not suppose a Jew will ever know as the Christian does — “the righteousness of God.” The way in which Israel will have it made known, more particularly, will be rather as to the form “the righteousness of Jehovah;” but we see “the righteousness of God” as such, entering in our measure into that which the depths of His moral nature have found, all that is suitable to Himself completely glorified in the Lord Jesus by His work; and then God according to His counsels dealing with us suitably, for we are made His righteousness in Christ.

This may illustrate the way in which the Father’s truth, the Father’s word, is the instrument of setting us apart to God the Father as given directly in the New Testament, but not confined to it, as just seen. What I am more anxious still to show is that which might easily enough be overlooked — the complete change that the

knowledge of Christ has thus revealed on the basis of redemption already accomplished in the Holy Ghost sent down to bring us into all its fruit now in faith, — the change that is wrought by this in our appreciation and enjoyment and application of all the word of God. In short, the result of Christ revealed as we know Him is that we see scripture generally as we never did before. Many of us have said, and many more have felt if they have not said, that such a knowledge of the Lord Jesus makes the Bible to be a new book even if we had been Christians before. I am perfectly persuaded that many present in this place know what this is. I am appealing to what has passed through their own souls in feeling. Instead of the questions, the anxieties, the unsolved thoughts that they have had, the vagueness with which the truth of God was approached, and their own relationship too with God, now they have seen it fully through the grace of God as far as any of us can speak of anything being full: but, in truth, we may, for God our Father speaks of us as knowing Himself without a doubt or question. He speaks even of the youngest among us, the babes that have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. How could the Father so speak of the least of His family? He has given them Christ and the Holy Ghost.

Yes, we are sanctified by the truth, and the Father’s word is truth. This it is then that has made such an immense change. The Christian is brought out of the old contracted way of looking at the word of God. We know what it is now no longer to be half Jew and half Christian. We have been brought by His infinite grace in the gospel to appreciate Christ, to embrace all the revelation of Christ, to see that, whatever might have

been the literal application, it is now absorbed and lost in the brightness of One who fills the mind of the Spirit from Genesis 1 to the end of Revelation 22.

All scripture is thus our heritage, and nothing less. Only we need to know the Father in the Son in order to read it all thus. I shall not be charged at any rate with abridging; nor does such a view admit even in appearance of shutting up the Christian to that which the Jew had as a rule of death which some would persuade us to regard as our rule of life. I rather think that those who plead for the law are more liable to that accusation. No, beloved friends, let us not abandon what our Saviour spreads before us in its infinite extent for that by which God was shutting up the proud Jew to condemnation. If we had been Jews, we have left that kind of sanctification behind. The disciples were not only Jews, but believing Jews; yet they needed to be (and were not yet) sanctified by the truth.

Sanctification then was not conversion (for they were converted), but the separating power of the Father's word which they were about to prove. And the mighty change was wrought in them. How was it wrought? What has the Lord said? "Sanctify them through thy truth." Undoubtedly that which wrought this, as far as the written word was concerned, was the new development of divine truth where the Father's name as revealed in and by the Son was the distinguishing characteristic force of it.

In short, the instrumental means was the New Testament. But then so far from this taking away one fraction from the Old, it is the best way to make the Old truly our own; thus is it really understood. Knowing the

Father we enter in and enjoy every part of the word of God. There is nothing therefore lost. It is not imagining ourselves to be Jews that will give us the truth or sanctify us. On the contrary, it was precisely out of all that was Jewish those were taken who had been really Jews. It is a question now of one new man in Christ.

Thus then we may see clearly the general ground on which the Lord speaks, and somewhat of that weighty change that was to be brought about by the power of the Spirit of God. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” You must remember that the disciples were not yet on Christian footing. This sanctifying that is spoken of here is really setting them apart as Christians. It was not the communication of life, which is not sanctifying. On the other hand it does not refer simply to the practical work that goes on day by day in the heart of the child of God. This is true, and important too; and there are scriptures that speak of it in this light exclusively, as 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 12:14. There is a sanctification or setting apart unto God the Father of a more general kind, and more fundamental too. This, without excluding the practical work going on all through, is what (I believe) the Lord Jesus refers to; the setting apart, in that new proper Christian character and power, of the disciples who then surrounded the Lord Jesus. They were still connected with the old condition of things, having been Jews up to this moment. The time was just at hand when they were to be brought out of their Judaism. The Lord Jesus appears to have this in His mind.

But this is not all. He does not merely say, “Sanctify them through thy truth” — the Father’s truth, more particularly and directly in the Christian scriptures

commonly called the New Testament; but further He says, “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” It was no question of the land of Judea now. The world was before them. Thus, if there was the intimacy of setting apart to the Father, there is also an universality of mission. Though the Lord Jesus had a mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, this is not the way in which He is regarded in the Gospel of John. There is a deeper thing here in question. The fact is that all through this Gospel the people are viewed as utterly gone from God, and as only part of a vast system in opposition to the Father: so completely are all regarded as hopelessly evil and enemies. As the Father had sent Him into the world, “even so I also sent them into the world.”

But in order yet more to effect this work of setting apart unto the Father, the Lord adds another and a most weighty truth: “For their sakes I sanctify [or set apart] myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” That is, the Father’s word (blessed as it is, and changing all as it does for us) is not enough. We want a personal object in order to bind our affections to it. Who could that object be but one — the Lord Jesus himself? But it is the Lord Jesus not on earth. Jews will have the blessed revelation of the Lord here below: I do not say how far or how long; but they will have it. They will have the promised One making Himself known to them here below. His feet, as we know, shall stand on the Mount of Olives. But it is not there or thus that we know Him. How then? As He is now in the presence of the Father in heaven. This is the meaning of His setting Himself apart. It is not the victim upon the cross. There God made Him sin, instead of His sanctifying Himself. There it was the

substitute forsaken of God that we who believe might never be. Not that Jesus, even when made sin, was one whit less but infinitely more the object of God the Father's delight, and in that most solemn judgment even morally a deeper, yes the deepest, delight to the Father. But still it was most true and real that He was made sin upon the cross in this sense, that He identified Himself thoroughly and without reserve with all the consequences of our evil, and suffered accordingly at God's hand against whom the evil was wrought and whom He came to glorify. The cross certainly was no mere appearance but a reality, whatever might be the vain show of the world wherein it stood. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of your redemption is gone. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of the glorifying of God is gone — which is a much more important thing than your salvation or mine. Brethren, all was met there and settled for ever. All evil was there taken on Himself, who was judged for it. There was nothing so foul but Jesus suffered for it; there was no sin so dark but He washed it away with His precious blood. The consequence is that there, and there alone, can either God Himself rest with satisfaction when He looks at a sinner, or a sinful soul find the rest that his awakened conscience needs. But this is a wholly different thing from our Lord setting Himself apart or sanctifying Himself for our sins, "that they might be sanctified through the truth." It is the Lord Jesus who enters into an entirely new place for man — a place essential in order that there should be Christians in deed and in truth. For the essence of a Christian is that, although he is upon earth, he is heavenly; and how could he become heavenly unless by the revelation of a heavenly man who is his life ? And who is or could be

that heavenly man but the man Christ Jesus, who, after having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, takes this new place there, Head of a new family, and is so revealed to us by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?

This then is the force of our Lord's added words. Instead of only giving us that fulness of truth in the Father's word, more particularly the New Testament, but at the same time so affecting all the Old as to give us distinctly and positively a means of knowing the Father in every part of scripture, He gives us Himself as a personal object before us in order that we may have the truth thus. Besides having thus the detailed word of the Father, we want an object to attach our hearts to; we need it that we be not lost in the abundance of the revelations of God. Here then is One who can claim every affection, who can detach us by the revelation of Himself, the worthiest of all objects, an object worthy of God the Father, and surely of us the children who delight in what He delights in. This is none other than Christ, but it is Christ after all the evil was judged, after all the good was won, after love had nothing to do, nay, even righteousness no other task but to bless us. This is what God now can afford to do as the Father: this is what He is now doing through the infinite sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. But this is what He now reveals, through the Lord Jesus in His presence, and by the Holy Ghost sent down gives us to know. Hence therefore our Lord's taking His place at the right hand of God is not a bare fact in Christianity, an incident be it ever so great and glorious, but barren of fruit. Far from it: His setting Himself apart at God's right hand is a root of divine truth, yea, the root of our distinctive blessedness. He is there the model

man according to whom the Spirit forms us by the truth. It is thus essential in order that He fitly and fully should be the means of that wondrous display of truth and love that God looks to be reproduced in those that are Christ's below.

This then is the further intimation in the words, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." We require the Father's word; but we require the person thus set apart in heaven, and in this order too. For the Father's truth that is made known in the New Testament invariably precedes our full appreciation of the Lord Jesus at His right hand, thus sanctifying Himself that we might be sanctified through the truth. But then, (need we say it?) when we have seen the Lord Jesus there, when we appreciate the all-importance of having Him as an object before our souls entirely outside the world, according to which the Holy Ghost is carrying us on and fashioning us while we are here below, the truth is everywhere made more personal and in power. Not that the truth abides not in the word, but that it is thus applied with increase of blessing. As He says here, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," but not stopping at this, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Thus we see, if we begin with the truth and rise to see the personal place of the Lord, the truth only receives more and more power and point through it.

Turning now to some of the chief scriptures of the New Testament that touch on sanctification, we shall find fresh developments no doubt, but all of them making good the same great truth, whatever the special application to need.

Almost every epistle furnishes evidence. “To all that be in Rome, called to be saints,” or rather saints called; “to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,” saints called, that is, in Corinth; “all the saints in all Achaia;” “to the saints which are in Ephesus;” “to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi;” “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse;” “unto all the holy brethren,” speaking of Thessalonica. Here there can be no doubt to any simple, not to say intelligent, mind. It is the description of persons set apart to God; and this too from the beginning of His work in their souls as Christians. The word in no way speaks of their measure or practical attainment of knowledge: it supposes that they were set apart to God as His own children in this world from the outset of their career after their calling, but it says no more.

But this truth, elementary as it is, was far too much for Christendom to carry uncorrupted. Nor do I speak only of the grossness of Babylon, which canonizes her saints years after death, and actually not till alleged proofs are given of miracles from relics of the deceased candidate. But even where the pope is rejected, what can be more timid, what more unscriptural, than the unwillingness of most believers now to recognise each other as saints, and to confess themselves sanctified in Christ Jesus from the starting-point of their confession of the Lord’s name? What is this but an unworthy shrinking both from accrediting the rich grace of God and the solemn responsibility of the believer? Saints they are however; and as such they are bound to walk. Not to own it is not exuberance of humility, but only ignorant unbelief to the dishonour of the Lord and their own souls’ great loss. It is clear as light from the scriptures adduced that all who

confessed Christ were called and treated as saints, and that sanctification is viewed as attached to every one who bore His name. They were set apart to God; and this from the first. (Compare Acts 9:13, Acts 20:32, Acts 26:18.)

Again, in 1 Cor. 1:30 we find another reference, without taking up every one, for this would be beyond the limits of the present discourse. But here the apostle says, “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” There I think that the Spirit of God uses “sanctification” in a very large sense, not only for the separating us from the first unto our God and Father through the Lord Jesus the Son, but also looking at the separative power as going on practically in our souls to the last. It is very general, and this is my reason for citing it, as I believe that this two-fold application is contained in it and meant. “Wisdom” is in contrast with the philosophy of men that particularly prevailed among the Greeks to whom he was writing; “righteousness” as setting aside all that was imperfect, and communicated in grace where moral consistency with God was absolutely wanting to man as such; “sanctification” not only from the first call but going on all through; and “redemption” completing the work of grace; for it is not here redemption through Christ’s blood but that of the body, as I gather from its place as winding all up. This again illustrates the largeness of the term “sanctification.” As it is clear that redemption is meant in the fullest sense, so I suppose is “sanctification” too.

But when we come to chapter 6 we have something a little more precise in verse 11: “Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are

justified.” No theologian writing in the nineteenth century would ever think of putting these words in any such order. They have missed the truth therefore. And let me say further that no man writing in any century whatever would have ever chosen the same form of words except one inspired of God. But have we learnt the wisdom of it? Have we discovered why these words are not only true, but more true in this order than in any other? Certainly the verse does not regard sanctification as only the practical application of the truth to the conscience by the Spirit of God after one is justified, which is the general sense among Protestants; still less does it confound sanctification with justification as Romanists do.

It is manifest therefore that, assuming the apostle’s words to be the vehicle of divine truth perfectly expressed, the notion which limits sanctification to the practical process which goes on in the soul after justification is altogether defective. It is not the view that the apostle gives here for our instruction. Is it meant then to weaken the value and need of that practical work, of growth in holiness, after we believe and are justified ? Far from it. I admit its importance and that it is rightly styled sanctification, being our continual setting apart to God every day and in each detail. But I maintain that there is more truth which man does not so easily let into his own thoughts and judgment, and that an element is wanting to give Christians a fuller and clearer understanding of their relation to God.

First of all is it not plain that the apostle Paul here tells these Corinthians that (whatever they might have been in vileness before they knew the Lord Jesus) when they received Him, they were washed? It is very possible

there may be some allusion to their baptism as an outward sign of it. I am not discussing this; but I affirm that washing is not the same thing as sanctifying, and that sanctifying is, as all admit, a different thing from justifying. But further, as all these express necessary parts of Christian salvation, are they not all right as God has written them here? The Corinthian believers are said to have been “washed,” because the first action of the word of God on a guilty soul is to deal with his impurity — to detect, judge, and remove the evil that defiles. “Washing” by the word (Eph. 5) is not sanctifying, though in the closest way associated with it; God’s grace thereby takes notice of and deals with that which is altogether contrary to Himself. “Sanctifying” is more positively and exclusively occupied with the good to which the soul is set apart. There is a separating object to which the affections are attached, not merely a cleansing from our natural evil.

Although we may distinguish between the washing and the sanctifying, in point of fact they cannot be separated in the soul of him that comes under the quickening power of God.1 But still God is wise in the order in which He puts the thoughts and words. The washing, I repeat, is the application of the word of God by the Holy Ghost to the conscience. Christ, thus received in truth, gives the sinner to detect and judge his evil before God. He is born of God; but the effect of the new birth is that he feels what he himself is. There is repentance in short. But, besides, sanctifying goes farther by the revelation of an object that wins and draws out the heart towards that object. It is plain therefore that the washing supposes more the removal of defilement; and that the sanctifying is rather the effect of the object revealed,

which commands the heart, and attracts it from all else, set apart to itself.

This then is the way in which the Spirit of God presents the matter. But there is a third expression — justifying; and it is clear that to be justified is here put after and not before sanctification. In the order in which the Spirit of God puts them, it follows washing and sanctification. How is it possible to reconcile this with the view which limits the doctrine of sanctification to the practical holiness of a Christian after he is already justified? Impossible! Is the apostle's statement then to be given up as unintelligible? Are we not to have the truth of God as to this received and enjoyed by our souls? The truth is, that not only "sanctified" in John 17 is proved by our Lord's use of it to have other and larger meaning than men usually assign to it, but the way in which the Spirit of God, through the apostle, uses it has a force quite different from its bare application to the practical condition or growth of the soul after the Lord is known.

I will refer to one other scripture, in order to show that this is no arbitrary thought, but that the Spirit of God has designed it in the most distinct manner. The very same side of the truth is revealed by another apostle. In 1 Peter 1:2 we are told that the Christian Jews who were scattered about Asia Minor were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. It is clear that what is called "justified" in 1 Cor. 6 answers to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus here. If the common view were meant, the way in which the apostle Peter would have expressed himself would have been somewhat of this sort — that these Christian Jews were elect unto the sprinkling of the

blood of Jesus Christ, after which the Spirit carried on the work of sanctification in their souls. But He makes, at the very least, a totally different statement. He says here, “Elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” In short, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is supposed necessarily to be in virtue of sanctification; for they were sanctified by the Spirit in order to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.2 In what sense then is sanctification meant here? This is the real question. What does the Spirit of God mean either by Paul saying, “sanctified, justified;” or by Peter saying, “through (ἐν) sanctification of [the] Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ”? Put before “justified” in 1 Cor. 6, and before the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus in 1 Peter 1:2, “sanctification” in these passages must needs take in the work of the Holy Spirit from the time that the soul is quickened to desire after God, to look up because of Jesus, distrusting itself, yet daring only to hope for good. Perhaps the soul does not yet know what provision grace has made; but it knows enough mercy in God to make it willing to bow to His judgment of all that it has been and all that it has done. Hence it cleaves to Him, and is perfectly sure that all goodness is in Him, trusting that His grace through the Lord Jesus will yet shine upon it; but it does not yet know how richly that grace has sought it out, and wrought for it even before its awakening. The Spirit of God produces a desire to do the will of God at all cost, and testifies before such a soul the work of the Lord Jesus in its infinite efficacy before God. Then and thus it is brought to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; but as it was elect before the Holy Spirit began to work

effectually, so the Spirit was effectually at work before the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

There is, it seems plain, an allusion to Old Testament figures or facts in the language of Peter, which was calculated to impress the believing Jews with a lively sense of their new position as compared with the nation of old. For an Israelite could scarce avoid recalling Ex. 24:7, 8, when Moses “took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that Jehovah hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words.” Now here we have the same elements in their case: obedience of the law and sprinkling of the blood of the victims offered at that solemn moment. But how great the contrast ! Israel stood pledged to obey the law and sprinkled with the blood which declared death the penalty of its infraction. The Christian is partaker of the life of Christ which lives in obedience, the obedience of a son, even as Christ was its perfect expression; and he is sprinkled with His blood, which declares that he himself is perfectly cleansed from his sins before God.

That effectual work of the Holy Spirit from first to last is called in the scriptures “sanctification of the Spirit.” It embraces the entire setting apart of the soul to God from the beginning onwards. Quickening looks on the soul as being dead in trespasses and sins. There is a new life given it from God; but the effect of divine life is that the heart goes out towards the God that gives it. Sanctifying always supposes the affections drawn out towards Him who thus confers His blessing. The depth and fulness of the blessing may be imperfectly known

yet, but nevertheless He is believed in who alone can bless. It may be but the conviction that in the Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, with the assurance of happiness if one could only get there. The soul is quite sure that mercy is there, though not yet looking when there to be more than a hired servant. Still the confidence of the heart is in the love that is there if one can only get there; and so he sets out. Such is the effect: behold a quickened soul. Without the Spirit there had been no such turning of the prodigal's heart to the Father; no real sense and confession of having sinned against heaven and in His sight. This action of the Spirit was immediate and vital. From the moment that self-judgment was produced, and the affections of the heart turned towards the Father and His house, there is sanctification of the Spirit. It is only when he meets the Father and learns the killing of the fatted calf with the ring and the shoes and the best robe — it is only then that he is doctrinally what may be called "justified." Justified is the application by faith of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to the person who is already in the true sense of scripture sanctified by the Spirit.

Of course practical holiness mainly follows justification; and with such a view I have not the smallest quarrel. I do not in the least mean to raise any question or attack any person or party on that subject. It is an important truth in its own place that the progressive work of holiness proceeds after we are justified. But what is sanctification of the Spirit before we are justified? And why is it that theologians or preachers never say a word about this? Why is it thus left out? Not certainly to do honour to scripture; nor through intelligence in the truth of God. How comes it to be thus ignored in Christendom

at the present moment, and for seventeen centuries before it? If it be not so treated, where among the divines ancient or modern can we find its expression? Who can say? I do not know, and I do not believe that anybody else does. The fact is that this truth has, in a way absolutely unaccountable save to such as have learnt the defection of Christendom from the faith, fairly dropped out of the schools of theology.

What should we gather from this, my brethren? The blessedness of having the scriptures. For this is no recondite truth; it is not something that might be lost without any particular detriment to the soul. There are immense practical consequences which result from losing sight of sanctification of the Spirit from the point of view in which both Paul and Peter treat it. I am speaking now not of what may be called relative or progressive sanctification, or whatever growth in practical holiness may be styled in theology; I leave all that as it is. Those terms may be more or less correct, but I pass them by without the smallest debate or arresting ourselves upon that question. For my own part I believe that they express substantially the truth, and I have no controversy with Arminian, Calvinist, or anybody else about the matter.

But I must demand of these Christians and you, whether it is not a most extraordinary and suggestive fact, that one of the primary truths for every soul that fears God, one of the most capital truths of the New Testament, should have thus practically become a cipher to most of God’s own children up to this present time? If I be mistaken in such a thought, let me be shown the evidence; for indeed I should take it as a very great kindness if any one do me the favour of pointing out

where I have in some way overlooked it; but I can honestly say that, after searching in vain yet examining carefully, I believe that what has been said is the simple truth, (and a solemn truth it is,) that sanctification of the Spirit, in the most important sense in which the New Testament presents it, is a truth wholly wanting — an "unknown quantity" — to most Christians at the present moment.

And what is the result practically for souls? Much every way. But this is obvious that there are those in whom the Spirit of God has wrought, who are often tried and miserable. Then not the Father's word but the law is brought in as a rule for them, and they are thus made still more wretched; for it never was the intention of God by the law to make any sinful man happy. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," How could it do aught for any child of Adam but enslave, condemn, and kill? (See 2 Cor. 3) Further, the law, as it does not give power, so it never reveals an object. The law has a most important use: but its use is to convict the guilty soul. As the apostle expressly teaches, its lawful use is not for the righteous but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane. It is the strength of sin, not of holiness, the precise reverse of a sanctifying power. The Father's grace reveals to us the most blessed object that even He has; and His word makes His object to be our object. This sanctifies. "Sanctify them by thy word. Thy word is truth.... For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth."

Besides this, which gives us the full character of Christian sanctification right through the believer's course, "sanctification of the Spirit" takes in the first

effectual working of the Holy Ghost in every soul that is born of God, from the earliest real effect of the Spirit of God by a life that is given in opening the heart more or less (for it may be often hindered, and is often in bondage), nevertheless with affections turned to God. In such a case how frequently the soul is pining after the assurance of being sanctified! If a person could know himself sanctified already, what a relief it would be! It is exactly in that condition that many a person, conscious of his unworthiness, is cast down immensely, because he is deeply conscious that, whatever the grace of the Lord Jesus, at any rate he is not sanctified himself. What a comfort it would be for such a soul to know that it is precisely what he is in a sense still more absolute than the practical measure which occupies his mind — to be thrown off self on Christ!

But there is a further thing. While God does meet a soul tried, cast down, and without ability to take full comfort and peace through faith in the Lord Jesus, even though already sanctified, He does not allow one to settle down in that condition. Here is where the importance of Peter's word comes in: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." And why obedience first? This often is no small difficulty, and sometimes leads persons to a sad perversion of the word. They acknowledge that as believers they are called to obey; but are apt to think that, if we fail to obey, the blood of Christ becomes the resource, and makes up all deficiencies. There is hardly any one, it is to be hoped, in this room so uninstructed in the mind of God as to treat the scriptures thus lightly, not to say offensively. No, my brethren, the apostle

meant no such thing; but this, — that when the Spirit of God thus separates a soul from the world, the first movement of the soul when turned really and truly to God from sin and Satan, the great and prime desire of the heart thenceforward is to obey, while the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus assures of cleansing from guilt in the sight of God. “Lord,” said Saul of Tarsus, when he was smitten down, “what wilt thou have me to do?” I know there are those who say that this was rather legal. From such thoughts I wholly differ. I grant you there was not yet known the full liberty of the gospel; but, as far as it went, the desire was excellent and blessed. It is the instinctive yearning of the new nature to do the will of God.

But we have far more here. We are told that the measure of the obedience of the elect soul now sanctified by the Spirit is the obedience of Jesus; for His name, I believe, qualifies both the obedience and the blood sprinkled. It is not the obedience of a Jew, but in contrast with it. Such is the point of the words “Jesus Christ” introduced at the end. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by sanctification of the Spirit unto [the] obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ.” The English words are a little changed to give the full force. The obedience was Christ’s obedience, as the blood was His blood. And is not the first desire of the awakened soul to obey? But God has no obedience now that He values, except that kind of obedience which Jesus rendered. It is not obeying the law, as a Jew might do, in the hope of certain blessings, or from fear of certain curses. The Lord never obeyed on this principle; He always obeyed out of the consciousness of a Son — the Son — of God; and the simplest Christian ought to

obey from a similar consciousness too; for we too by grace are children of God; and our God and Father has implanted this in us as the first feeling of the new life — to do His will. This it is you may see in many that are born of God, and that, even though not in liberty, and alas! too often imbued with doctrine that injures the soul, they nevertheless delight in His will. Their hearts desire to be faithful and obedient. They only want the bright fulness and freeness of the grace of God to clear them out of these imperfect and sometimes erroneous thoughts.

This then is what I believe the Spirit of God here meant. The sanctification of the Spirit is “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” It is in contrast with the Jew saying presumptuously, “All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient,” and in consequence of this, having himself as well as the book sprinkled with the blood of the offerings, which threatened death in case of disobeying the law; for this was the sense of the blood with which the book of the covenant and the people were sprinkled. It was not at all the blood of atonement to secure them, but blood sanctioning the law and their own obligations, so as to keep before them the death that they must die if they failed. The apostle Peter appears to me to have all this in view: only the change is complete for the Christian, who begins, not with the book of law, but with the Saviour; and what he finds in the Saviour is both a spring of life, by which he desires to obey God, and also accomplished redemption, by which he starts with his sins effaced and forgiven before God. Thus, instead of having the blood of victims to tell him he must die if he fails, he has the blood of the Saviour to assure him that all is clear

because he is thereby washed from his sins. And the redemption is eternal no less than the life in Christ.

I trust, therefore, that in these few scriptures compared with what has come before us somewhat more at length in John 17 the nature of Christian sanctification has been shown clearly. Its full character and means the Lord Jesus first gave us to see. This the epistles follow up, developing the order and place of sanctification, or the setting apart of the soul to God, as compared with His other dealings in grace. Christ looked at its full import right through, while the passages in the epistles we have examined take up its beginning, so to speak, in the heart. At the same time both of course are divinely true, and each of all possible importance; but both differ not a little, unless I am greatly mistaken, from popular thought even among the children of God. I have been anxious therefore to set forth, as far as God has enabled me, the testimony of scripture to this most momentous truth.

There are other scriptures that refer to practical sanctification, on which I must say a word next. One clear text of this description is in Hebrews 12, where the apostle says, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness” (or sanctification, if you please) “without which no man shall see the Lord.” It is evident that this is practical holiness. He is addressing those whom he assumes to be Christians. There might be persons among them in danger of going back, as we know there had been. Some had already been apostates; but the apostle was “persuaded better things of them, and things that accompanied salvation, though he thus spoke.” But here he says, “Follow peace with all men.” They had already peace with God, but they were told to

“follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” There is nothing really harsh in that, nor a word to cause the smallest difficulty to the most sensitive spirit; for surely, my brethren, there is no Christian who would affirm or allow that a man can live as he lists and yet go to heaven. Can a person sin habitually and be born of God? Surely the language of St. John is even stronger where it is laid down that “he that is born of God doth not commit sin.” No doubt, as you justly plead, he means the person so characterised, not that a believer may not fail in this particular or in that, but that no man who is really born of God lives without exercised conscience and holy ways before God: no man so born goes on in sin, but walks according to the new nature. There are differences of measure, and various degrees of spiritual power as we know; but all saints have an uniform desire, and the Lord hearkens to that desire and answers it too, — meeting and helping the soul, sometimes by the comfort of the truth, sometimes by sharp discipline, but in one way and another strengthening it to please Himself. It is manifest from this that there is not the slightest ground for explaining away such an exhortation, no excuse for trying to make out that “holiness” here means what we are made in Christ. This is not the thought in the smallest degree. It is only deceiving ourselves if any think so.

Again, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians it is clearly a question of practice. “This is the will of God, our sanctification.” “For God hath not called us to uncleanness but in holiness” or sanctification. Here it is plain that he is speaking of walking in holiness every day. And then again he prays that the God of peace

Himself sanctify them wholly, and that their spirit, soul, and body should be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In all he is looking at the practical work that goes on in the believer.

I particularly mention these passages; for we ought never, in asserting one side of the truth, to forget another. Only what has been already said proves that, besides the practical holiness of which we have been last treating, the New Testament speaks pointedly and plainly of the separating power of the Spirit of God in every man's soul who is born of God, and from its rudiments calls it "sanctification of the Spirit." From the first motion of divine life in the soul right through, all that time a man is sanctified; and this one may call absolute or personal sanctification, in order to distinguish it from what came next, that is, relative sanctification, which depends upon spiritual growth, submission to God, use of means, as the word of God, prayer, fasting, self-judgment, discipline. All these things help on the soul's practical growth in holiness.

Again, we must notice briefly such passages as Acts 20:32, Acts 26:18. It is impossible to apply these to progress in holiness but to the character and estate of all Christians. The structure of the word ἡγιασμένοι admits of no other meaning. Is it argued that this is only the condition of believers when they have arrived at the end of their course, if not of the world altogether? Rom. 15:16 and 1 Cor. 1:2 refute such a restriction; still more forcibly does Heb. 10:10. This is not at all weakened by the form of the word (ἁγιαζόμενοι) in verse 14, as in chap. 2:11. For the present participle may be used abstractedly apart from the question of the action or the passion. But the perfect tense could not be used as it is

in verse 10 about the same persons at the same time, if the object were to define by ἁγιαζόμενοι that we are only under a process of sanctifying now going on, but as yet imperfect. For while the present may express either the actual time or the abstract character and object of the operation, the perfect necessarily gives the permanent result of a terminated action, and therefore affirms that we have been and are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. It is no question of God's counsel respecting us, but of a present abiding effect of Christ's finished work. Hence to lay stress on ἁγιαζόμενοι as if it must needs indicate a process going on is not only arbitrary, because the present participle does not always convey this force, but even negatived by ἡγιασμένοι which decides the time and excludes what is imperfect. It is not potentiality, but a present fact and a continuous character acquired by Christians through the accomplished and accepted sacrifice of Christ. To translate therefore in verse 14 τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους as "them who are being sanctified" is, under the appearance of literal precision, to prove that we have never seen the true spirit of the passage, and that we do not understand the apostle's doctrine on this great head; and the rather too as τετελείωκεν (he hath perfected) in the same clause is irreconcilable with this effort to get rid of sanctification here as a standing condition, by denying the abstract force of the present participle as used in this case. It is interesting to observe that in the same chapter (ver. 29) the Spirit employs the aorist ἡγιάσθη to describe him who had once been a baptized confessor of Christ crucified but afterwards turned out an apostate. That tense simply states the fact historically; whereas the perfect, adding to it the idea of an existing result, could not properly be

used of one who spurned Christ and counted the blood of the covenant a common thing. It is not true that he had advanced so far in the spiritual life that this blood had been applied by faith, or that its hallowing or purifying effects were visible in his life. Such talk is merely imaginative, not only without scripture, but neglecting the obvious intimation of that which is said; for the passage says nothing of spiritual life, or of applying the blood by faith, or of purifying effects visible or invisible, but only of sinning wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth. Be it ever so exact and full, this in no way implies in itself a divine work in the conscience so that the person was born again and converted to God, but such a clear full and certain knowledge as many unconverted men possess who nevertheless hold fast the truth in unrighteousness. Very different is the statement in Heb. 9:14 where the blood of Christ is said to purify the conscience from dead works in order to serve (i.e. religiously) the true God. Had there been any such language in chap. 10 used of the renegade's previous state, there would have been a scriptural basis for the idea of some; as it is, in what is really said here and in what is said not here but in chap. 9:14 is a twofold testimony of the most distinct kind against it. Heb. 13:12 seems too general to decide the question before us in either way; but there is ample light where the language is strict to gather the sense with certainty.

These then are the two main senses in which "sanctification" is used of believers; for I do not here go into the setting apart of the Son by the Father (John 10:36), nor of praying that the Father's name be hallowed (Matt. 11:9; Luke 11:2), nor of the relation of

marriage with a believer (1 Cor. 7:14), nor of food no longer taken in mere nature but set apart for godly use of the faithful. The first is what the apostles Paul and Peter have laid down, where, as we have observed, sanctification is expressly shown to be before justification. To apply this to the practical work would destroy all truth: there can be no proper Christian holiness of heart and ways before the soul is justified. Tridentine doctrine is ignorance of scripture: “to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Since therefore both emphatically introduce it before justification, it is plain that the “sanctification” of the Spirit intended has another sense than the practical one; and that it means the setting apart in principle to God which is true of the believer from first to last. So it is used in 2 Thess. 2:13, 14: “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Sanctification of the Spirit” evidently here accompanies “belief of the truth,” and this “from the beginning.” It is not growth in holiness afterwards. Yet assuredly growth comes when the soul, finding rest in the work of Christ, identifies itself by the working of the Spirit practically with Christ as an object before the heart. “As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” or sanctification. Hence “being now made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto

holiness, and the end everlasting life.” There it is and thus that the Christian enters into what the Lord Jesus set out so fully, which, as we have seen, contemplates Christian sanctification and its specific means without drawing attention to time one way or the other. Its object is a deeper one, showing that we are set apart unto the Father according to what was revealed by His word and in the Son on high. “We all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed unto the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit.”

May the Lord then grant that this rich and grave subject may be estimated better, — a subject so easily obscured to the loss of the children of God, and so easily forgotten to the injury not only of those that are beginning their career (depriving them of the comfort of the knowledge that they are sanctified), but also of those that may be longest in the way. May they be continually stimulated, knowing that if they are thus sanctified, they are called on to walk according to no less a measure than Christ revealed by the Father’s word. May they profit not by fragments of the truth only, but by the whole revelation of God, acting by the power of the Spirit of God in renewed affections, ever judged, ever deepened, by these divine communications, but also concentrated on the person of the Lord Jesus. May He give us thus to prove more and more how precious it is that we are sanctified by the Father’s word, and that the Son has set Himself apart for our sakes that we might be according to such a model. Amen.

Appendix On 1 Peter 1:2.

It may help souls if I give a few proofs, not from persons of extreme views, but from the most intelligent among the Reformers, of their looseness on this subject and their divergence from scriptural truth. It is needless to speak of Romanists; for they are too stupefied by tradition to afford the least hope of finding real and intelligent subjection to the teaching of the apostles.

The plainest conceivable instance of the way in which popular error works may be seen in the following extract from Beza's Version and Annotations. I quote from the latest edition (1598) during his life, where his thoughts are given most fully and correctly. "Electis ex praecognitione Dei Patris ad sanctificationem Spiritus, per obedientiam et aspersionem sanguinis Jesu Christi." Such is his version: of the note this will suffice. "Ita complexus fuerit Petrus omnes proprias salutis nostrae causas quae a Deo manant, nempe efficientem summam causam, Dei Patris praescitiam, id est decretum aeternum: Formalem, vocationem efficacem, quam electionis nomine intelligit: (nam ut alibi diximus, tum demum re ipsa eligimur quum Deus aeternum suum decretum in nobis per vocationem exequitur) Finem, sanctificationem electorum: Materiam ipsam, Christi justitiam, cujus imputatione justi coronamur."

First his version is as unfaithful as one can imagine. He not only departs from the necessary force of the apostle's words in two most weighty particulars, but inverts the prepositions employed so as to alter completely the revealed mind of the Spirit. It is true that in one of these errors the Vulgate had led the way; for it is impossible fairly to render ἐν ἁγιασμῳ by "in

sanctificationem." Beza should have been rather warned by such a flaw, especially as Erasmus from the first had correctly given "per sanctificationem," as none could justify the taking ἐν and εἰς as both = "in" with the accusative. But Beza allowed his system of doctrine so completely to warp his mind that he proceeded to the still greater error of representing εἰς by "per," a rendering which not only falsifies the meaning but has not the smallest shadow of justification from the Greek idiom in any work of any author from Homer down to the fall of Constantinople. And, secondly, this bold and excessive perversion is the foundation of his comment; which, being wholly unfounded, calls for no remark further than that it is just the common notion on the subject. For, spite of the English Bible, which is in the main right, people continue to fancy that the Lord means here that the Christian is elect according to God the Father's foreknowledge unto sanctification of the Spirit by the obedience of Christ and the sprinkling of His blood.

Much more right was his leader, J. Calvin, though he speaks hypothetically. "If there be parts or effects of sanctification, then sanctification is to be taken here somewhat differently from what it means when used by Paul; that is, more generally. God then sanctifies us by an effectual calling; and this is done when we are renewed to an obedience to his righteousness, and when we are sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thus are cleansed from our sins." Even he is mistaken in thinking that Paul does not use sanctification in this more general way, as I have shown on 1 Cor. 6:11. But plainly the Genevese chief owns a sense of sanctification different from that which is ordinarily seen and admitted. 2

Thess. 2:13 appears to me another clear witness of Calvin's limiting this more general usage to Peter. For there the apostle speaks of God's having chosen the Thessalonian saints from the beginning unto salvation by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. It was in virtue of the Spirit's setting them apart and their faith in the truth of the gospel that God thus chose them to salvation: doctrine strikingly in analogy with the statement of Peter, if we allow for the difference in presenting the thought to Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Again, the excellent Archbishop Leighton, in his well-known Commentary upon the first Epistle of Peter, is perplexed by this obedience. He rejects Beza's application to Christ's obedience actively (though he took it as His obedience unto the death of the cross); and he himself thinks that it is contained in (yea, chiefly understood to signify) that obedience which the Apostle in Romans 1 calls the obedience of faith, by which the doctrine of Christ is received, and so Christ Himself. When he adds that "by obedience sanctification is here intimated," it appears to me that he gets confused by not holding fast the more general sense of sanctification. The apostle certainly treats of obedience in this place as flowing from the setting apart to God or sanctification which precedes it. Besides, I think he mistakes the nature of the obedience by understanding it as the obedience of faith when a soul receives the gospel. In my judgment the phrase means that we are thus set apart to obey as Christ did, in the consciousness of our sonship, and with the assurance of being purged by blood. Much more correctly does he say later (Works, vol. i. pp. 15, 16, Jerment's edition) that "sanctification in a narrow sense, as distinguished from justification,

signifieth the inherent holiness of a Christian, or his being inclined and enabled to obedience mentioned in this verse; but it is here more large, and is co-extended with the whole work of renovation, and is the separating of men to God by His Holy Spirit, drawing them unto Him; and so it comprehends justification (as here) and the first working of faith, by which the soul is justified through its apprehending and applying the righteousness of Jesus Christ."

1 So in Eph. 5:27 we read that Christ gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle or any of such things, but that it might be holy and blameless. The English Version might, and no doubt does confuse, by putting it as "sanctify and cleanse." The cleansing or purifying by the washing of water by the word is the way by which Christ sanctifies the church. The object here is to state the work in itself, not to distinguish the initiatory setting apart from the progressive work.

2 See Appendix.

The powers that be

The source of their authority, and the obligations of Christians towards them; with remarks on Capital Punishment (Broom 1854)

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1).

Human government, it has been justly said, finds its root in the authority which God conferred upon Noah. There was no such thing, properly speaking, in the antediluvian earth. Adam had a most extensive dominion, but no power over life. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man,” etc. (Gen. 1:26-28). There was no authority delegated over man, nor even to deprive the least animal of its life. Hence it was that the murder of a brother did not draw down vengeance from man, though conscience dreaded the retributive blow from every hand. “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto ME from the ground,” said the Lord to guilty Cain; and He set a mark upon him, lest any should slay the fugitive. Then followed a long reign of gigantic and uncurbed wickedness. Finally, a preacher of righteousness was raised up who warned for the space of one hundred and twenty years, when God swept away the corruption and violence of the race in the waters of the deluge.

After that catastrophe, a new commission opens. Noah and his sons have the Adamic grant confirmed; but they

have much more. Every moving thing that liveth, even as the green herb, should be meat for them, the blood thereof excepted. “And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man: at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man.1 And you, be ye fruitful,” etc. (Gen. 9:5-7). Evidently, the world was then placed under new conditions, which, in their substance, continue and must subsist till a new and yet future dealing of God change the face of all things, as may be gathered from 2 Peter and other scriptures.

The principle, then, of the divine charge to Noah and his sons remains true and obligatory till the day of the Lord. Now what is its chief characteristic? Clearly it is God’s committal of the sword, or the power of life and death, into the hands of man. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, BY MAN shall his blood be shed.” Such is the true source and basis of civil government. It did not spring from social contract. It did not grow by degrees out of family relationships. It did not originate in the usurpation of man or of a class. As God’s command gave it being, so it can never cease to be clothed with His authority, whether men hear or forbear. If there be any one part of the charge which stands most prominent, it is the responsibility of man to visit capitally him who sheds man’s blood. Such is the requirement of God, grounded upon the fact that He made man in His image. But though the reason of the thing might apply from Adam downwards, no such power was delegated till Noah. The notion, therefore, of its being, in any sort or degree, a right inherent in man, is thus cut off. It is a

right of God, which He, ever since the flood, has been pleased to entrust to human keeping, which those in authority are bound to enforce in subjection to Him, and for the exercise of which they must by-and-by give account to Himself (Psalm 82).

It is easy to say that God has withdrawn or quashed the commission given to Noah and his family. But I ask, where? when? how? and await in vain the shadow of a proof.

Undoubtedly, God revealed other thoughts and hopes to the faith of Abraham and of his seed. With the fathers he entered into a new relationship — a covenant of grace and promise, as proved by Rom. 4 and Gal. 3 — which did not clash with the previous bond signed, sealed, and delivered, if I may so say, to Noah and his sons. This was a covenant between God and the earth at large; that was a special covenant between God and His own people. By the one, the world's wickedness was kept in check; by the other, the wandering patriarchs walked as strangers in a land promised to them and their seed for an everlasting possession. The former menaced human violence, if need were, with death; the latter led the men who embraced its hopes, pilgrims on earth, under the guidance of a known and almighty Friend. The government of the earth proceeded in its own sphere, wide as all the families of the earth. The calling of Abraham and his seed had its proper and peculiar domain. Between them there was no confusion, much less contradiction.

It is true that, after the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, the principle of government, first committed to Noah, and that of God's call, first manifested in

Abraham, were seen united. In that chosen people, separated from the Gentiles as His witness, God developed His ways as a Ruler. But, alas! at Sinai, instead of confessing their sin, and pleading the absolute promises made to the fathers, they accepted the conditions of their own obedience. The result was ruin under all variety of circumstances: the law broken before it was brought down from the Mount, God Himself rejected, failure under priests, under prophets, under kings, “till there was no remedy,” and God at length gave them into the hands of their enemies. During their national existence in Canaan, none can pretend that God relieved Israel from the responsibility of punishing with death.

At the Babylonish captivity, God severed the principle of earthly rule from that of His call, transferring the former to the Gentiles. The four great empires appeared in succession, as Daniel and other inspired writers predicted and attested. The last, or Roman empire, bore sway, as is notorious, when our Lord was born and died; and God began to call His church, chosen from Jews and Gentiles, as one body here below. But it is clear and certain, from the Acts of the Apostles and the rest of the New Testament, that the church in no way interfered with the government of the earth, which God had placed in the hands of magistrates. They had, no doubt, to hear and to bear the reproach of turning the world upside down, and of doing contrary to the decrees of Caesar; but it was false. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. They knew it, they had it, and they did not want another. They remembered His own glowing words about them: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”; and they waited for Him from heaven, assured

that those who suffer shall also reign with Him. As they never resisted the authorities by force, so they sought in their teachings to uphold, not to weaken, the just place which God of old had assigned them. Hence St. Paul thus addressed the believers in the imperial city: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (rather judgment, as also in 1 Cor. 11:29, where the context is decisively against the idea of “damnation”). “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger [or avenger] to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake,’’ etc. (Rom. 13). The reigning emperor was a pagan and a persecutor; but clearly that was not the question. The language of the Spirit is so framed as to exclude cavil, founded either on the profession or the practice of the ruler. “There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” What can be conceived more definite on the one hand, more comprehensive on the other? What more opposed to revolutionary movement? It was most wholesome; just in the right place and time. For the Jews were then turbulent, and the Christians were obnoxious in the extreme to the ruling powers. It seems probable that some at Rome, from old Jewish associations, found it hard to own and respect, as of God, rulers whom they

saw sunken in the spiritual and moral degradations of heathenism. Under such circumstances, if under any, one might have supposed à priori that God might have revoked the grant of power from its Gentile holders, if He did not transfer it to the church. But no! The door is closed against every excuse. “The powers that be are ordained of God.”

As regards Christian responsibility, it is of no essential importance what may be the form of government. It may be despotic or constitutional: it may be aristocratic or republican. Nay, more, in its profession, it may be Pagan or Mahometan, Popish or Protestant. The principle or rule, as regards mankind and the earth, remains untouched. Thus, the Christian is bound to pay allegiance and honour wherever he may be — in England to the Queen, and in France to the Emperor; in Russia to the Czar, and in Turkey to the Sultan; and the same thing is true of all subordinate authorities. The only limit is that the Christian owes absolute subjection to God; and therefore when obeying an earthly government entails — happily a rare thing — disobedience to God, it need scarcely be said that he must obey God rather than man. To resist the powers is to resist God’s ordinance. The alternative for the Christian, when he may not obey a human command that involves a breach of God’s will, is suffering, not resistance. But in general it remains true that to him who does good, the magistrate, under any government you please, is God’s minister for good. So said St. Paul in view of an arbitrary and an idolatrous power. “But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: FOR HE BEARETH NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN.” That is to say, we have the Apostle, long after Christ had been extensively preached

among the Gentiles, urging the saints at Rome to submit themselves to the existing authorities, to render to Caesar the things of Caesar. Of course, if Caesar had sought to corrupt the faith or destroy the worship of God's church; if Nero had ordered them to give up the Lord, positively like Nebuchadnezzar, or negatively like Darius, their duty had been plain — not to protest merely, and sin all the while, but to suffer for righteousness' sake: they were not to render the things of God, but of Caesar, to Caesar. But if the State demanded any service, however hard, Christianity taught them to yield it, if not positively sinful. If it insulted and persecuted them, still they were taught to pray for kings and for all in authority, "that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

But suppose, instead of doing good, and having praise of the ruler, a man does evil, what then? "Be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain." Assuredly, if the ruler is not to use the sword, he does bear it in vain. He might as well, or better, not bear it at all; for an idle threat is a proof of feebleness, and a brutum fulmen brings a ruler, of all men, into contempt. St. Paul, however, anticipates no such dereliction of duty on the part of the magistrate, but warns the ill-disposed that he is God's servant, "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The passage is clear as noonday. It demonstrates that the authority of the sword delegated to Noah and his sons, as representatives of government, is no more repealed or neutralised by the grace of the Christian revelation, than it had been by the righteousness of the Mosaic code. It proves that the Christian is bound to respect that sword by whatever hands it may be wielded. Even if the magistrate were an infidel, if he

degraded his office by regarding the popular will, not God, as the source of his authority, the Christian is not the less bound to own God's authority in him, and to honour him as God's minister in worldly things, in "the things of Caesar." It is mere delusion, therefore, to suppose that Christianity deprives a government of the authority to punish evil-doers with the sword. St. Paul, as we have seen, fully recognises that power, and describes the ruler as one authorised by God to avenge evil. To speak of mercy, amendment, etc., as the sole or chief aim when law is violated and a man is convicted of murder, for instance, is to evince the utmost confusion of thought. For while grace is the central idea in God's scheme for saving sinners by the cross, justice is and must be the foundation of all earthly government, Jewish or Gentile. Doubtless, in the gospel God can and does justify — not pardon only, but justify — the chief of sinners freely, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. But thence to infer that a world's ruler ought to deal on the same principle towards criminals, is, in my opinion, to despise both revelation and reason.

Some, I am aware, find a difficulty because of Matt. 5:38, etc., and similar texts. This is due to a failure in seizing the bearing of these scriptures; for no believer would even insinuate that one part of God's word contradicts another. Now we have seen Rom. 13 to teach distinctly that the ruler is to be owned as bearing not the sword in vain; as an avenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil; in short, as God's minister in earthly things, no less than Paul and Apollos were God's ministers in heavenly things. This chapter formally sets the Christian in the place of subjection to the powers that be, asserts the authority which God has vested in

them, and finally makes it a matter not of wrath merely, but of conscience to the believer. Matt. 5 is in quite another direction, but perfectly consistent with the former teaching. Here the Lord instructs His disciples in their individual path, not their relation to governors, and puts their calling to walk in grace, active or passive, in contrast with the Jews, who were called to act in the righteousness of the law. It is absurd to apply such a passage to a government or a worldly tribunal. If it did so apply, it would prove that magistrates ought to caress and reward every culprit, instead of punishing any.

1 Peter 2 connects and enforces both truths within a narrow compass. On the one hand, we are exhorted, in verses 13 and 14, to submit ourselves to “every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.” On the other hand, we are told that this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” The latter verses savour as strongly of Matt. 5 as the former do of Rom. 13; they teach different but harmonious truths. And the present day is a time when we need to put each other in mind “to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:1, 2); for there is no lack of them that “walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous

are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” The Lord keep His own in the path of obedience.

W. K.

1 Will it be believed that some have gone so far as to treat these words as a mere prediction, and not as a solemn permission and charge on God’s part?

Thus saith the Lord

(Pray refer to the Scriptures quoted)

(Published by Broom: also in French, German and Italian.)

A Collection Of God's Words On God's Way Of Assembling God's Children;

For the Word of God, which discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12), is able to furnish the man of God thoroughly unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17); and, being so, it would never leave the manner for the children of God to assemble themselves together undetermined, to become a bone of contention amidst diversities of opinion. People may assert that, without man's additions, it is not capable of building up a Church, but Paul asserts that it is (Acts 20:32). Moreover GOD'S WORD must be referred to (Isa. 8:20; Matt. 4:4; John 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2), searched (John 5:39; Acts 17:11), understood (Matt. 13:23; Luke 24:45; Acts 8:30; Col. 3:16), and obeyed (Ezra 9:4; Isa. 66:2, 5; 1 Thess. 2:13; James 1:21-25), and it alone on all points; — else we go wrong (Matt. 15:9; Matt. 22:29; Mark 7:7-9, 13; Titus 1:14; Rev. 22:18, 19).

1. When Jesus was on earth among the disciples the Father had given (John 6:37), and brought (John 6:44, 65), by the operation of His Spirit (John 3:5-8) and word (John 4:41; John 8:47; James 1:18), to Him (John 3:14-17; 1 John 5:1), to receive eternal life, from Him (John 5:24; John 17:2; 1 John 5:11, 12), they gathered round His person (Matt. 10:38; Matt. 19:27; Mark 6:30, 31), and were subject to His commands (Luke 10:1; John 10:4;

John 15:14) and teaching (Matt. 5:1, 2: Luke 11:1); and, when He departed, He promised them His presence still (Matt. 28:20; John 14:18), and especially so to any two or more believers gathered in His name (Matt. 18:20).

2. After He had by Himself purged our sins (Heb. 1:3; 1 Peter 2:24), Jesus Christ ascended up on high, far above all principality and power (Eph. 1:20, 21; 1 Peter 3:22), and sat down on the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 10:12, 13; Heb. 12:2). This He did as the Risen Head of His Body, the Church (Col. 1:18); which is said to be dead with Him to sin (Rom. 6:2-11), the law (Rom. 7:1-6; Gal. 2:16-21), and the world (Col. 2:20), risen with Him from the dead (Col. 3:1-3), and seated in Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:5, 6); where He is our life (Col. 3:4) and peace (Eph. 2:14), we being there accepted (Eph. 1:6), complete (Col. 2:10), and blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) in Him, and joint heirs with Him of God (Rom. 8:16, 17), He being the RESURRECTION-HEAD over ALL THINGS to HIS BODY the Church (Eph. 1:21-23).

3. But, before He was parted from His disciples and carried up into heaven (Luke 24:51), He promised not to leave them comfortless or destitute down here (John 14:18), but to pray the Father (John, 14:16), who, after His departure (John 16:7) and His entrance into His glory (Luke 24:26; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:33), would give them in His stead ANOTHER COMFORTER to abide with them FOR EVER, even the HOLY GHOST (John 14:16, 25, 26), — the Holy Spirit of promise (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:13), — who should be sent them in the name of Christ (John 14:26), to glorify Him amongst His disciples on earth (John 16:13, 14; 1 Cor. 12:3), and to enable them there abidingly to enjoy the manifested

presence of the Father and His Son (John 14:16-26; John 15:26; John 16:14-16; Eph. 2:18; Eph. 3:16, 17; 1 John 1:3; 1 John 2:24, 27; 1 John 4:13).

4. The world cannot receive this blessed Comforter (John 14:17), but only those who, by Him, have been led to believe in the Lord Jesus (John 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 1:22; Gal. 3:2-5, 14; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13).

5. Such was our gracious Lord's promise of this great blessing to His flock; and we find them commanded to pray for it (Luke 11:13), and wait for its most glorious fulfilment after His ascension (Luke 24:49); which they did (Acts 1:14): and we find it bestowed first on believing Jews (Acts 2:1-4, 33, 37, 38), and subsequently on believing Gentiles (Acts 10:44-46).

6. The Holy Ghost, having thus descended on all believers, baptizes (Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 1:5) them all, Jew and Gentile irrespectively (Acts 11:15-18; Acts 15:7-9; Rom. 10:12; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:18; Col. 3:11), — the Jewish economy, etc., being now taken out of the way (Eph. 2:11-17; Heb. 8, Heb. 9, Heb. 10, Heb. 13:9-14, etc.), — into one body (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 3:6; Col. 1:18, 24; Col. 3:15), even the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27), being of His flesh and His bones (Eph. 5:29-32); which body is the temple of God (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22); all believers being one spirit with the lord (1 Cor. 6:17), so having Christ in them the hope of glory (Col. 1:27), and also being partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). THIS BODY OF CHRIST and TEMPLE OF GOD, composed irrespectively of Jews and Gentiles, and INHABITED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD HIMSELF, was the great mystery hidden from ages and generations (Col. 1:24-28), but now made known to

Christ's holy apostles and prophets, and through them to the saints by the Spirit (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:1-11; Eph. 5:29-32).

7. Farther, we find that this Holy Ghost, the glorious gift of a bountiful, triumphant, risen Christ to His Bride, the Church (Eph. 4:7-10), not only assures believers of their sonship to God (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 6:6), gives them abiding confidence (2 Cor. 5:5, 6), is the earnest of their inheritance (Eph. 1:13, 14), produces in them the fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Gal. 5:22, 23), and can impart to them the mind of Christ, even in the deep things of God (John 16:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:9-16), so that they are said to know all things by Him (1 John 2:20-27), etc.; but, having made all believers everywhere members of one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5), He imparts to each member some gift (Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10), dividing severally to every man as HE WILL (1 Cor. 12:11, 18, 28; Heb. 2:4), to be used for the edification (building up) of the body, till we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, etc., (Eph. 4:11-16), These gifts, which are to be earnestly coveted (1 Cor. 12:31), — and the right using and cultivating of them, are much dwelt upon in the Word of God (Rom. 12:5-8 1 Cor. 12, 1 Cor. 14; 1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Peter 4:10, 11 etc.)

8. Not only is the whole Church of Christ called into existence through faith in His name, and indwelt and built up by the Spirit of Christ, but we find believers in various localities exhorted not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25), in the name of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 5:4): — His name through faith in His name, being the only door of

admission prescribed; for, whilst they were commanded to receive those weak in the faith (Rom. 14:1), they were enjoined to try the spirits (1 John 4:1, Rev. 2:2; see also Acts 9:26, 27), and forbidden to have fellowship with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-18); though false brethren might creep in privily or unawares (Gal. 2:4; Jude 4), they were commanded to warn the unruly (1 Thess. 5:14), to have no company with such as walked disorderly or insubordinately to God's word (Rom. 16:17, 18; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14), and to judge, and even put away, inconsistent persons (1 Cor. 5:9-13), — as well as to comfort the feeble-minded (1 Thess. 5:14), restore the faulty in a spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1), and forgive the truly penitent (2 Cor. 2:5-8), — because they being many were one bread or loaf (1 Cor. 10:16, 17), and a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:5-7; Gal. 5:9; Heb. 12:15, 16): and we find them commended for showing indignation and revenge against evil detected amongst themselves, as well as godly sorrow about it (2 Cor. 7:11, 12). When thus assembling themselves together, they were to exhort one another (Heb. 10:25), and, — praying in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 8:26, 27; Jude 20, 21), — to build themselves up, and comfort one another (1 Thess, 5:11); and they were commanded to give the FULLEST SCOPE AND LIBERTY TO "THE LORD THE SPIRIT" (see 2 Cor. 3:17, 18, marg.) to exercise as He would (1 Cor. 14:30, 31; 1 Thess. 5:19, 20), such gifts as He had distributed according to His will (1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 2:4). They were also enjoined to break bread and drink wine together in celebration of our blessed Lord's death, and in expectation of His return (Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26); which they used to do on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

9. Those who called themselves of any denomination or sect beyond that of Christians (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16), — stigmatised as the “sect of Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5; Acts 28:22), — are blamed (1 Cor. 1:12, 13; 1 Cor. 3:3-9): as also those would have been, who, instead of endeavouring to keep THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT (Eph. 4:3), by which we are built up in the unity of the faith (Eph. 4:13), separate themselves for any unity not in subjection to the Holy Ghost.1

10. Moreover we find that where THE PRESENCE of the LORD JESUS, through His Representative the HOLY GHOST, is PRACTICALLY and fully recognized and realized in, and by, an assembly of members of Christ, nor merely as a doctrine, but as a LIVING TRUTH, the POWER OF GOD is promised (Matt. 18:15-19), and displayed in that assembly, to rule, judge, guide, bless, teach, build up, etc., etc., (Acts 5:1-11, 13, 14; Acts 11:27, 28; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 15:2-29, 32; Acts 20:22, 23; Acts 21:4, 10, 11; 1 Cor. 5:4-13; 1 Cor. 11:19-32; 1 Cor. 14:24, 25, 30, 31; 2 Cor. 2:6, 7), in a greater or less degree.

11. But where then are the college-educated, and regularly or humanly ordained, and salaried ministers and dignitaries? The scriptures do speak, — although not as man speaks, — of instruction and elocution (Matt. 11:25-27; Matt. 13:11-16, 51, 52 Matt. 16:17; Luke 24:25-27, 44-48; Acts 4:13, 20; Acts 18:24-28; 1 Cor. 1:17 - 2:16; 2 Cor. 10:10; Gal. 1:10-23), and salaries (Acts 18:3; Acts 20:33-35; 1 Cor. 4:11, 12; 1 Cor. 9:7-18; 2 Cor. 11:27; 2 Cor. 12:13-18; Phil. 4:10-18; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7, 8; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 3 John 6-8), and also of regularly ordained (appointed) elders (called also bishops or overseers, comp. Acts 20:17 with 28, and

Titus 1:5 with 6, 7), and deacons (that is, servants or ministers), in some of the churches, in the New Testament; but only the apostles (Acts 6:2, 3, 6; Acts 14:23), or those like Timothy or Titus, with a special gift of the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. 1:6), and authority from an apostle (Titus 1:5), might appoint these (1 Tim. 3:1-15; 1 Tim. 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; and comp. Acts 6:3 with 6).2 Also we read of the Spirit and His gifts being communicated in those days through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:15-19; Acts 9:17; Acts 19:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), which, as practised in the present day, being unaccompanied by real power, is as mere a form as anointing a sick person with oil (James 5:14) would now be. But we never find that the different churches might appoint the one, or conferred the other, for themselves; for sheep cannot choose or create their own rulers and shepherds: still less could money (Acts 8:14-24), or even those ordered of God to govern this world (Matt. 17:24-27; Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:13-18), do so for them (Matt. 22:21). Only the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9:37, 38; Heb. 2:4) and the Chief Shepherd Himself (Eph. 4:7, 8), or one deriving delegated, vested, and real authority and power from HIM (and not from the flock or the world), could do so. If, then, any one can clearly prove that he has this authority to ordain, and this power to impart spiritual gifts (by apostolic succession and a special gift of the Holy Ghost), then the power to ordain, and to impart the Holy Ghost still really exists amongst us; but, if no one can satisfactorily produce and prove such authority and commission, then this power mush have been lost amidst the mournful wreck and apostasy of the professing Church; and those who pretend to it are infringing on what now is alone the direct right of the Holy Ghost. Paul said something

about “apostolic succession” to the Ephesians (Acts 20:28-32), and then John has a word of approval to them for having acted on it (Rev. 2:2).

12. But even in the apostles’ times, although they appointed overseers, etc., and communicated spiritual gifts, in some of the churches, this did not at all prevent the Holy Ghost, even then, distributing gifts, such as pastors, teachers, etc., like Apollos (comp. Acts 18:24-28 with 1 Cor. 3:6), and the house of Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:15), etc., in the churches without any intervention; and if the disciples were enjoined to submit themselves to such then (1 Cor. 16:16; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17), — though not blindly (Matt. 15:14), as to those having dominion over their faith (2 Cor. 1:24), but in the fear of GOD (Eph. 5:21), and the light of His word (Isa. 8:20; Acts 17:11), — how much more now. I repeat, all such apostolic power having clearly ceased, we can, in the present Church ruin and day of weakness, only fall back on the blessed Comforter, who is to abide with us FOR EVER (John 14:16; 1 John 2:27), and whose presence in the Church, therefore, will never cease, and thankfully acknowledge and receive such gifts as He may be pleased still to raise up amongst us, “dividing severally to every man as HE will” (1 Cor. 12:11), and, — knowing that God has expressly spoken of the many vain talkers, false teachers (2 Cor 11:14, 15), mere formalists and ungodly men, who resist the truth, covetous practices, perverse ways, doctrines and disputings, vain babblings, old wives’ fables, etc., etc., which would come in these perilous times, the last days (Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9, 13; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4; Titus 1:10-16; 2 Peter 2, 2 Peter 3:3-7; 1 John 2:18, 19; 1 John 4:1; Jude 1-23), — obey Him by withdrawing and

purging ourselves from all these (Matt. 7:15-20; Matt. 18:17; John 10:5; Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 1 Tim. 4:7, 12-16; 1 Tim. 6:3-11; 2 Tim. 2:14-23; 2 Tim. 3:5 Titus 2:7, 8; Titus 3:9-11; Heb. 13:13; 2 John 8-11 Rev. 2:14, 15, 20; Rev. 18:4), and by following after righteousness, faith, charity and peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22; Jude 20, 21).

Finally, GOD says, HEARKEN, — and, — OBEY (1 Sam. 15:22). Let God be true, but every man a liar (Rom. 3:4). Prove ALL THINGS; hold fast that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21); for to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is SIN (James 4:17); and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19). ABHOR that which is evil, cleave to that which is good (Rom. 12:9). If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye DO them (John 13:17). Grieve not the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). Quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19).

“Thus saith the LORD;” and if I go and worship in another way, I show either my ignorance, or my self-will and disobedience, and thereby I create, or by my presence countenance, some sect, denomination, or party outside GOD’S principles, which are ‘THE UNITY OF THE FAITH” and the “UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.” I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say (1 Cor. 10:15); for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

1 Qy. Might not Jude 19 apply corporately to such unions?

2 Qy. If the Churches could ordain elders, etc., for themselves, why need Paul have left Titus (Titus 1:5) to do it?

Our Future Glory, and Our Present Groaning in the Spirit

Rom. 8:18-27

It is comforting and instructive to notice the way in which the expected glory utterly outweighed the sufferings in the mind of the apostle. It is not that he did not suffer — we must suffer, and sufferings are not pleasant; but suffering is soon over! “I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” It is not merely that he knows he will then get rest and glory; but what a sense of the glory he has now, with his sufferings, of what he here calls the manifestation of the sons of God! Like a person you may have seen in the world, so filled with the bright hopes of to-morrow, that he is getting through today as fast as he can. It is “The glory which shall be revealed in us.” It is our glory and yet God’s glory. He counts it but fair that, if we are in sufferings, we should be in the glory too. “ If so be we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” If ours is the suffering, it is also in respect of ourselves the glory is to be revealed. While Christ (the Son) reflects the glory of the Father, the woman (the Church) reflects the glory of the man. Then there is the sense too, by the power of the Holy Ghost, of its belonging to us — that it is really our own. If a man has the sense of its being his, there will not be the turning his back on what he knows to be his own, but the getting towards it as fast as possible. If his heart is in that state, filled with the Holy Ghost, he will pass on through the world, as an angel would pass through it. Do you think, if Gabriel

were sent on a message into this world, he would desire to stop here? No, he could not stay where all is defiled. It is this “present evil world;” so he does not linger, but is in haste to get through. But it is a much higher principle we enjoy than can be enjoyed by an angel, and so there never can come out of an angel’s heart the same song of praise that comes from the believer’s heart. Though it has been lately remarked, that the angels are never said in Scripture to sing, they are said “to speak” — “to say” — “to talk,” but they do not “sing.” There could be no harmony in an angel’s song compared with ours, their hearts not being exercised with trials like ours. Never having sinned, they cannot know what the joy of salvation is; or what it is to be strengthened when weak, or lifted up when failing, or comforted in suffering. They laud, and praise, and bless God; but they cannot know the new song that they sing who passed through it all. The four living creatures rest not day and night, saying, “Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty;” but their subject is creation - “for thou hast created all things; for thy pleasure they are, and were created.” (Rev. 4) But in Revelation 5 it is redemption - “And they sing a new song, saying, Thou are worthy: for thou hast,” etc.

Then you see how strong St. Paul’s personal realization of it was; he says, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” How much he must have had the glory present to his soul, to prefer it to “present things!” Now, he had suffered much; but it only brought the glory the brighter before him, and shows how the glory of the cross filled his soul.

The words “this present time” are striking. His mind is full of the future — absorbed with to-morrow — like the boy at school looking for a holiday, who can think of nothing else. The glory is so present, that he calls it but momentary — “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment.” For if you talk to one whose mind realizes eternity, about this present evil world, eternity is too big to allow of room for any thing else. We never realize eternity, till we fill it with the Father’s love and Christ’s glory. If we think of it otherwise, we only look into a mere vacuum. We are confounded on the one hand, and filled with glory on the other. Finding ourselves in the glory of God, we hardly know how to grasp it — “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” It is a blessed thing that it is ours, so that we can get near it in that kind of way. “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;” it is not to become proud with the “glory which shall be revealed in us;” it is not a change of time, but the glory is present to his mind, and he realizes the glory. Then he opens it out doctrinally: “For I reckon” — not “we teach” — “that the sufferings of this present time,” etc. — the present sufferings had lost their hindering power, because he saw the power of God in them and endured afflictions according to the power of God. He does not say it is received, but “revealed in us.” It is wonderful how the Holy Ghost uses that word “us.” It is the common course of all the promises of God, “to the glory of God by us.” “That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length,” etc. The great thing is to get the heart into conscious association with all this fair scene. And if we have our hearts always occupied with Christ and glory, there will be such a sense of it that we shall be always

there. So that if I look at the stars in the heavens — though I admire them and gaze on them with wonder and delight — they do but remind me at once that I am one with Him who created them.

It is amazing how the soul becomes soft when happy in the Lord! How it removes all roughnesses. Saints cannot quarrel about being happy in the Lord, though they may quarrel about doctrine or discipline. We ought all to look onward, and have the heart filled with the glory. The effect of this is to put us into suffering, though we can say it is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. It is not the divine essential glory, of course, but the manifested glory, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Verse 19 shows the sons exhibited in the family glory. In the world it is known by the dress of the children what is the wealth and grandeur of the father. It is the parent's pride and delight to deck them out and show them forth. Well, God has children, and He must display His sons in His glory. When He transfigures them, He manifests them. It is then, and not till then, the creature is introduced into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. This, as far as creation goes, is not intelligent, for it has been brought by man's sin, unwillingly, into all misery and bondage. It must also wait, for it will not be brought back until man has been. If a chain were suspended from the ceiling, and the first link be broken, which connects it with those below, the whole chain would immediately fall to the ground.

When man fell, all creation was involved. It has often struck me how as all the misery of the creature, sickness, bodily suffering, etc., came by man, so all the deliverance comes by man. There will be a blessing on

the fruit of the ground and not a curse, by and by, certainly in Jerusalem. The Cain-curse it is that was taken away by the flood, as Noah (i.e., “this shall comfort us”), the name given by Lamech to his son, seems to imply. It is not that they get rid of labour, but they get comfort in it. No doubt there will be very great fertility and fruitfulness; not that there will be no labour needed there, but they shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; but they shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” It is clear that “the creature” goes beyond our bodies; the creatures outside our bodies are groaning. There are two curses spoken of. The first was spoken to Adam, the second to Cain. The first was on the earth in general, but the second did not extend beyond the family of Cain. The two curses are very different. Cain was a tiller of the ground — “Now art thou cursed from the earth. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not yield unto thee her strength.” It is true Cain had the earth, after it was cursed, after he had killed Abel. The two presented, as heirs of the earth, were Cain and Abel. These were two parties, and they soon showed who should get on in it — the righteous man or the vagabond — for Abel is slain; but Cain takes possession, builds a city, and makes progress in it. God blessed Israel in the earth; but what do we see? The godly forced up to heaven, because the ungodly were in prosperity, and this, too, while prosperity was the mark of God’s favour to the righteous; and so David says, “This I understood not, till I went into the sanctuary of God.” Well, they will have the heavenly blessing. The temporal promises were not

even possessed by Abraham. God's temporal government was blessing on the earth. (See Ezra, Nehemiah, etc.) Solomon did not get higher than earthly blessing. The prophets rise up to heavenly blessing; not that they reach to the heavenly Bride — the body of Christ; for the Church never was the subject of prophecy or promise. The Church is founded on the defacing the difference between Jew and Gentile. Now to have attempted to deface the Jew before, would have been wicked. It was done in the cross. Meanwhile the Christian suffers. But, see how the energizing power of the Holy Ghost fills him with this "earnest expectation." He so sees the love of God and thought of God in the thing that is coming, that his neck is stretched out, as it were, looking for it. God is a faithful Creator, and so He will bless according to God. The intelligence does not know the remedy, though the heart feels the groaning. Paul knew God in the sorrow pressing on his spirit. If he links it with the glory, it never can come till the manifestation of the sons of God, when the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It is not liberty by grace, but the liberty of the glory; "for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same." My will was concerned in it; if it had ruined itself willingly, it would have remained; but God is there, and He is good. The creature offended; then the Holy Ghost inspires the whole creation with hope, so that all are looking out for the manifestation of the children of God. That is what they wait for. They groan, but not intelligently. We have the key to the groaning. The text may be read thus: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of

God, in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God; for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that subjected the same." There is a parenthesis. If it had chosen all, then there would have been no hope of recovery; but it is "waiting in hope," and not only they, but we ourselves also wait, because we have the creature about us; "even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption." "The Spirit itself maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God." It is recorded in the history of the experience of an old saint, that he had lain a whole day groaning, without uttering a word, and, at the close of the day, there came out simply, "My God!"

"The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption." Everything connected with it — sickness, death, suffering. It was "made subject to vanity." He calls it all vanity. Take the flogging of horses in an omnibus to see how fast they can go, or how many they can carry, calculating the cost, what they shall gain by the journey, and the like. What is all this but "creature" groaning and vanity? Unless God sustained them, how could even the angels bear to look on and to witness it all? Look at what is called military prowess. Think only of 20,000 men being killed by their fellow men in a single fray! Man walks in a vain show, and toils for death; thus spending all his strength to die! The creature is subject to vanity, and cannot get out of it, until brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. There is more villainy and misery, I suppose, in

Manchester or London, than anywhere in the world, even where men are still in a mere state of nature. Blessing of another nature, doubtless, comes in; but that is another question. Civilization has pushed men even to the extremity, so that they are at their wit's end — up to such a point that there must be a break out at last, which men will find out to their cost. Luxury, indulgence, and pride have crept in, living for comfort, without any regard or care for the poor: men everywhere are feeling it, and evil passions are breaking out and showing themselves in various forms. God has mercifully spared this nation, because they do care more in this country for the poor than in any other; there are poorhouses, or unions, hospitals, and infirmaries. This is not the case in other countries of the world, where the people are kept down by mere power or influence, by the priests or the army; only let these be removed, and all goes. Men are saying, Peace, peace, and all the while trembling with fear, looking for those things that are coming on the earth, for come they must; and God alone knows what will turn up in a year's time. It is not because "signs" are not properly meant for us, that we are not to discern the signs. The Lord said, rebukingly, "How is it ye do not discern the signs of the times?"

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." How astonishing it is that Christians can go on trying to better the world, with so many positive texts of Scripture against them! "The whole creation groaneth," etc. What an amazing difference! He is speaking of "the weight of glory" which shall be revealed in us; and then at once turns and says, What a groaning creation I am in! It is his realizing the glory that fits him to enter into the sorrow of the groaning

creation around. Christ, coming in glory, lifts him above it all. When Christ was here, every outgoing of His heart was stopped (except that grace would make a way): they turned away from Him and rejected Him; though He had cast out a whole legion of devils out of their land, they could not endure His presence, but “besought him to depart out of their coasts.”

The groaning goes beyond the saints — the whole creation groans. If I have the Holy Ghost, I may be full of joy and full of hope; but this does not hinder my groaning as a creature; the more I joy, the more I feel this wretched body is an earthen vessel that cannot hold the treasure. We have but the “firstfruits of the Spirit.” We have already the sprinkling of the former rain; when we get into glory, then will come down the latter rain.

There is no groaning in my connection with God; it is all rejoicing, and nothing else, in that respect. “Rejoice in the Lord always.” I am not waiting for the redemption of my soul (that is the state of the quickened man in Rom. 7), but for the redemption of my body; we have redemption by blood already, but not so as to glory; we are quickened in our souls as His children, but God will never have us as He wills until we are conformed to the image of His Son — this cannot be to what Christ was in the grave, but to what He is now. Christ is a glorified man. (There is no such thing as a glorified spirit, as some speak; there may be a glorious spirit, but a glorified spirit — what is it? who can tell?) Just as the coming of the Lord, as a hope, had been suffered to drop out of the Church, so the hope of being conformed to the likeness of Christ has been allowed to vanish. Now the evil of this is, it dissociates from Christ the spirit in heaven and the body in the grave; it is as Christ was

before He rose; but the moment I get my mind filled with the thought, “I am to be conformed to Christ as He is in glory,” it associates me with Him now. The thought of His coming makes me happy. There is such a thing as delighting in God; but Christ fills up the scene between. He may make the person of the Lord precious to me — not merely His work but Himself; and then I shall not be talking about the immortality of the soul! (however true this may be, as indeed it is, but my body is mortal), I shall be waiting to have “this vile body changed and fashioned like his glorious body.” There is no hope but that of being conformed to Christ. Death is not a hope. “Our conversation is in heaven,” and there we hope to be. My hope is to be with Him in heaven, bodily. I have all for my soul now in Christ.

“We ourselves groan within ourselves.” It is very experimental to see all this groaning, provided I see the hope that enables me to go on. The Lord groaned deeply at the grave of Lazarus, but He had power to carry it in spirit to God, and was strengthened. He came to the place of death and found all sealed up, and a stone laid upon it; and He groaned in spirit. Men put away their dead as loathsome — to get rid of them quickly.

The apostle had received the Spirit of adoption. Christ was “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead;” so we are declared to be sons, and are waiting to be raised up bodily by Christ. We must never confound the groaning here spoken of, with the groaning of the soul for its own salvation, which we have already; but the redemption of the body is our hope, for Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Redemption comes last, as in itself comprising all, and

not of the soul only. When they talk of hope among men, there is uncertainty always attached to it; as, one may ask, Do you expect to get this, or that? The reply is, I hope so; but meaning to imply uncertainty as to its being realized. Now this can never be the case with regard to our hope, for there is no uncertainty if God has said it. The full result is salvation; I have only the earnest of it now. I must wait patiently for it. Abraham had not a place to put his foot on, though God had given him the whole land: “He looked for a city,” etc. When hope is settled, you go on quietly today, expecting Him to come. The Holy Ghost has fixed our hearts on this hope, and we are waiting for it. Whilst we groan, the Holy Ghost itself groans, so that while it is a groaning creation, that is not all. If you groan, your groanings are according to God, and are as divine as your hopes, though in a different way. But as the Son became a man, and, as a man down here, had these feelings, so the Holy Ghost (He does not become a man) dwells in me; and these groans are precious, because in these groans it is the positive intercession of the Holy Ghost; and “He who searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,” so that if God searcheth my heart, He finds the Holy Ghost there.

It is wonderful how God has insinuated Himself into every thing: filling us with His hopes, His sorrows, and affections. If it is God who listens, it is God He hears. How thoroughly He is come in to possess man’s soul! It is God’s love outside us, and His love is shed abroad in our hearts. We dwell in God, and God in us. He has given us His thoughts and feelings, so that we are wrapped up in God, “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.” God’s love! if it is not His love, it is of no use; if

it is not in me, it has no reality. Scripture sometimes speaks as if it was of us, and at other times as of God. Thus it is my heart groans, while it is said, “The Spirit maketh intercession” — Oh! the wondrous ways of God! “Have I been a wilderness to your” It is a great comfort to know they are not selfish groans in me, because while I am groaning with all around me, I might have the thought, “Take care there is no unbelief there,” but it is the Spirit’s groan in us. Selfish groans we find in Rom. 7. There it is all I, I, I, — no Christ, nor Holy Ghost, until the end of the chapter. Rom. 8 is full of Christ and of the Spirit.

W.K.

Enduring Temptation and Entering into Temptation

There is manifestly a vast difference between “falling into temptation,” or “enduring temptation” (James 1:2, 12), on the one hand, and “ entering into temptation “ (Matt. 26:41), on the other. We do well therefore to have it clear and settled in our souls; for, as the one is blessed, the other is the utmost possible danger for the soul. There is nothing more strengthening than to “endure temptation”; nothing more perilous than to “enter into” it. There seems little difference in the words, and people might easily slur over the difference in their thought. But the difference is complete; for in the one case it is an honour that God puts upon us, and in the other a snare that Satan presents to us.

Which of these two things do we know best? How far do our souls that are here round the table of the Lord Jesus know what it is to fall into divers temptations, or to endure temptation? For blessed are we if we do. Falling into temptation, or enduring it, is that which God delights in. In Gen. 12 we find that Abraham was in a condition in which God could try him; and He loves that we should be in such a condition that He can try us. But this is not so when we are not governed by the sense of the presence of God, as well as happy in Him. It is not so where flesh is not judged. Are we then brought to this point in the ways of God? For it is this that He looks for from every saint of His. Are we then brought into communion with the Father and His Son in our Lord Jesus (1 John 1)? Have we not the same Saviour, and the same salvation of God?

Still, in Christ salvation is not merely an incomparable favour such as God has shown to us in the depths of our need, but it is also assuredly inseparable from the dealing with self in the presence of God; so much so, that where this is not learnt at the beginning it must be more painfully taught in the course. And then what dishonour to God! how grieving to His Spirit! Such failure, to teach us what we are, is not enduring temptation, nor is it in the least the same as God's trying us. In such a state the Lord has rather to buffet us for our faults, as those who bear the name of the Lord Jesus after an uncomely sort.

How grievous that those who have in the Saviour such a salvation, based on the utter judgment of the flesh, should so little have used it to deal with self, the most hateful of all things to God; for so one need not hesitate to call it. I admit there is a greater daringness and pride and subtlety in Satan; but it seems to me that for that which is low and base and mean, there is nothing so bad as self; and yet this is the very thing that every one of us carries with us. The question now is, How far has grace acted upon our souls to lead us to judge it out and out in the presence of God? Where this is the case, the Lord can try us; that is, He can put us to the proof by what is not at all a question of evil of any kind, because God does not tempt by evil any more than He is tempted by evil things.

When God then was pleased to ask Abraham to give up his only son, this was in no wise evil, but a most blessed trial. It was proving whether Abraham had such perfect confidence in God that he would give up the object that was dearest to him, in whom were centred all the promises of God. And by grace Abraham could. Of

course he did it with the perfect certainty that, if Isaac were then to die, God would raise him up; for Abraham perfectly well knew, before the sacrifice was asked, that Isaac was to be the child of promise; and he knew that it was to be that Isaac and nobody else — not another son — so that he was certain, if Isaac were offered up, God would raise him again from the dead. It was therefore really the good of God's own heart that was reflected in what He asked of Abraham's heart; and Abraham was brought into greater communion with God in that which was in its measure the counterpart of the gift of His own Son.

Just so it is with the trials that God is pleased to try us by, speaking now not of our bad trials, but of our good ones; not of such sorrows as Lot passed through, but of those like Abraham's. It is a proof of the greatest confidence on God's part if there is in us such a groundwork of walking before God, and in the consciousness of His presence, that He can try us with something that is like Himself — some prize to give up, some suffering to endure in grace — whatever it may be that is according to His own mind. It is in this sense that temptation is spoken of in James 1:2, 12.

After this (James 1:13-15) we immediately turn to temptation spoken of in a bad sense, and this connects itself with the verse I read in Matt. 26. I shall not dwell long upon either, though both are words of most salutary character for our souls. The Lord had looked for His disciples to watch with Him. Alas! He had not found it. And the Lord had gone Himself alone, and had prayed to His Father in deepest suffering. Then He comes back to the disciples, and, finding them sleeping, He says to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

No, they could not watch with Him one hour! The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

Now it would be very unworthy for us to take this as an excuse for our own failure; this would be reading scripture to the positive injury of our souls and the dishonour of God; yet I am afraid there are many who do so. But we must remember there is this difference between our standing now, and that of the disciples. Flesh had not been thoroughly exposed and judged at that time; it was before the cross of Christ, and so before the Holy Ghost was given. There was divine life, but divine life, in itself, always goes in weakness.

It is the Holy Ghost that acts in power; and you never can have power without Him. But we are always responsible for the power of the Holy Ghost, because He is given to the believer, and for ever abides in him. This time was not yet come; but the Lord does say in view of it, as well as of the state in which they then were, “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” For remember this, it is not any power conferred by the Spirit of God that keeps, even though He be the Spirit of power — it is not energy in this or that which keeps, but dependence; it is the sense of weakness that watches and prays, and thus has the power of Christ resting on us. His strength made perfect in weakness.

There is nothing that so tends, where it is severed from Christ, to destroy dependence, as a large knowledge of the word of God. And that is where our danger lies. The greater our knowledge of the word of God, where it is separated from the sense of utter weakness, and consequently from the need of watching and praying, the greater the danger. This is a solemn warning for our

souls. There is no doubt plenty of knowledge of Scripture, and of what is called intelligence of truth; but do our souls keep up this sense of our need and weakness, and the expression of it to God? “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

What does our Lord mean by “entering into temptation”? The will that goes into a scene where nothing but a judged will in one who goes at the bidding of God and leaning on Him can be kept; that is, the will goes in where failure is inevitable, just because it is will at work. So Peter himself soon proved. He went where Peter could not stand, unless the Lord had called and kept him by faith. He entered into temptation. He did not suffer. There was no such thing as enduring temptation; but he entered into it, and fell.

And let me just say that it is all well in the midst of the saints of God to confess our Lord Jesus Christ; but it is not so easy to confess Him truly and humbly where, instead of saints sympathising with us, shame and contempt, or death even, may be the consequence, as in Peter’s case. He would have endured, had he gone in by grace, obedience, watching and praying, instead of trusting in his own willingness to go to prison or even to die for his Master. When our Lord says, “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak,” He is looking at nature in man; and nature is incapable of such a trial. None but God can sustain, and therefore it would require God’s will expressed in His word to lead us rightly into such a scene of temptation, and His grace sustaining in faith to keep us in it; otherwise it would be but our own will, and we should fall.

It would have been an abomination in Abraham to sacrifice his son, unless God had spoken the word. But faith, where self is judged, strengthens the soul to endure temptation. One enters not into temptation where one abides in dependence and self-judgment. Then when we fall into various temptations, we count it all joy; and as we did not enter of our own will, so we do not fall in them, but by grace endure.

The Lord give us to watch and pray, so much the more because He has blessed us with such a knowledge of His word and of Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ.

W. K.