Lectures on the Pentateuch

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Genesis

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Genesis 1

There is one characteristic of divine revelation to which attention may be profitably called as a starting point. We have to do with facts. The Bible alone is a revelation of facts, and, we can add (not from the Old Testament, but from the New), of a person. This is of immense importance. In all pretended revelations it is not so. They give you notions — ideas; they can furnish nothing better, and very often nothing worse. But they cannot produce facts, for they have none. They may indulge in speculations of the mind, or visions of the imagination — a substitute for what is real, and a cheat of the enemy. God, and God alone, can communicate the truth. Thus it is that whether it be the Old Testament or New, one half (speaking now in a general way) consists of history. Undoubtedly there is teaching of the Spirit of God founded on the facts of revelation. In the New Testament these unfoldings have the profoundest character, but everywhere they are divine; for there is no difference, whether it be the Old or the New, in the absolutely divine character of the written word. But still it is well to take note that we have thus a grand basis of things as they really are — a divine communication to us of facts of the utmost moment, and, at the same time, of the deepest interest to the children of God. In this too God’s own glory is brought before us, and so much the more because there is not the smallest effort. The simple statement of the facts is that which is worthy of God.

Take, for instance, the way in which the book of Genesis opens. If man had been writing it, if he had attempted to give that which pretended to be a revelation, we could understand a flourish of trumpets, pompous prolegomena, some elaborate means or other of setting forth who and what God is, — an attempt by fancy to project His image out of man's mind, or by subtle à priori reasoning to justify all that might follow. The highest, the holiest, the only suitable way, once it is laid before us, evidently is what God Himself has employed in His word. — "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Not only is the method the most worthy, but the truth with which the book opens is one that nobody ever did really discover before it was revealed. You cannot, as a rule, anticipate facts; you cannot discern the truth beforehand. You may form opinions; but for the truth, and even for such facts as the world's history before man had an existence in it — facts as to which there can be no testimony from the creature on the earth, we find the need of His word who knew and wrought all from the beginning. But God does communicate in such a way as at once meets the heart, and mind, and conscience. Man feels that this is exactly what is appropriate to God.

So here God states the great truth of creation; for what is more important, short of redemption, always excepting the manifestation of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Creation and redemption bear witness to His glory, instead of communicating aught of His own dignity. But short of Christ's person and work, there is nothing more characteristic of God than creation. And in the manner in which creation is here presented what unspeakable grandeur! all the

more because of the chaste simplicity of the style and words. How suited to the true God, who perfectly knew the truth and would make it known to man!

“In the beginning God created.” In the beginning matter did not co-exist with God. I warn every person solemnly against a notion found in both ancient and modern times, that there was in the beginning a quantity of what may be called crude matter for God to work on. Another notion still more general, and only less gross, though certainly not so serious in what it involves, is that God created matter in the beginning according to verse 2, in a state of confusion or “chaos,” as men say. But this is not the meaning of verses 1 and 2. I have no hesitation in saying that it is a mistaken interpretation, however prevalent. Nor indeed is such dealing according to the revealed nature of God. Where is anything like it in all the known ways of God? That either matter existed crude or God created it in disorder has not, I believe, the smallest foundation in the word of God. What scripture gives here or elsewhere seems to me altogether at variance with such a thought. The introductory declarations of Genesis are altogether in unison with the glory of God Himself, and with His character; more than that, they are in perfect harmony with itself. There is no statement, from beginning to end of scripture, as far as I am aware, which in the smallest degree modifies or takes away from the force of the words with which the Bible opens — “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Some have found a difficulty (which I simply touch on in passing) from the conjunction with which verse 2 commences. They have conceived that, coupling the second verse with the first, it suggests the notion that

when God created the earth it was in the state described in the second verse. Now not only is it not too strong to deny that there is the least ground for such an inference, but one may go farther and affirm that the simplest and surest means of guarding against it, according to the style of the writer, and indeed propriety of language, was afforded by here inserting the word “and.” In short, if the word had not been here, it might have been supposed that the writer meant us to conclude that the original condition of the earth was the shapeless mass of confusion which verse 2 describes with such terse and graphic brevity. But, as it is, scripture means nothing of the sort. We have first the great announcement that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. There is next the associated fact of an utter desolation which befell not the heavens, but the earth. The insertion of the substantive verb, as has been remarked, expresses no doubt a condition past as compared with what follows, but pointedly not said to be contemporaneous with what preceded, as would have been implied in its omission; but what interval lay between, or why such a desolation ensued, is not stated. For God passes rapidly over the early account and history of the globe — I might almost say, hastening to that condition of the earth in which it was to be made the habitation of mankind; whereon also God was to display His moral dealings, and finally His own Son, with the fruitful consequences of that stupendous event, whether in rejection or in redemption.

Had the copulative not been here, the first verse might have been regarded as a kind of summary of the chapter. Its insertion forbids the thought, and to speak plainly, convicts those who so understand it either of ignorance,

or at the least of inattention. Not only the Hebrew idiom forbids it, but our own, and no doubt every other language. The first verse is not a summary. When a compendious statement of what follows is intended, the “and” is never put. This you can, if you will, verify in various occasions where scripture furnishes examples of the summary; as, for instance, in the beginning of Gen. 5, “This is the book of the generations of Adam.” There it is plain that the writer gives a summary. But there is no word coupling the introductory statement of verse 1 with what follows. “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man.” It is not “And in the day.” The copulative would render it improper, and impossible to bear the character of a general introduction. For a summary gives in a few words that which is opened out afterwards; whereas the conjunction “and” introduced in the second verse excludes necessarily all notion of a summary here. It is another statement added to what had just preceded, and by the Hebrew idiom not connected with it in time.

First of all there was the creation by God — both of the heavens and of the earth. Then we have the further fact stated of the state into which the earth was plunged — to which it was reduced. Why this was, how it was, God has not here explained. It was not necessary nor wise to reveal it by Moses. If man can discover such facts by other means, be it so. They have no small interest; but men are apt to be hasty and short-sighted. I advise none to embark too confidently in the pursuit of such studies. Those who enter on them had better be cautious, and well weigh alleged facts, and above all their own conclusions, or those of other men. But the perfectness of scripture is, I am bold to say, unimpeachable. The

truth affirmed by Moses remains in all its majesty and simplicity withal.

In the beginning God created everything — the heavens and the earth. Then the earth is described as void and waste, and (not as succeeding, but accompanying it) darkness upon the face of the deep, contemporaneously with which the Spirit of God broods upon the face of the waters. All this is an added account. The real and only force of the “and” is another fact; not at all as if it implied that the first and second verses spoke of the same time, any more than they decide the question of the length of the interval. The phraseology employed perfectly agrees with and confirms the analogy of revelation, that the first verse speaks of an original condition which God was pleased to bring into being; the second, of a desolation afterwards brought in; but how long the first lasted what changes may have intervened, when or by what means the ruin came to pass, is not the subject-matter of the inspired record, but open to the ways and means of human research, if indeed man has sufficient facts on which to ground a sure conclusion. It is false that scripture does not leave room for his investigation.

We saw at the close of verse 2 the introduction of the Spirit of God on the scene. “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” He appears most consistently and in season, when man’s earth is about to be brought before us. In the previous description, which had not to do with man, there was silence about the Spirit of God; but, as the divine wisdom is shown in Proverbs 8 to rejoice in the habitable parts of the earth, so the Spirit of God is always brought before us as the immediate agent in the Deity whenever man is to be

introduced. Hence, therefore, as closing all the previous state of things, where man was not spoken of, preparing the way for the Adamic earth, the Spirit of God is seen brooding upon the face of the waters.

Now comes the first mention of evening and morning, and of days. Let me particularly ask those who have not duly considered the matter to weigh God's word. The first and second verses make allusion to these well-known measures of time. They leave room consequently for a state or states of the earth long before either man or time, as man measures it. The days that follow I see no ground for interpreting save in their simple and natural import. Undoubtedly "day" may be used, as it often is, in a figurative sense. No solid reason whatever appears why it should be so used here. There is not the slightest necessity for it. The strict import of the term is that which to my mind is most suitable to the context; the week in which God made the heaven and earth for man seems alone appropriate in introducing the revelation of God. I can understand, when all is clear, a word used figuratively; but nothing would be so likely to let elements of difficulty into the subject, as at once giving us in tropical language what elsewhere is put in the simplest possible forms.

Hence we may see how fitting it is that, as man is about to be introduced on the earth for the first time, as the previous state had nothing whatever to do with his being here below, and indeed was altogether unfit for his dwelling on it, besides the fact that he was not yet created, days should appear only when it was a question of making the heavens and the earth as they are. It will be found, if scripture be searched, that there is the most careful guard on this subject. If the Holy Spirit, as in Ex.

20:11, refers to heaven and earth made in six days, it always avoids the expression “creation.” God made heaven and earth in six days: it is never said He created heaven and earth in six days. When it is no question of these, creating, making, and forming may be freely used, as in Isa. 45:18. The reason is plain when we look at Genesis 1. He created the heaven and earth at the beginning. Then another state of things is mentioned in verse 2, not for the heaven, but for the earth. “The earth was without form and void.” The heavens were in no such state of chaos: the earth was. As to how, when, and why it was, there is silence. Others have spoken — spoken rashly and wrongly. The wisdom of the inspired writer’s silence will be evident to a spiritual mind, and the more, the more it is reflected on. On the six days which follow I shall not dwell: the subject was before many of us not long ago.

But we have on the first day light, and a most remarkable fact it is (I may in passing just say) that the inspired historian should have named it. No one would have done so naturally. It is plain, had Moses merely formed a probable opinion as men do, that no one would have introduced the mention of light, apart from, and before all distinct notice of, the heavenly orbs. The sun, moon, and stars, would certainly have been first introduced, had man simply pursued the workings of his own mind, or those of observation and experience. The Spirit of God has acted quite otherwise. He, knowing the truth, could afford to state the truth as it is, leaving men to find out at another day the certainty of all` He has said, and leaving them, alas! to their unbelief if they choose to despise or resist the word of God meanwhile. We might with interest pass through the account of the

various days, and mark the wisdom of God in each; but I forbear to dwell on such details now, saying a word here and there on the goodness of God apparent throughout.

First of all (verse 3) light is caused to be or act. Next the day is reckoned from “the evening and the morning” — a statement of great importance for other parts of scripture, never forgotten by the Spirit of God, but almost invariably let slip by moderns; which forgetfulness has been a great source of the difficulties that have encumbered harmonies of the Gospels. It may be well to glance at it just to show the importance of heeding the word of God, and all His word. The reason why persons have found such perplexities, for instance) in relation to our Lord’s, as compared with the Jews taking the passover and with the crucifixion, is owing to their forgetting that the evening and the morning were the first day, the second day, or any other. Even scholars bring in their western notions from the familiar habit of counting the day from the morning to the evening It is the same thing with the account of the resurrection. The difficulty could never arise had they seen and remembered what is stated in the very first chapter of Genesis, and the indelible habit graven thereby on the Jew.

We find then light caused to be — a remarkable expression, and, be assured, profoundly true. But what man would have thought it, or said it, if he had not been inspired? For it is much more exactly true than any expression that has been invented by the most scientific of men; yet there is no science in it. It is the beauty and the blessedness of scripture that it is as much above man’s science as above his ignorance. It is the truth, and in such a form and depth as man himself could not have

discerned. Being the truth, whatever man discovers that is true will never clash with it.

On the first day light is. Next a firmament is separated in the midst of the waters to divide the waters from the waters. Thirdly the dry land appears, and the earth bringing forth grass, and herb, and fruit-tree. There is the provision of God, not merely for the need of man, but for His own glory; and this in the smallest things as in the greatest. On the fourth day we hear of lights in the firmament. The utmost possible care appears in the statement. They are not said to be created then; but God made two great lights (it is no question of their mass, but of their capacity as light bearers,) for the Adamic earth — the stars also. Then we find the waters caused to bring forth abundantly "the moving creature that hath life." Vegetable life was before, animal life now — a very weighty truth, and of the greatest moment too. Life is not the matter out of which animals were formed; nor is it true that matter produces life. God produces life, whether it be for the fish that people the sea, for the birds of the air, or for the beasts, cattle, or reptiles, on the dry land. It is God that does all, whether it be for the earth, the air, or the waters. And here in a secondary sense of the word is the propriety of the phrase "created" in verse 21; and we shall see it also when a new action comes before us in imparting not animal life but a rational soul. (Verse 27.) For as we have on the sixth day the lower creation for the earth, so finally man himself the crown of all.

But here comes a striking difference. God speaks with the peculiar appropriateness which suits the new occasion, in contradistinction from what we have seen elsewhere. "Let us make man in our image, after our

likeness.” It is man as the head of creation. It is not man placed in his moral relationships, but man the head of this kingdom of creation, as they say; but still even so with remarkable dignity. “Let us make man in our image.” He was to represent God here below; besides this he was to be like God. There was to be a mind in him, a spirit capable of the knowledge of God with the absence of all evil. Such was the condition in which man was formed. “And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon earth.” God created man in His own image: in the image of God created He him. In conclusion, the Sabbath day, which God1 sanctified, closes the great week of God’s forming the earth for man, the lord of it. (Gen. 2:1-3)

Then, from Genesis 2:4, we have the subject from another point of view, — not a repetition of the account of creation, but what was even more necessary to be brought here before us, — the place of relationship in which God set the creation He had formed, not mutually alone, but above all, in reference to Himself. Hence it is here that Eden is first spoken of. We should not have known anything of paradise from the first chapter. The reason is evident. Eden was to be the scene of the moral trial of man.

From the fourth verse of Genesis 2, therefore, we first meet with a new title of God. To the end of the third verse of that chapter it was always God (Elohim) as such. It was the name of the divine nature, as such, in contrast with man or the creature; not the special manner in which God may reveal Himself at a particular time, or deal in exceptional ways, but the general and

what you may call historical name of God, — “God” as such.

For this, as for other reasons, it is manifest that Genesis 2 ought to begin with the verse which stands fourth in the common English Bible. God is here styled Jehovah-Elohim; and so uniformly to the end of the chapter.

I must be permitted here to say a word on a subject which, if it has called out enormous discussion, betrays in its course, I am sorry to say, no small amount of evident infidelity. It has been gathered from the varying names of God, etc., by speculative minds that there must have been different documents joined together in this book. Now there is not really the very least ground for such an assumption. On the contrary, supposing there was but one writer of the book of Genesis, as I am persuaded is the truth of the case, it would not have borne the stamp of a divine communication if he had used either the name of Jehovah-Elohim in 1-2:3, or the name of “Elohim” only in 2:4-25. The change of designation springs from distinct truths, not from different fabulists and a sorry compiler who could not even assimilate them. Accepting the whole as an inspired writing, I maintain that the same writer must have used this distinctive way of speaking of God in Genesis 1 and 2, and that the notion of there being two or three writers is merely a want of real intelligence in scripture. If it were the same writer, and he an inspired one, it was proper in the highest degree to use the simple term “Elohim” in chapters 1, 2:3, then the compound “Jehovah-Elohim” from verse 4 and onward through Genesis 2. A mere historian, like Josephus of old — a mere commentator, like Ewald now — might have used either the one or the other without sensible loss to

his readers through both chapters. An inspired author could not have expressed himself differently from Moses without impairing the perfect beauty and accuracy of the truth.2 If the book were in each of these different subjects written according to that most perfect keeping which pervades scripture, and which only God is capable of producing by His chosen instruments, I am convinced that, as Elohim simply in Genesis 2, so “Jehovah-Elohim” in Genesis 1, would have been wholly out of place with their respective positions in 1 and 2. As they stand, they are in exact harmony. The first chapter does not speak of special relationships, — does not treat of any peculiar dealings of God with the creature. It is the Creator originating what is around us; consequently it is God, Elohim, who alone could be spoken of as such in ch. 2:1-3, taking the Sabbath as the necessary complement of the week, and therefore going on with the preceding six days, not with what follows. But in Genesis 2, beginning with verse 4, where we have special position and moral responsibility coming to view for the first time, the compound term which expresses the Supreme putting Himself in relation with man, and morally dealing with him here below, is first used, and with the most striking appropriateness.

So far is the book of Genesis, therefore, from indicating a mere clumsy compiler, who strung together documents which had neither cohesion nor distinctive propriety, instead of there being merely two or three sets of traditions edited by another party, there is really the perfect statement of the truth of God, the expression of one mind, as is found in no writings outside the Bible. The difference in the divine titles is due to a distinctness of object, not of authorship; and it runs through the

Psalms and the Prophets as well as the Law, so as to convict of ignorance and temerity the learned men who vaunt so loudly of the document hypothesis as applied to the Pentateuch.

Here accordingly we find in Genesis 2, with a fulness and precision given nowhere else, God's entering into relationship with man, and man's relation to Eden, to the animal realm, and to woman specially. Hence, when notice is here taken of man's formation, it is described (as all else is) in a manner quite distinct from that of Genesis 1; but that distinctiveness self-evidently is because of the moral relationship which the Spirit of God is here bringing before the reader. Every subject that comes before us is dealt with in a new point of view suitably to the new name given to God — the name of God as a moral governor, no longer simply as a creator. Could any person have conceived such wisdom beforehand? On the contrary, we have all read these chapters in the Bible, and we may have read them as believers too, without seeing their immense scope and profound accuracy all at once. But when God's word is humbly and prayerfully studied, the evidence will not be long withheld by the Spirit of God, that there is a divine depth in that word which no mere man put into it. Then what confirmation of one's faith! What joy and delight in the Scriptures! If men, and men too of ability and learning, have tortured the signs of its very perfection into proofs of defective and clashing documents, ridiculously combined by a man who did not perceive that he was editing not fables only but inconsistent fables, what can believers do but wonder at human blindness, and adore divine grace ' For themselves, with glowing gratitude they receive it as the precious word of

God, where His love and goodness and truth shine in a way beyond all comparison, and yet meeting the mind and heart in the least, no less than in the most serious, wants that each day brings here below. In every way it proves itself the word not of men, but as it is in truth of God, which effectually works in them that believe.

In this new section accordingly it is written, “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created [going up to the first], in the day3 [here the writer comes down] that Jehovah-Elohim made the earth and the heavens.” It is not in this connection “created,” it will be observed, but “made” them. The language is invariably used in the most perfect manner. “And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for Jehovah-Elohim had not caused it to rain upon the earth; and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.4 And Jehovah-Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”

Here we learn that man did not become a living soul in the way that every other animal did. The others were caused to live by the simple fact that God organized them according to His own will; but in man’s case there was this essential difference, that he alone became a living soul by the inbreathing of Jehovah-Elohim. Man alone therefore has what is commonly called an immortal soul. His body only is ever said to be mortal. Man alone, as deriving that which gave him the breath of life not from his body but from the breath of Jehovah-Elohim, gives an account to God. Man will rise and live again. Not merely with the elements of his body will he

reappear, which is quite true, but besides he will reappear bodily in connection with a soul that never died. It is the soul which gives the unity, and which accounts for the personal identity. All other ways of explaining it are feeble, if not mere trash. But this divine statement, in connection with man's moral relationship with God, here calmly and clearly stated, is the true key. When men reason instead of receiving the revealed light of the Bible, I care not who or what they may be, they only mistake God and even man. They speculate; they give you ideas — and very foolish ideas they often are. The word of God presents to the simplest Christian the perfect account of the matter.

This elementary truth is of immense importance at the present moment. For it is a day when all things are in question, even the surest. It is not as if it were a new thing for man to deny the immortality of his own soul. At first it sounds strange that a day of human self-exaltation should be equally characterised by as strong a desire to deny the special breath of God for his soul, and degrade him to the pedigree of an ape! But it is an old story in this world, though a new thing for professing members and ministers of Christ, to take pride in putting scorn on divine revelation. Infidelity takes increasingly an apostate form, and those that used to revere both Old Testament and New are abandoning the truth of God for the dreamy but mischievous romances of so-called modern science. Never was there a moment when man was verging more evidently towards apostacy from the truth, and that not merely as to redemption, but even as to creation, as to himself, and above all as to his relationship with God. Give up the immortality of the

soul, and you deny the ground of that relationship, man's special moral responsibility to God.

But there is more than this, though this be of exceeding interest; because we see with equal certainty and clearness why Jehovah-Elohim is introduced not before but here, and why man's becoming a living soul by the inbreathing of God was said here and not in the first chapter. Neither would have suited the chapter; both are perfectly in season in Genesis 2. Further, we now hear of the garden that was planted by Jehovah-Elohim eastward in Eden, where He put the man whom He had formed. And here we find the solemn truth, that not only did Jehovah-Elohim cause to grow every tree that is pleasant and good for food, but "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

I call your attention for a moment to this. It is often a difficulty with souls that God should have made the moral history of the world to turn on touching that tree or eating of that fruit. The mere. mind of man thinks it a mighty difficulty that what appears to be so small a matter should be pregnant with such awful results. Do you not understand that this was the very essence of the trial? It was the essential feature that the trial should be simply a question of God's authority in prohibition, not one of grave moral evil. There was the whole matter. When God made man, when Jehovah-Elohim breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, man had no knowledge of things as right or wrong in themselves. This was acquired (have you never known, or have you forgotten, the solemn fact?) by the fall. An innocent man could not have had the knowledge of good and evil; it pertains necessarily to a fallen one. He who is innocent

— a man absolutely without any evil either in himself or in that which was around him, where all was from God — (and this is the revealed account of things), how could he have a knowledge of evil? How possibly have that discrimination which decides morally between what is good and what is evil? How perfect therefore is the intimation of scripture! Yet none did or could anticipate it.

The condition of man was altogether different then from what it became immediately after. All is consistent in revelation, and nowhere else. Men, the wisest — those of whom the world has most boasted, never had even the least adequate thought of such a state of things; yet enough of tradition remained even among heathens to witness to the truth. Nay, more, now that it is clearly revealed, they have no competency to appreciate it — never take in its force; and for this simple reason, that man invariably judges from himself and from his own experience, instead of submitting to God and His word. It is only faith that really accepts what comes from God; and faith alone gives the clue to what is around us now, but then it guides us through all present entanglements by believing God whether as to what He once made or what He will yet do. Philosophy believes neither, in a vain effort to account for all by what is, or rather appears; for it knows nothing, not even the present, as it ought to know. Consequently the attempt of man’s mind by what is now to judge of what was then always ends in the merest confusion and total failure. In truth only God is competent to pronounce; and this He has done.

Hence the believer finds not the slightest difficulty. He may not be able perhaps to meet objections. That is another matter, and by ho means of such consequence

as many suppose. The great point, my brethren, is to hold fast the truth. It is all well, and a desirable service of love, if a Christian can happily and with God-given wisdom meet the difficulties of others; but hold you the truth yourselves. Such is the power and simplicity of faith. Adversaries may no doubt try to embarrass you: if they will, let them do so. Do not be troubled if you cannot answer their questions and dispose of their cavils; you may regret it in charity for injured or misled souls. But, after all, it is the positive truth of God which it is the all-important business to hold, and this God has put in the heart of the simplest child who believes in Jesus.

I affirm then that, when God thus made man, when He put him in Eden, the actual test was the interdict not of a thing which was in itself evil, but simply and prescriptively wrong for man because God had forbidden it. Such is the very essence of a test for an innocent man. In fact any other thought (such as the law) is not only contrary to scripture, but when you closely and seriously think of it as a believer, it will be seen to be an impossible state of things then. Consequently a moral test such as the wise and prudent would introduce here, and count a worthier reason why there should be so vast a ruin for the world ensuing, is out of the question. No, it was the simple question whether God was really Jehovah-Elohim, whether He was a moral governor or not, whether man was to be independent of God or not. This was decided not by some grave and mighty matter, of which man could reason and see the consequences, but simply by doing or not doing the will of God. Thus we see how the simple truth is after all the deepest wisdom.

It is of great interest and importance to observe that God distinguished from the first between responsibility on the one hand, and life-giving on the other, in the two trees (verse 9). Even for Adam, innocent as he was, life did not depend on abstinence from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Death followed if he disobeyed God in eating of this tree (verse 17); but, walking in obedience, he was free to eat of the tree of life. He fell in partaking of the forbidden fruit; and God took care that he should not eat of the tree of life. But the two trees, representing the two principles, which man is ever confounding or obliterating one for the other, are in the scripture as in truth wholly distinct.

Observe another thing too. We have the description of the garden of Eden. I do not consider that its locality is so very difficult to ascertain in a general way as has been often imagined. Scripture describes it, and mentions two rivers which unquestionably exist at the present day. There can be no doubt that the Euphrates and the Tigris or Hiddekel, here named, are the same two rivers similarly called to this moment. It appears to me beyond reasonable doubt that the other two rivers are by no means impossible to trace; and it is remarkable, as showing that the Spirit of God takes an interest, and furnishes a thread to help us in the fact, that the two less notorious rivers are described more fully than the rivers which are so commonly known.5 We are therefore warranted in supposing that they are described just because they might have been less easily discerned. It is said that the name of the first river is the Pison, and of the other the Gihon. Now without wishing to press my individual judgment of such a matter, I may state the conviction that the Pison and the Gihon, here

described, are two rivers on the north of the site of Eden, one running into the Black Sea, the other into the Caspian. I believe that they are what are called, or used to be called in ancient times at any rate, the Phasis and the Aras or Araxes.

However this is merely by the way, for it is evidently a matter of no great importance in itself, save that we should hold the entire account of Paradise to be historical in the strictest and fullest sense. And, more than that, the position of these rivers seems to me to explain — what has often been a difficulty to many — the account that is given us here, that “a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads;” because if the garden of Eden lay in that quarter (that is to say in Armenia), in the part of it where are found the springs or watershed of these rivers, they would be all within a certain circumscribed quarter, as surrounding this garden. It is however possible that God may have allowed a certain change as to the distribution of these waters around the garden. I do not venture on any opinion as to this. Scripture does not say more, and we must hold to scripture. But these remarks are merely thrown out to show that there seems to be no insuperable difficulty in the way of arriving at a satisfactory solution of this vexed question. As for the transfer of the site of the garden lower down in the plain of Shinar, it appears to me altogether untenable. It is impossible thus to connect Eden with the fountainhead or sources of these rivers. It is not hard to conceive both that they had a common source before they parted, and that the garden of Eden may have been of considerable extent. Let this suffice: I do not wish to speculate about the matter.

The grand question to be tried we have afterwards. “Jehovah-Elohim took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Not a word of this is in the first chapter. “And Jehovah-Elohim commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day,” etc. Not a word of this again occurs in the previous chapter. Why? Because moral responsibility in relationship to Jehovah-Elohim comes in exactly where it should. Had it been spoken of in the first chapter, there might have been grave exception taken whether such an account could have been inspired; but, coming in as it does, it is exactly as it ought to be.

Then the various species of land animals and birds are brought forward to see what Adam would call them; not when Eve was formed, but before. The beautiful type of creation belonging to Christ is thus admirably preserved.6 Creation does not in the first instance belong to the church at all, whose place is purely one of grace. The Heir of all things is the Second man, and not the bride. If she possesses all along with Him, it is because of her union with Him, not intrinsically. This, it is observable, is kept up strikingly here, for Adam has these creatures brought before him by Jehovah- Elohim, and gives names to them all, showing clearly not alone his title as lord, but the power of appropriate language imparted by God from the first. The notion that intelligible speech is a mere growth from the gradual putting together of elements is a dream of ingenious speculation, which may exercise men’s wits, but has no foundation whatever. Adam on the very first day of his life, even before Eve was formed, gave the animals their

names, and God Himself sanctioned what their head uttered. Such was his relation to the creature; he was put in that place by God.

But this made the want so much the more evident, of which Jehovah-Elohim takes notice, of a partner for Adam's affections and life, one that might be before him, as it is said: "And Jehovah-Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.'' The creation of the woman apart from the man (as no doubt every other male and female were made separately) would have been a sterile and unimpressive fact. As it is, God reserves the striking detail for the scene of moral relationship. And may I not put it to the conscience of every soul whether such an event is not exactly where it should be, according to the internal and distinctive features of Genesis 1 and 2? We all know how apt man has been to forget the truth — how often might takes advantage of right! God at least was pleased to form woman, as well as to reveal her formation in a way that ought to make ashamed him who recognises her as his own flesh and bone, yet slights or misuses a relationship so intimate. "And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which Jehovah-Elohim had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

The primitive condition is described too. "They were both naked — the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." It was a state altogether different from that of man fallen; however suitable then, it was such as man

as he is could never have conceived of with propriety. Yet we cannot but feel how suitable it was for innocence, in which condition God made man and woman. Could He have made them otherwise consistently with His own character? Could they so made have carried themselves otherwise than is here described? Man's present experience would have suggested neither; yet his heart and conscience, unless rebellious, feel how right and becoming all is in such a state of things — none other so good.

The next chapter (Genesis 3) shows us the result of the test which we have seen laid down by Jehovah-Elohim. It was soon brought to issue. And here is another fact that I desire to bring before you. We see introduced, without more delay upon the scene, one too well and yet too little known, the active, audacious, most subtle adversary of God and man, the serpent — from whom sin and misery result, as the Bible witnesses from the beginning to the end — who is here first brought in a few quiet words before us. Who would have done this but God? In any other book, in a book written by mere man, (need one hesitate to say?) we should have had a long introduction, and a full history of his origin and his designs and his doings. God could introduce him, and could leave the heart to feel the rightness of saying no more about him than was necessary. The fact declares itself. If in the first chapter the true God shows Himself in creative power and glory, and in the perfect beneficence which marks too that which He had made; if in the second special relations display yet more His moral way and will, so the serpent does not fail to manifest his actual condition and aim — not of course the condition in which he was made, but that to which

sin had reduced him. “The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah-Elohim had made.”

The third chapter is indeed a continuation of the second — properly enough made into a separate chapter, but still its sequel simply. It is the issue of that probationary trial which was proposed there. And here the effort of the enemy was first to breathe suspicion on the goodness of God as well as on His truth, in short, on God Himself. Human lusts and passions were not yet in question, but they soon followed — the desire of having what God had forbidden. First, however, it was an insinuation infused and allowed against the true God. All evil is due to this as its spring; it begins with God as the object attacked or undermined. “And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God7 said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” So it was that the serpent envenomed morally the heart of the woman first, and then of the man. I need not dwell on the sad history which we all know more or less. She listened, she looked, she took of the fruit; she ate, and was fallen. And man eat too, not deceived, but with open eyes, and therefore so much the more guilty — swayed, no doubt, by his affections; bold, however, in yielding to them, for he ought rather to have been her guard and guide, certainly not to have followed her, even if he had failed to keep her safely in the path of

good. Alas! he followed her, as he has often since, into the broad way of evil. Adam did not preserve the place in which God had set him.

Both fallen, they were both ashamed. “They knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” And they heard the voice of Jehovah-Elohim walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves. The victims of sin knew shame, now fear. Departed from God, they hid themselves, and He had but to utter those solemn and searching words to Adam, “Where art thou?” He was gone from God. Forced to discover himself, Adam tells the humiliating tale: — “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” The evil is traced home at last to its source, and the serpent is brought fully out. Each severally — the man, the woman, the serpent — stand evidently convicted by the presence of Jehovah-Elohim. Yet, wonderful to say, in the very announcement of judgment on the serpent, God, who had by the light of His presence compelled the guilty pair to come forth out of the darkness in which they had hid, or rather sought to hide — God held out the first bright light of mercy, but mercy in the judgment of him who was the root of the evil. May one not say again who beforehand would have thought of ways so truly and self-evidently divine? But it is the word of God, and nothing can be more suitable to God, gracious to man, or just to the enemy.

Believers have constantly called it a “promise;” but it is not uninstructive to see that scripture never does. There was a revelation of an infinite blessing for man unquestionably, but hardly what is called a promise. It was addressed to the serpent. If a promise to any, it was

to the woman's Seed, the last Adam, not to the first, who was just sentenced with Eve. Abraham, not Adam, is the depository of promise: so speaks scripture, as far as I know, invariably. We see why that ought to be. Was it a time for a promise? Was it a state for a promise? Was it a person for a promise? — one that had ruined the glory of God, as far as it rested upon him. No, but in judging the serpent there comes out the revealed purpose of God, not a promise to Adam in sin, but the revelation of One who would crush the serpent's head the first sinner and too successful tempter to sin. The Second man, not the first, is the object of promise. This indeed is the invariable truth of scripture, and runs through it to the last.

Observe, in the beginning of the word of God, the sources of all things. As we saw God Himself the Creator and the moral Governor, so further we find the enemy of God and of man in exact accordance with the latest word that God speaks. Again, let us note the confronting of the serpent, not with man, who always falls under Satan's power, but with Christ, who always conquers. Such is the way in which God puts His truth, and this in the earliest part of His word. No later revelation in the smallest degree corrects the very first. Scripture is divine from first to last. But along with this we find no haste to reveal: all is in season. Not a word is heard about eternal life yet — that must wait for His appearing who was such with the Father; not a word yet about the exhaustless riches of grace which were afterwards to abound. A person is held out — the Seed of the woman; for the manner most expressly bespeaks the tender mercy of God. If the woman was the one first of all to yield, she is the destined mother of Him that would

defeat the devil and deliver man. But what came in immediately, and what is traced throughout the Bible, it may be noted, is the present consequence in the government of God.8 Consequently we find that as man had hearkened to the voice of the siren, and had eaten of the tree of which he was commanded not to eat, the ground was cursed for him. It is the present result. So again the woman has her portion, of which we need not say more than to point out what a clue it is to her lot in the history of the race. Both unite in this, that, as they were made of dust, to the dust they must return.

Notwithstanding in the midst of the scene of desolation we hear Adam calling his wife's name "Eve" (ver. 20). To me it is perfectly clear how speedy was the fall after the creation of man. He had not before given his wife this her full and proper name. He had described what she was rather than who; it was only when sin had come in, and when others, had there been any, would have called her naturally the parent of death, that Adam (by what seems to be the guidance of God in faith) calls her rather the mother of the living. His soul, I cannot doubt, laid hold of the word that God had pronounced in judging the devil. And God here too beautifully marks His feeling. For (ver. 21) we are told, that "to Adam also and to his wife did Jehovah-Elohim make coats of skins and clothed them." The insufficiency of their resources had been proved. Now comes in the shadow of what God would do fully another day.

Nevertheless present consequences take their course, and in a certain sense mercy too is mingled with them, as is the case habitually, I think, in the government of God; for man as he is is just so much the less happy as he knows not what it is to labour in such a world as this.

It is not only what he is doomed to, but the wisely ordered place for fallen man here below. There is no one more miserable than the man who has no object before him. I grant that in an unfallen condition there was another state of things. Where all was bright and good around man in innocency the scope for labour would not have its place. I only speak of what is good for man out of Paradise, and how God meets with and ministers to his state in His infinite grace. On this however we need not say more than that He “drove out the man,” lest he should perpetuate the condition of ruin into which he had passed.9 In his original estate man was created in God’s image, but he had not the knowledge of good and evil. This he acquired by the fall. After this he could estimate and know things himself as good or evil; whilst innocent this could not be. A holy being might and does so know, i.e., a being who, while knowing, has an intrinsic nature that repels the evil and cleaves to the good. But this was not Adam’s state, but simply made upright, with absence and ignorance of evil. When fallen he acquired the internal capacity of knowing right from wrong, apart from a law to inform or forbid; and in this respect became like God at the very time when he lost God and intercourse with Him as an innocent creature. We thus learn the compatibility of these two things, which in fact were true of man — a fall from the relationship of innocence, in which he was originally set with God, and a rise in moral capacity, which, without faith, entails immense misery, but which is of the utmost value when one is brought to God by our Lord Jesus.

Then (Gen. 4) we have a new scene, which opens with a change in the name of God. It is no longer the test of creation, as God made it, and this accordingly is marked

here. He is called “Jehovah;” He is not designated by the former mingled or compound term “Jehovah-Elohim,” but by “Jehovah” simply; and this is found afterwards, either “Elohim” alone or “Jehovah in the other names of special character, as we shall see,” until the call of Israel, when we have an appropriate modification in the expression of His name. But Adam now becomes a father, not innocent, but fallen before he became the head of the race. Cain was born, and the fallen mother gave the name: but, oh, what a mistake! I am sure, not that she was exactly entitled to give the name, but that it can be proved that she gave a singularly inappropriate one. She thought her first-born a great gain, for such is the meaning of the name “Cain.” Alas! what disappointment and grief, both of the most poignant kind, followed ere long For Abel too was born; and in process of time it came to pass that they brought their offerings unto “Jehovah” — a term, I may observe, that is here in admirable keeping. It was not barely as He who had created all, but the God that was in special relationship with man — Jehovah. This is the force of it. Cain looked at Him in the place merely of a Creator, and there was his wrong. Sin needed more. Cain brought what might have sufficed in an unfallen world — what might have suited an innocent worshipper of One who was simply known as Elohim. It was impossible that such a ground could be rightly taken longer; but so Cain did not feel. He makes a religion from his own mind, and brings of the fruit of the ground now under the curse; whilst Abel by faith offers the firstlings of the flock, and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel, and to his offering. It is the great truth of sacrifice, of which Abel’s faith laid hold, realising and confessing in his slain lamb that there was no other way in a ruined

world for a holy relationship, and for the confession of the truth too, as between God and man. He offers of the firstlings of his flock — that which passed under death — to Jehovah.

“And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” And Jehovah speaks to him thus — “Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?” The principles of God’s nature are immutable. Whether people are believers or not, whether they receive the truth or not, God holds to that which belongs to His own moral being. That any one is capable of meeting the character of God in an unfallen state is another matter. It is the same principle in Genesis 4, which we find more explicitly stated in Romans 2, where God shows His sure judgment of evil on the one hand, and His approval of that which is good, holy, and true on the other. So with Cain here — “and if thou doest not well;” and such was the fact. His condition was that of a sinner, and he looked not out of himself to God. But what characterises this scene is not the state in which man as such was — this we had in Genesis 3 — but what man did in that fallen state, and more especially what he did in presence of God and faith. Certainly he did not well. “And if thou doest not well,” it is said, “sin lieth at the door.” Evil conduct is that which makes manifest an evil state, and flows from it.

I do not think that the expression means a sin-offering, as is sometimes supposed; for it does not appear that there is ground for inferring that the truth of a sin-offering was understood in the slightest degree till long afterwards. “By the law is the knowledge of sin,” and until the law was brought in there was, as far as

scripture tells us, no such discrimination, if any, between the offerings. They were all merged in one; and hence it is that we find that Job's friends, though guilty in the Lord's sight, yet alike with him offer burnt-offerings. When Noah brings his sacrifice, it is evidently of that nature also. Would there not have been a sin-offering on these occasions had the law been then in force? Most wisely all such details awaited the unfolding of another day. I merely use these scriptural facts to shew what seems to me the truth that "sin" here does not refer to the specific offering for it, but rather to that which was proved by evil conduct.

Notwithstanding God maintained the place that belonged to the elder brother. But nothing softened the roused and irritated spirit of Cain. There is nothing which more maddens man than mortified religious pride; and so it is here proved, for he rose up against his brother and slew him. And Jehovah speaks to him once more. It was sin not as such against God in leaving Him, like Adam's, but against man, his brother accepted of God. "Where is Abel thy brother?" To God's appeal he answers with no less hardness and audacity than falsehood, "I know not." There is no real courage with a bad conscience, and guile will soon be apparent where God brings His own light and makes guilt manifest. Let us not forget the deceitfulness of sin. "What hast thou done?" said Jehovah. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Justly now we have him self-cursed from the face of the earth, pronounced a fugitive and vagabond. But the will of man pits itself invariably against the known will of God, and the very man who was doomed to be a fugitive sets to work that he may settle himself here below. Cain, as it is said,

went out from His presence, and dwelt in the land of Nod; a son is born in due time who builds a city called after his name. Such is the birth of civil life in the family of Cain, where we find the discovery and advance of the delights of man; but, along with the progress of art and science, the introduction of polygamy. The rebellious spirit of the forefather shows itself in the descendant Lamech.

But the chapter does not close until we find Seth, whom God10 substituted (for this is the meaning of the name), or "appointed," as it is said, "instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." And so Seth, to him also there was born a son, and he called his name Enos. Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.

In Genesis 5 we have the generations of Adam. Upon this I would not now dwell farther than to draw attention to the commencing words, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created." But "Adam," it is said, "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." It was no longer in the likeness of God, but in the image of God always. For man, now as ever, fallen or not, is in the image of God; but the likeness of God was lost through sin. Seth therefore was begotten in Adam's own likeness, not in God's. He was like Adam fallen, not his representative only. And this is what is referred to in James 3, where he speaks of our having been made in the likeness of God. But it is the more important because, when it is a question of the guilt of taking man's life, the ground is that he was made in God's image. This, it is plain, was never lost; it abides, whatever man's state. Had the crime depended on man's

retaining the likeness of God, murder might have been denied or justified, because if a man were not like God the unlikeness might be urged in extenuation of killing him. But it is a crime against man made in the image of God, and as this abides, whether he be fallen or not, the guilt of murder is unimpeachable and evident. This accordingly is the ground taken, to which I refer as an instance of the perfectness of scripture, but at the same time of the profound and practical power of the truth of God.

In the remarkable list, which is pursued down to Noah, we have another great truth set forth in the most simple and beautiful way — the power of life which exempts from the reign of death, and not only that, but the witness to heaven as a place for man. Enoch brings both these lessons before us. I have no doubt that, besides this, Enoch is the type of the portion of those who look to be with the Lord above, just as Noah shows us (as is too well known to call for a delay upon it) those who pass through the judicial dealings of God, and nevertheless are preserved. In short Enoch is the witness of the heavenly family, as Noah is of the earthly people of God.

But in Gen. 6 we have a very solemn statement — the apostacy of the ancient world. The sons of God chose the daughters of men. The true key to this account is supplied in the Epistle of Jude. It is hardly so common-place and ordinary a matter as many suppose. When understood, it is really awful in itself and its results. But the Holy Spirit has veiled such a fact in the only manner that became God and was proper for man. Here indeed the principle of reserve does apply, not in withholding from man’s soul the deepest blessing of grace for his

deepest wants, but in furnishing no more than that which was suitable for man to learn about the matter. He has said enough; but any one who will take the trouble to refer to Jude in connection with this chapter will gather more than appears on the surface. It is not needful to say more now. God Himself has touched it but curtly. This only may be remarked in addition, that “the sons of God,” in my judgment, mean the same beings in Genesis as they do in Job. This point will suffice to indicate their chief guilt in thus traversing the boundaries which God had appointed for His creatures. No wonder that total ruin speedily ensues. It is really the basis of fact for not a few tales of mythology which men have made up. Any one who is acquainted with the chief writings of the old idolatrous world, of the Greeks and Romans especially, will see that what God has veiled in this brief statement, which passes calmly over that of which more had better not be spoken, is what they have amplified into the Titans and the giants and their greater deities. I do not of course enter into details, but here is the inspired account, which shines in the midst of the horrors of that dark scene which fabulists portrayed. But there is enough in man’s amplification to point to what is stated here in a few simple words of truth.

The flood ensues. In the statement given by Moses every minute point beautifully exemplifies the propriety of the word of God. Men have fancied contradictions; they have fallen back on the old resource of opposed documents put together. There is not the slightest reason for suspicion. It is the same inspired historian who presents the subject in more than one point of view, but always consistently, and with a divine purpose which

governs all. Every great writer, as far as he can go, illustrates this plan — indeed everybody, we may say. If you are speaking in the intimacies of the family, you do not adopt the same language towards your parents, wife, child, or servant, still less towards a stranger outside. Is there then any contradiction to be surmised? Both may be perfectly right, and both absolutely true; but there is a difference of manner and phraseology, because of a difference of object before you. It is no otherwise with God's word, save that all illustrations fail to measure the depth of the differences in it.

Thus in Genesis 6 it is said that "the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." It is not "Jehovah" now but "God." "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." What does He do then? He directs the ark to be made. For what end? The preservation of the creatures which required the ark. Hence He orders that two of every kind should be taken into the ark. We can easily see the propriety of this. It is very simply a measure for perpetuating the creature by God the Creator, in spite of imminent judgment. It has nothing to do with moral relationships. God the Creator would preserve such of the creatures as required the shelter of the ark. Here then we only hear of pairs which enter.

In Genesis 7 we have another order of facts. It opens thus: "And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Is this merely the conserving of the creature? Not so. It is the language of One who has special relationships with Noah and with his family. "Come thou into the ark," says He; "for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." "Righteous" —

is this a question of creation as such? It is not, but rather of moral relationship. “For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.” Certainly this is not mere creation in view, but special dealings of a moral sort. Almost every word gives evidence of it. “Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens.... and of beasts that are not clean by two.” It is God providing not for the perpetuation of the creature merely, but with marked completeness for sacrifice. Consequently we have this perfect care over the maintenance of His rights and place as One that governed morally. “And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded.”

Thus in relation to His place as creator God preserved two of every sort; in relation to His own moral government He would have seven taken into the ark — seven animals of each clean sort; of the unclean just enough would be there to preserve what He had made. It is evident therefore that in the one case we have that which was generally necessary, in the other case that which was special and due to the relationship in which man was placed with Jehovah. Thus it is seen at once that, instead of these wonderful communications being merely earlier and later legends put together by a still more modern editor, who tried to make something complete by stringing together what did not aptly fit, on the contrary, it is the Spirit of God who gives us various sides of the truth, each falling under the title and style suitable to God, according to that which was in hand.

Put them out of their order, and all becomes confused; receive them as God has written them, and there is perfection in the measure in which you understand them.

So we find what shows the folly of this yet more in what follows: “And they that went in went in male and female of all flesh, as God commanded him; and Jehovah shut him in.” The two terms occur in the very same verse; yet is there not an evident propriety in each case? Unquestionably. They went in male and female. What is the idea? Moral relationship? Not at all. “Male and female” has to do in itself with the constitution of the creature, nothing whatever necessarily with moral relationship. In male and female God acts according to His rights and wisdom in creation; and consequently there it is said, “as Elohim commanded him.” But when all this is done with, who was it that shut Noah in? “Jehovah.” There we have delight in the man who had found grace in His eyes. No doubt the mere act could have been effected in other ways. Noah might have been enabled to shut himself in; but how much more blessed that Jehovah should do it! There was no fear then. Had it been merely said that Elohim shut him in, it would have simply suggested the Creator’s care of every creature; but Jehovah’s shutting him in points to special relationship, and the interest taken in that righteous man. What can be more beautiful in its season?

Thus a peculiarity in scripture, when understood, is pregnant with truth, having its source in God’s wisdom, not in human infirmity. If we did not see it at once, this was merely because of our dullness. When we begin to enter into its real meaning, and hold fast that which is clearly the intended truth, the theory of Elohistic and

Jehovistic annalists, with their redaction, vanishes into its own nothingness. I confess human — my own — ignorance; but not that there is a single instance where God has not employed the terms in all respects the best. No language could express so well the truth as that which God has employed as a matter of fact.

The next chapter (Genesis 8) shows God's remembrance of Noah and every living thing. Here it would not have served His purpose to say, "Jehovah remembered every living thing," because every living thing was not in moral relationship with God. Noah was undoubtedly; but it is not always, nor here, the aim to draw attention to what was special.

In due time the ark rests upon Ararat, and then follows the strikingly beautiful incident of the raven and the dove, which has been often before us, and from which therefore we may pass on. Afterwards God tells Noah to come forth — he and all the other creatures.

"And Noah," it is written in verse 20, "builded an altar." Unto whom? Unto God? Most appropriately it is to Jehovah now. Without loss, these two things could not be transposed. He took then, it is said, "of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl." Yes, Jehovah is in question. It is the relationship of Noah which appears here. It is the special place in which he stood that was witnessed by the sacrifice thereon offered. And there Jehovah, accepting the sweet savour, declares that He "will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

Here again how observable is the transparent and self-consistent truth of scripture. The Statement before us

may look at first unaccountable; but when carefully weighed and reflected on, the propriety of it becomes manifest. That man's being evil was a ground for sending the flood we can all see; but what depth of grace in the declaration that God knew perfectly the ruined condition of man at the very time when He pledges His word that there shall come no more flood on the earth! This is brought before us here.

Here then we enter on an entirely new state of things, and a truth of capital importance for everybody to consider who has not already made it his own. What was the ground of God's delays in the previous time? Absence of evil in earth; innocence in man; it was a sinless, unfallen world. What is the ground of God's dealings now? Man is fallen, and the creature made subject to vanity. All the delays of God now proceed on the fact that the first man is in sin. Leave out the fall; fail to keep it before you and test all with that in mind, and you will be wrong about every result. Next to Christ Himself, and what we have by and in Him, there is nothing of greater importance than the confession of the truth, both that God created, and that His creation is in ruins. Your judgment alike of God and man will be falsified; your estimate of the past and your expectations of the future will all be vain, unless you steadily remember that God now in all His dealings with man acts on the solemn fact of sin — original and universal sin. Will it be so always? By no means. There is a day coming when the ground of God's action will be neither innocence nor sin, but righteousness. But for that day we must wait, the day of eternity — of "the new heavens and the new earth." It is a real joy to know that it is coming; but until that day God always has before Him,

as the theatre and material where He acts, a world ruined — ruined by sinful man.

Thanks be to God, One has come who is before Him in unfailing sweet savour, so that if sin be in the background, there cannot but be also what He introduces of His own free grace. If His servant bids others behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, how much more does God Himself behold Christ and His sacrifice! Need it be said that as far as its efficacy is concerned, and God's delight in it, He doers not wait for the new heavens and the new earth, either to enjoy it Himself or make known its value to us? In short, Christ has intervened, and this most weighty consequence is connected with it — that, although everything manifests evil and ruin increasingly, God has triumphed in grace and in faith after the fall and before "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." God, having introduced His own Son, has won the victory, the fruits of which He gives to us by faith before our possession is displayed by and-by.

Let it suffice to refer to the great principle, remembering that the theatre of the ages or dispensations of God is the world since the flood. It is a mistake to include the world before that event in the time of dispensations. There was no dispensation, properly so called, before it. What dispensation could there be? What does it mean? When man in Paradise was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he broke the command immediately — as far as appears, the first day. Not that one could say positively that so it was; but certainly it is to be supposed that little time could have passed after receiving the woman, his wife. And the patent fact lies before us, that to join

his wife in the sad sin is his first recorded act. What dispensation or age was there here? And what followed after it? There was no longer trial in Paradise, because man was turned out. By what formal test was he proved outside? By none whatever. Man, the race, became simply outcasts morally — nothing else — from that day till after the flood. Not but that God wrought in His grace with individuals. Abel, Enoch, Noah, we have already seen. There was also a wonderful type of deliverance through Christ in the ark — happily so familiar to most. But it is evident that dispensation, in the true sense of the word, there was none. There was a trial of man in Eden, and he fell immediately: after that there was none whatever in the antediluvian world. The history supposes man thenceforward allowed to act without external law or government to control though God did not fail to work in His merciful goodness — in His own sovereignty.

But after the flood we find a covenant is made with the earth (Gen. 9): the principle of government is set up. Then we enter on the theatre and times of dispensations. One sees the reason why man before this had not been punished by the judge; whereas after the flood there was government and judicial proceeding. In the post-diluvian earth God establishes principles which hold their course throughout the whole scene till Jesus came, or rather till He not only come and affirm by His own power and personal reign all the ways in which God has been testing and trying man, but deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all, when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

This then may suffice. As a notice of God's covenant with the earth, I may just refer, in passing, to the establishment of the bow in the cloud as the sign of the mercy of Elohim (verses 12-17).

The end of this chapter shows that the man in whose person the principle of human government was set up could not govern himself. It is the old familiar story, — man tried and found wanting as always. This gives occasion to the manifestation of a great difference among Noah's sons, and to the solemn words which the father uttered in the spirit of prophecy. "Cursed be Canaan" was of deep interest, especially to an Israelite, but in truth to anyone who values the revelation of God. We can see afterwards how verified the curse was, as it will be yet more. The sin began with utter disrespect to a father. Not to speak of the destroyed cities of the plain, they had in Joshua's day sunk into the most shameless of sinners that ever disgraced God and defiled the earth. The believer can readily understand how Noah was divinely led to pronounce a just malediction on Canaan. 11 "Cursed [be] Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be." So always it is. A man who despises him whom he is bound to honour, not to speak of the special distinction which God had shown him, must come to shame and degradation, must be not merely a servant but "a servant of servants." The most vaulting pride always has the deepest fall. On the other hand, "Blessed be Jehovah the God" — for God does not dwell upon the curse, but soon turns to the blessing — "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." And Elohim, it is said, "shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." How remarkably this has been made good in the providential history of the world

I need not stay to prove, — how Jehovah God connected His name with Shem, to the humiliation of Canaan, and how Elohim enlarged Japhet, who would spread himself not merely in his own destined lot, but even dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan humbled there too. How true of the energetic Japhetic race that pushed westward, and not content with the east, pushes round again to the west — anywhere and everywhere. Thus God declares Himself in every word He utters. A little key to the world's history is contained in those few words of Noah.

Then we find the generations of the sons of Shem. Without pretending to enter into particulars, this I may remark — that in the Bible there is not a more important chapter than Genesis 10 as regards the providential arrangement of tongues, families, and nations Here alone is given the rise of different races, with their sources. Who else could have told us how and when the earth was thus divided? For this was a new state of things, not only not at all in the world before the flood, but not for some considerable time after it, and their distribution in their lands. This is the divine ethnology. Here man is at sea; but where he does arrive at conclusions, this at least is the common consent, as far as I know, of all who have given their minds to the study, that there are three, and only three, divisions into which nations properly diverge. So it is here. The word of God is before them. More than that: it is the conviction of all men, and men worthy to be listened to, that not more surely are they divided into three grand lines than that these three lines had a common origin. That there was only one such root is the statement of the scriptures. The word of God is always right. The details are of the highest interest, more especially when compared with

the predicted results in the latter day, where we see the same countries and nations re-appear for judgment in the day of Jehovah. But into the proof of this we cannot now pause to enter.

Genesis 11 opens with the sin of man, which led to the division described in the preceding chapter, the moral reason of that fact, new then, but still in its substance going on, whatever the superficial changes among men in their lands, and tongues, and political distribution. Hitherto they had been of one lip; but combining to make a name to themselves, lest they should be scattered, not to exalt God nor confide in Him, they had their language confounded, and themselves dispersed. “So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (verses 8, 9).

The genealogy of Shem, with gradually decreasing age among his seed, follows down to Abram, the remainder of the chapter being thus the link of transition from the history of the world as it then was, and in its principle still is. We come at length to him in whom God brings in wholly new principles in His own grace to meet a new and monstrous evil — idolatry. This daring evil against God, we know from Joshua 24 was then spread far and wide, even among the Shemitic race, although never heard of in scripture, whatever man’s lawlessness in other ways, before the deluge. But here I stop for the present.

May we confide not only in scripture, but in Him who gave it! May we seek to be taught more and more His truth, leaning on His grace! He will withhold no good from those who walk uprightly; and there is no other way than Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gen. 12 - 25.

We have had hitherto God's account of that which He had made; then the trial and utter ruin of the creature, with the revelation of divine mercy in Christ the Lord. We have had in fine the judgment of the world before the flood, and the universal history, we may say, of the sources of nations, compared with which there is nothing safe or sure, even to this day, spite of all pretensions of men. Their true history, and, scanty though it seems, the fullest and most comprehensive, is in that one short chapter — Genesis 10 — which was before us last night; the following chapter (Genesis 11) disclosing the moral ground of that dispersion which was merely given as a fact before. Then the Spirit of God takes up not merely the source of that nation that He was about to form for His own praise and glory in the earth, but a regular line successionally given of the chosen family from Shem till we come to Abram.

This introduces Genesis 12 on wholly new ground It is evident that here we are entering a sensibly different atmosphere. It is no longer man as such, but a man separated of God to Himself, and this by a promise given to one chosen and called — a new root and stock. These are principles which God never has abandoned since, and never will. Let me repeat that it is no longer mankind as hitherto, nor nations only, but we have the call of God to Himself — the only saving means where

ruin has entered before judgment vindicates God's nature and will by His power. For we know from elsewhere that idolatry was now prevalent among men even among the descendants of Shem, when a man was called out by and to the true God on a principle which did not change nor judge (save morally) the newly-formed associations of the world, but separated him who obeyed to divine promises with better hopes. Abram, it need hardly be said, was the object of His choice. I am not denying that God had chosen before; but now it became a publicly affirmed principle. It was not only a call known secretly to him who was its object, but there was one separated to God by His calling him out as the depository of His promise, the witness of it being before the eyes of all, and in consequence blessed, and a channel of blessing. For what might seem to man's narrow mind an austere severing from his fellows was in point of fact for the express purpose of securing divine and eternal blessing, and not to himself and his seed alone, but an ever-flowing stream of blessing which would not fail to all the families of the earth. God will yet shew this. For the present it has come to nought, as everything else does in the hands of man; but God will yet prove in the face of this world how truly and divinely, and in the interests of man himself, as well as of His own glory, He wrought in His call of Abram.

Abram comes forth therefore at God's bidding; he departs from his country; but first of all we find a measure of infirmity which hindered. There was one who hung upon the called out man, whose presence was ever a clog: the company of one not in the calling always must be so. Terah was not the object of the call; and yet it was difficult to refuse his company; but the effect was

grave, for as long as Terah was there, Abram, in point of fact, did not reach Canaan. Terah dies (for the Lord graciously controls things in favour of those whose hearts are simple, even in the midst of weakness); and now “Abram set forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came.” The Canaanite, it is added, was then in the land.12 “And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him.”

Here we find for the first time the principle so dear to our hearts — the worship of God founded on a distinct appearing of Himself (it always must be so). Man cannot reason out that which is a ground of worship. It flows from, and is presented to us as flowing from, the appearing of Jehovah. It is not merely the call now, but Jehovah “appeared” unto him. True worship must spring from the Lord, known in that which at any rate is a figure of personal knowledge of Himself. It is not only thus a blessing conferred, but in Himself known. Of course no one means to deny the fact that until He was known in the revelation of His own Son by the power of the Holy Ghost, there could not be that which we understand now as “worship in spirit and in truth;” but at least this sets forth the principle.

There is another thing also to be observed here: it was only in Canaan that this was or could be. There was no worship in Mesopotamia; no altar, which was the symbol of it, was seen there. Neither was there an altar in Haran. It is in Canaan we see one first. Canaan is the clear type of that heavenly ground where we know Christ now is. Thus we see first Jehovah personally revealing Himself; and this next in connection with the

type of the heavenly places. These are clearly the two roots of worship, as brought before us in this instructive passage.

Further, Abram moves about in the land; he pitches his tent elsewhere. This was of great importance. He was a pilgrim, not a settler in the land. He was as much a pilgrim in the land as before he came there. It was evident that he was a pilgrim when he left all dear to him, whether country, or kindred, or father's house; but when in the land he did not settle down. He still pitches his tent, but he also builds his altar. Who could hesitate to say that in the land Abram acquired a more truly heavenly intelligence? The promise of the land from God brought him out of his own land — out of that which is the figure of the earth; but when in Canaan God raised his eyes to heaven, instead of permitting them to rest on the world. And this is precisely what the epistle to the Hebrews shows us, — not alone the faith which brought him into the land, but the faith which kept him a stranger when there. This is precious indeed, and exactly the faith of Abram.

His worship then we have in connection with his sustained pilgrim character in the land of promise.

Then we have another thing, — not mere infirmity but alas! failure — open and serious failure. He who had come out to God's call, the stranger in the land that was given him of God, fearing the pressure of circumstances, goes down into the granary of the earth the land which boasts of exhaustless resources. Abram went there of his own motion, without God or His word. Not only is no altar there, but he is without the guidance and guard of divine power morally. Abram fails miserably. Say not that

this is to disparage the blessed man of God; it is rather to feel and to confess what we are, which is as much a part (however low) of our Christian duty as to adore what God is in His own excellency to our own souls. Flesh is no better in an Abram than in any other. It is the same ruinous quagmire wherever trusted, in every person and in any circumstances. And there it is that Abram (who had already failed in the unbelief which induced him to seek Egypt, away from the land into which God had called him) denies his wife, exposing her to the most imminent danger of defilement, and bringing not a blessing on the families of the earth, but a plague from Jehovah on Pharaoh and his house. Thus Abram proves the utter hopelessness either of blessing to others or preservation even for ourselves when straying from the place into which God calls us.

But God was faithful, and in Genesis 13 Abram is seen returning to the place where his tent was at the beginning. He is restored, and so resumes his place of pilgrim, and along with it of a worshipper. Such is the restoring goodness of God. But here we find another encumbrance in Lot, if we may so say, although personally a man of God. The Spirit bears witness that he was righteous, but he had no such faith as Abram, nor was he included in that character of call which we must carefully discriminate from the inward working of divine grace. Let us bear in mind that Abram had the public line of testimony for God, and the place of special promise. It is mere ignorance to suppose that there were not saints of God outside that call, which has nothing to do with the question of being saints, for Lot clearly was one; and we shall find from the very next chapter that he is not the only one. But Lot’s hanging upon Abram,

though it had not the same neutralizing effect as his father Terah, nevertheless did bring in difficulties. And here again Abram, restored in his soul, shines according to the simplicity of faith. It was not for him to contend. Alas! Lot was not ashamed to choose. He used his eyes for himself. Fully owning him to be a believer, it is plain that he lacked faith for his present walk. He preferred to choose for himself rather than ask God to give. Abram left all calmly with God. It was well.

After Lot had thus taken the best for himself, disgraceful as it was that the nephew should have ventured so to act in a land which God had promised to Abram only, another thereon decides the matter. “Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him.” So the Spirit notes now that all was according to the simple will of God, who was no heedless spectator, and does not fail to clear off the elements that hinder. Now that it was so, Jehovah said, “Lift up thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward,” — He had never said so before — “for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, etc., then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land,” — Abram was to take possession by faith — “in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto Jehovah.” Well he might! Thus we learn that there is a fresh manifestation of worship, and under the happiest possible circumstances to the close of the chapter.

This part is concluded by Genesis 14. For all these chapters may be viewed as forming one main section of

the life of Abram. It is more particularly what pertains to him publicly; consequently we have as the public character of Abram the separating call, the promise secured, himself constituted manifestly a pilgrim as well as a worshipper in the land. It is all vain to talk about being a pilgrim in heart. God looks for it thoroughly; but He does not constitute us necessarily the judges, though no doubt those who are most simple will not mind the judgment of their fellows. At the same time it is well to judge in grace where we have to do with others. If there is reality, it will commend itself to the conscience of others; but I do say that to be manifestly, indisputably a pilgrim is the only right thing for one who is thus called out of God, as well as a worshipper, no less truly separate from the world than knowing and enjoying the God who called him out. Then we have seen the fatal absence of truth when the faithful are in the type of this world, Egypt; and the sustaining grace which restores and gives back the place of one who was manifestly a worshipper to the last. These were the great points of his public separated career.

The work is closed, as remarked, by Genesis 14 where we see a raid made by certain more distant kings of the earth against those who ruled in the valley of the Jordan or the neighbourhood, four against five. In the affray between them, he who had chosen the world suffers from the world. Lot with all that he had was swept away by the conquering kings who came from the north-east, and thereon Abram (guided of God I cannot doubt) with his armed servants, goes forth in the manifest power of God; for the conquerors as thoroughly fall before Abram as the others had been conquered by them. Thereon the priest of the Most High God comes forth (mysteriously,

no doubt) king of Salem as well as in his own name, king of righteousness. On this the apostle Paul enlarges in the epistle to the Hebrews, where he shows us the close of the public career of pilgrimage and worship for the man of faith. For the Lord Jesus Himself is the anti-typical Melchisedec who will bring forth refreshment when the last victory has been won at the end of this age. Then the assembled kings will have come to nought after fearful convulsions among the other potsherds of the earth; and the Most High will bring in that magnificent scene of blessing which was represented by Melchisedec. For God in Christ will take the place of the possessor of heaven and earth, delighting in the joy of man, as man will be made to delight in the blessing of God; when it will not be as now simply sacrifice and intercession grounded upon it, but when, besides this which finds its place elsewhere and which is now the only comfort for our souls, there will be a new scene and God will take another character, the Most High God, and then all false gods shall fall before Him. It is clearly therefore the concluding scene of this series and the type of the millennial age. The Lord Jesus will be the uniting bond, so to speak, between heaven and earth, when He will bless God in the name of Abram, and He will bless Abram in the name of God. This then, in my judgment, winds up the series which began with Genesis 12.

It is worthy of remark on this occasion that Abram builds no altar here. And as there was no altar, so the course of pilgrimage is run. Separateness from the world and heavenly worship are no longer found. A tent and altar would be as unsuitable, reared by Abram at this juncture, as before they were exactly to the

purpose. It is the millennial scene when God alone is exalted, His enemies confounded, His people saved and blessed.

Genesis 15 introduces a new character of communications from God. It will be observed therefore that the language indicates a break or change. The phrase “after these things” separates what is to follow from what had gone before, which had come to its natural conclusion. I think I may appeal to the Christian as to these things, without in the least pretending to do more than give a judgment upon it. Nevertheless, when you find a number of scriptures which all march on simply and without violence, clothed with a certain character, and all in the same direction, we may fairly gather that as we know it was not mere man who wrote, so also the confidence is to be cherished that it is God who deigns to give us the meaning of His own word. I grant you that truth must carry its own evidence along with it — the stamp and consistency of that which reveals what our God is to our souls. Undoubtedly it becomes us to be humble, distrusting ourselves, and ever ready to accept the corrections of others. I believe, however, that so far as we have spoken, such is the general meaning of these three chapters. From this point you will observe a striking change. It is not only said “After these things,” as marking a break, but also a new phrase occurs. “The word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision.” We had nothing at all like this before. “Jehovah called,” “Jehovah appeared,” “Jehovah said,” but not as here “the word of Jehovah.”

It is a new beginning. And that this is the case may be made still more manifest when we bear in mind what the character of this recommencement is “Fear not, Abram:

I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Adonai-Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold to me thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And behold the word of Jehovah."13 Observe it here again. Clearly therefore it is a characteristic that cannot be neglected without loss. "The word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Jehovah." Is not this a fresh commencement? Is it not the evident and known scripture which the New Testament uses to great effect, and refers to repeatedly as the great note and standing witness of the justification of Abram? If we do not go back again with the type, but take it as following the scene of his worship and pilgrimage, and indeed the millennial shadow, it has no force, or would mislead. What! man justified after being not called out only, but a worshipper entering into such wonders as Abram had done! Take it as a recommencement, and all is plain. Justification is certainly not after the Lord had been leading on the soul in the profound way in which Abram had been taught. I grant you the order of facts is as we read; but what we are concerned with now is not the bare history, but the form in which God has presented His mind to us in His word. He has so ordered the circumstances of Abram's history, and presented them with the stamp of eternal truth on them, not only as an account of Abram, but looking on to the times of

redemption, in order to form our souls according to His own mind.

I consider therefore that, as the former series gave us the public life of Abram, so this is rather that which belongs to him individually considered, and the dealings of God with him in what may be called a private rather than a public way. Hence therefore we shall find that there is this further series, which going on from Genesis 15 closes with Genesis 21, where again it is observable that there follows a similar introduction to a new series after that. For the beginning of Genesis 22 runs thus: "And after these things." Is it not plain then that the clause, "After these things," introduces us to a new place? I am not aware that the same phrase occurs anywhere between. Consequently there is an evident design of God regarding it. We shall now look at the current of this new section, and see what is brought before us in these chapters.

First of all there is founded on the wants which Abram expresses to God the desire that it should not be merely an adopted child, but one really of his own blood. It was a desire to which God hearkened, but as it was a feeling which emanated from no higher source than Abram, so it had a contracted character stamped on it. It is always better to be dependent on the Lord for everything. It is not a question of merely avoiding the painful way in which Lot exercised his choice, but Abram himself is not at the height of communion in this chapter whatever God's mercy to him; It is better to wait on the Lord than run before Him; and we are never the worse that He should take the first step. Our happy place is always confidence in His love. Had the Lord pressed it upon His servant to speak to Him with open heart, it would have

been another matter. Abram however presented his desire, and the Lord meets it graciously. It is very evident that He binds Himself also remarkably. There was given to Abram a kind of seal and formal deed that He would secure the hoped-for heir to him. Who could gather from this that Abram is here found in the brightest mood in which the Spirit of God ever presents him? He is asking, and Jehovah answers, no doubt; he wants a sign whereby he may know that he shall inherit thus: “Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?” This does not seem to rise to that admirable trust in Jehovah which characterized him at other times. This is not presuming to find fault with one where one would gladly learn much; it is ours to search, as far as grace enables us, into that which God has written for our instruction.

Jehovah accordingly directs him to take a heifer and a she-goat and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon; and then “when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon him, and lo an horror of great darkness fell upon him.” It appears to me most evident that the circumstances here detailed were suitable to the condition of Abram; that there were questions, and it may be doubts, connected with that prospect which Jehovah had put before his soul; and that consequently we may safely discover, if it were only by the manner in which the communication was made to him, his state of experience then. Hence too the nature of the communication: “Be sure,” said he, “that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace:

thou shalt be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

This is not all. "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp." The mingled character of all is plain. There is a smoking furnace, the emblem of the trial on the one hand, not without darkness; there is the burning lamp, the sure promise and pledge on God's part, the prophetic and sure intimation therefore of God's deliverance. Nevertheless it is not a bright vision, it is a horror of darkness which is seen in the sleep which had fallen upon him. Sifting and tribulation must come, but salvation in due time. But there is more than this. The very limits of the land are given and the races with which Abram's seed should have to do.

In short we see that the whole scene, clothed in a measure with a Jewish character, has naturally the elements of sacrifice which in various forms were put forward afterwards in the Levitical economy, and that it is also stamped with prophecy which never brings one into the depths of God's nature, but displays fully His judgment of man. Prophecy, admirable as it is, is always short of the fulness of grace and truth which is in Christ. Prophecy has to do with the earth, with the Jew and the nations, with the times and the seasons. So it is here: we have dates and generations; we have the land and its limits; we have Egypt and the Canaanitish races. It is not heaven, nor the God and Father of our Lord known where He is — very far from it. It is God knowing what He means to do on earth and giving a doubting friend the certainty of it, securing and binding Himself to comfort the faith that wanted extraordinary support, —

nevertheless not without affliction for his seed, not without their serving a strange nation, but Jehovah bringing them out triumphantly in the end. Admirable as the vision is, it neither looks up at the heights of God's glory; nor again does it in any way go down into the depths of His grace.

It is no small confirmation of the condition of Abram at this time, if we read aright what follows in the very next chapter. (Genesis 16) Undoubtedly Sarah was more to blame than Abram: there was haste through manifest want of faith in short; and consequently Hagar was given to her husband, and the fruits of the connection soon appeared. As always, she who was most to blame suffered the most. It was not so much Abram as Sarah who smarted through her folly about her maid. But we have again in this chapter the faithfulness of God even in the case of Hagar, who is told to return to her mistress and humble herself before her. Jehovah here still carries on the prophetic testimony through His angel, and draws out the remarkable prefiguration of the Bedouins, who remain to this day a minor witness, but none the less a true one, of the truth of God's word.

In the next chapter (Genesis 17) we have another and higher scene. "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." Now here it is no longer Hagar, the type, as we know, of the Sinai covenant; it is not a prediction that man's way only brings the child of flesh into the house, a trouble to all concerned. But here Jehovah, unasked and of His own grace, appears once more to His beloved servant. "I

am," says he, "El-Shaddai: walk before me, and be thou perfect: and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." God, not man, takes the foremost place now. It is not Abram who asks, but God who speaks. Abram accordingly, instead of bringing forward his desires and difficulties, fell on his face — the right place — "and God talked with him." There was greater freedom than he had ever enjoyed before; but it in no way diminished the reverence of his spirit. Never was he more prostrate before God than when He thus opened His heart to him about the seed of promise, and was about to make further communications even as to the world.

Elohim then "talked with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations." It is not now about his seed a stranger in a land not theirs. Now we have the wide extent of the earthly purposes of God beginning to unfold before us, even as far as the whole earth, and Abram was concerned in all. "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." Not a word of this had been breathed before. That he should have a line to succeed him, one that should inherit the land and have it for ever: such was the utmost already vouchsafed. And when the doubting mind sought and would have security from God Himself, God deigned to enter as it were into a bond with him, but along with it gave him to know that many a sorrow and affliction must. precede the hour of His judgment in favour of the chosen seed. But here all is of another order and

measure — beneficence according to the grace and purposes of God. “I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger — all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised.”

Let none suppose that circumcision is necessarily a legal thing. In the connection in which it is put here it is the concomitant of grace — the sign of flesh’s mortification. Undoubtedly it was incorporated into the law when that system was afterwards imposed; but in itself, as our Lord Himself shows, it was not of Moses, but of the fathers; and as being of the fathers — of Abraham — it was, as we see here, an emblem significant of the putting flesh to death. God would have it dealt with as an unclean thing; and certainly this is not law. It may be turned to legalism as anything else; but in this case it is rather in contrast with law. It means flesh judged, which is the true spiritual meaning of that which God then instituted.

The chapter then exhibits grace that gives according to God’s own bountifulness: at the same time flesh is judged before him. Such is the meaning of this remarkable seal. Accordingly we have the promise

brought out when Sarah's name was changed from being "my princess" (Sarai) to be "princess" (Sarah) absolutely. So she was to be called thenceforth. "As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai; but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations: kings of people shall be of her." Then goes out the heart of Abraham even for Ishmael, with the historical notice that circumcision was instituted from that day.

The next chapter (Genesis 18) shows us that grace gives not only communion with Jehovah in what concerns ourselves, but that to His servant is granted to enjoy the communications of His mind even as to what is wholly outside. God had begun to speak with an intimacy such as Abraham had never before known: He would certainly not repent of His love. It is not God who recedes from us — we from Him rather, never He from us. "And Jehovah appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo! three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground." See the character of Abraham: it is very lovely — genuine lowliness, but remarkable dignity. He "said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts. After that, ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said." At this time there seems no reason to suppose that Abraham had any knowledge or

suspicion even who it was. We shall find how soon he does infer it, and has the consciousness of it. But he behaves with perfect propriety. He would not speak out openly; he does not break what we may call the incognito that Jehovah was pleased to assume. He understood it: his eye was single, his body full of light.

Outwardly it was simple patriarchal preparation for passing strangers. Some, you know, not forgetful to entertain strangers, have unawares entertained angels. It was Abraham's honour to entertain Jehovah. In due time he hears the question put to him, which I think is the point where he enters into the spirit of the divine action: "Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son." Could Abraham be ignorant any longer whose voice this was? Nevertheless there is no speaking before the due time. If Jehovah was pleased to appear with two of His servants there, if He put them in the common guise of mankind, certainly it was not for the faithful to break the silence which Jehovah preserved. And this was just a part of the admirable manner in which his heart answered to Jehovah's confidence in him. But Sarah shows her unbelief once more, whilst Jehovah reproving it, spite of Sarah's denial, remains with Abraham. When the men rose up to go towards Sodom, Abraham instinctively accompanies, but Jehovah remains with him, and says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"

As Genesis 17 had furnished Jehovah's communication of what so intimately concerned Abraham and Abraham's line for ever, this chapter reveals to him what concerns the world. Thus we see, although it be not the intimate relationship of the children of God, it is exactly

the way in which the understanding of the future is not only profitable but becomes a means of sustaining and even of deepening communion. Let me call your attention to this. Be not deceived beloved brethren. Entering upon the future in the first instance, and making it pre-eminently our study, never does really deepen our souls in the ways of God, but rather leads them on in lower lines and earthly principles from which it is difficult to escape at another day. Nevertheless it is very evident that God has given it all, and that God means that what He has given should be used and enjoyed by our souls.

What then is the preserving power? Grace; when it is not a question about what is coming, when it is not above all questions arising from ourselves. Such it was in Genesis 15; but now Abraham has been set perfectly free by Jehovah. He is at large as to what pertained to himself and to his seed after him. His heart is clear. Jehovah has abounded beyond his largest thought. There are infinitely greater prospects before Abraham than he had ever dared to ask of God; for He speaks out of His own thoughts, His own counsels, which must necessarily always be above the largest expectations of man; and then it is that the unveiling of the future, instead of dragging us down to the earth, on the contrary becomes a means only of drawing us into the presence of the Lord with longing after His own grace. Such was the case with Abraham. All depends on this, that we should not first yield to the bias of our minds before we enter into the perfect liberty and the enjoyment of our own proper place with Jesus Christ in the presence of our God. After that we can listen, and then all becomes profitable and blessed to us.

Such is the case with Abraham now. It is Jehovah again who takes the first step. It is Jehovah who says, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” What a difference for the man who wanted to know whether he should for certain have the line that God said he should have! Here Jehovah meets him and predicts to him the imminent ruin of the cities of the plain. Jehovah gives light to him here, and everything is made plain. But it is not a doubting heart or an inquisitive mind; it is one who bows down in heartfelt homage, withal confiding in God, who was pleased to confide in him. In truth God was going to act upon the world; He was going to judge this guilty scene; He was going to blot out that sink of iniquity — Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain that was as the garden of Jehovah, but alas! now rose up with pestilential breath against God Himself, so that He must as it were mow down this iniquity, or else the whole world would be polluted by it.

So it is then that God speaks to His servant. He loved to make known His ways. Abraham was now in a condition to enjoy without in any way sinking into earthly-mindedness. Abraham could hear anything that Jehovah would tell him. Then, instead of in any way dragging him down, Jehovah was rather lifting him up into an enjoyment of the secrets of Himself, into confidential intercourse with Him, for indeed he was the friend of God. Abraham profits by all here; and we shall see the moral effect on his spirit soon. “Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him” — Oh, what a word is this! — “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him” — what confidence in him the Lord expresses!

“I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah to do justice and judgment; that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. And Abraham drew near” — such was the effect — “Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city.”

It may not be now the fitting time to say much upon such a scene, but I will make at least this observation, that there is no anxiety about himself, and for that very reason his whole heart can go out, not only towards the God who loved him, and whom he loved, but also for his nephew, righteous Lot, who had played so poor a part, suffered for his folly, and once more had profited little by the discipline, and was about to be humbled yet more, as Abraham could not have anticipated. Not merely did the man of faith go forth to pursue the victorious kings of the earth for the rescue of Lot, but he now dares in the confidence of Jehovah’s goodness to draw near and plead for him whose righteous soul was vexed in Sodom, and loved the Lord spite of his earthly-mindedness and his evil position. And was it not of Jehovah that Abraham interceded? Did He not strengthen His servant’s heart to go on, until he was ashamed? As everywhere, so here, it was man who left off pleading with Jehovah, not Jehovah

who refused to encourage and hear the voice of further intercession.

Here was the effect of prophecy taken into the heart after it was freed by the grace of God, and rendered practically heavenly. Instead of exercising a damaging character by indulging idle curiosity about others, or causing mere occupation with self — the wanting to know what the Lord will give me — we see the believer's heart going out after another. This is as God would have it. It is the spirit of intercession for others which we find to be the result of listening to the Lord, and delighting in the communications of what was still unfulfilled, not because they were about himself, but because they were the Lord's secrets about others (even the world itself) entrusted to him, and drawing out his affections after a divine sort. Is it so with us in our use of the prophetic word? Ought it to be otherwise? May we gather such fruit of our Old Testament study!

In the next chapter (Genesis 19) the blow of judgment is seen to fall. The angels arrive at Sodom, and Lot shows himself a scholar in the same school of courteous grace as Abraham; but the men of the guilty city justify Jehovah in that unexampled dealing when the sun next went forth on the earth. Lot meanwhile was brought out, and his daughters without their unbelieving husbands; but his wife! — "Remember Lot's wife" — his wife remains for ever the most solemn instance on record of one who was personally outside, but in heart attached to the scene of evil.

Yet Lot delivered is nevertheless but half delivered; and here again we learn how the blessed written word sets forth in great facts the moral judgment of God before

the time came to speak with unmistakeable plainness. We had seen sorrowful enough results in the case of Noah, who, drinking of the fruit of the vine to the dishonour of himself, pronounced a curse on a branch of his posterity, though not without a blessing on the rest. It was a curse not causeless but just: nevertheless what a sorrowful thing for a parent's heart to utter! So here with Lot, delivered of angels from the worst of associations, even after his deliverance by Abraham, brought out again, but as it were maimed and wounded, to be yet more dishonoured. It would be painful if it were needful to say a word of that which follows. Yet was it not without moral profit for Israel to remember the source of a perpetual thorn in their side — the shameful origin of the Moabite and the Ammonite, two nations, neighbours and akin, notorious for continual envy and enmity against the people of God. The only God marks all in His wisdom. Sin then as now produced a harvest, large and long-continued, if sovereign grace in some cases forbids that it should be a perpetual harvest of misery to those who indulged in it. "He that soweth to the flesh," no matter who or where or when, "shall of the flesh reap corruption."

Then follows a new scene, where Abraham alas I fails once more. (Gen. 20) There is no power in forms to sustain the rich triumphs of faith. As on the one hand after failure God can bring into depths of grace which never were proved before, so on the other from the most real blessing there is no means of strength or continuance, but only in God Himself. No matter what the joy for one's own soul, or the blessing to others, power in every sense belongs to God, and is only ours in dependence upon Him. And now it was even more

painful than before, because Sarah was the known appointed mother of the heir that was coming. There was no question as to her any more than about Abraham. He had been long the designated father, as she was later the designated mother. In spite of all Abraham, for reasons of his own, is guilty once more of denying the relationship. What is man? Beloved brethren, we know One, who at all cost formed the nearest relationship with us that deserved nothing less, and who will never deny it. May He have our unswerving confidence!

But Abimelech was evidently conscientious, and God took care of him, although the seriousness of the case was not weakened to his mind. God made known in a dream how matters really stood, that he must not touch the man's wife. "He is a prophet and he shall pray for thee" — a most instructive instance of the way in which God holds to His principles. He will even honour Abraham before Abimelech, however he may act in discipline with Abraham. Perhaps Abimelech would be ready to say, "How can Abraham be a prophet, — a man that tells lies in denying his own wife?" Nevertheless, said God, "he is a prophet;" but we may be assured of this, that the Lord in no way restrained the mouth of Abimelech from a severe reproof, when he said to Sarah, "Behold I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved."14 What a veil Abraham had been to his poor wife! He had better buy a veil for her with the thousand pieces of silver. It was a keenly cutting condemnation — a rebuke no doubt addressed to Sarah, but how it must have touched Abraham to the quick! The Bible has

recorded the sin of the father of the faithful for the good of all the children. Where was the faithfulness of Abraham now? God first took care that his faith should not fail. May the sin be a warning to us, and the grace strengthen our faith too!

The next chapter presents the closing scene in this series. The child and heir of promise is given; the child of flesh is dismissed. All now is settled according to God. Whatever inconsistent with His grace had been allowed before must disappear. Hagar the slave must depart, and the child that was not of promise must be gone. Jehovah can no longer tolerate that the child of flesh shall be with Isaac and Sarah in the house of Abraham.

Remarkable to say, while the goodness of God fails not to care for Hagar, Ishmael too in His providence is seen winding up the whole scene. Abimelech comes in, seeking a covenant with the very man whose failure must have surprised and stumbled him not so long before. Abimelech, with Phichol the chief captain of his host, owns God to be with Abraham in all that he did, adjures him to shew favour to his race, and stands now reproved for the wrong of his servants. The Gentile king in short craves the countenance and protection of Abraham, “who planted a grove,” as we are told here, “in Beersheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah the everlasting God.” It is clear therefore that here we behold the heir of the world in figure brought in. It is not a question yet of introducing deeper relations; nevertheless it is the heir not merely of the land of Palestine but of the world that comes before us here. Consequently Jehovah is presented to us in the character not before named of the everlasting God (El-olam). This fitly terminates the series) and brings us

down to another type of the millennial day. It is then that the Gentiles seek the protection of the faithful; it is then that Jehovah will show Himself the God of ages, the guardian and blesser of the true Heir; it is then that pretensions of flesh and law will be for ever put aside, and the promises will have their full course to His glory who gave them. This again concludes, as it would appear, in a way similar to the former section. We are carried forward to the millennial day.

After this a still deeper order of things begins, where the distinct light of God is seen shining, one might almost say, on every step. Here we survey a type before which almost every other even in this precious book may be considered comparatively a little thing. It shadows such love as God Himself can find nothing to surpass, if even to compare with it. It is the chosen figure of His own love, and this not only in the gift but in the death of His Son, who deigned to be for us also the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. A scene at once so simple yet so deep demands few and will not indeed bear many words of ours on what is happily the most familiar of all types to all Christians, as, morally viewed, it is an unequalled call to our hearts. For we must not overlook it as a most real trial of Abraham’s faith, besides being such a precious manifestation of God’s own love. For if Isaac was spared the blow to which Abraham fully devoted him in the confidence of God’s raising him again to make good the line of promise, the type of death as a sacrifice was fully carried out by the substitution of the ram caught in the thicket and slain by the father. Then follows the oath of Jehovah founded on it, of which the apostle Paul makes so striking a use in the Epistle to the Galatians, where he draws the

remarkable contrast between the one seed and the many. With the seed being Christ, where number is not expressed, we have the blessing of the Gentiles; whereas, when we hear of the seed numerous as the stars and the sand, the connection beyond all controversy is with the supremacy of the Jews over their enemies. If we closely examine the passage, it may be readily seen in all its force. “By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore.” Here it is expressly the numerous seed; and what follows? Is there any promise of blessing to the Gentiles here? On the contrary it is a properly Jewish hope — “Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.” Is this the special place of Christ? Is it His relation to us now from among the Gentiles? The very reverse It remains to be verified when He reigns as the Head of Israel, and He will give them power and rule over their enemies. In its day this will be all right But what is it that the apostle quotes, and for what purpose? Not this but the next verse, which is of a wholly different nature: — “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” The force of the apostle’s argument is that, where the scripture referred to says nothing of number, only naming “thy seed” as such, there the blessing of the Gentiles is assured. On the other hand, where He speaks of the seed multiplied according to the most striking images of countless number, Jehovah pledges here the earthly exaltation and the power of the Jew over their enemies — a blessing in contrast with that of the gospel and the argument in Galatians. It is this distinction which the apostle applies

to the subject with such depth of insight. The inference is obvious. The Galatians had no need to become Jews to get blessing. Why then should they be circumcised? What God gives them in the gospel and what they have received by faith is Christ, dead and risen, as was Isaac in the figure. (Compare Heb. 11:17-19.) Of this seed He speaks not as of many but as of one: this seed secures the blessing of the Gentiles as Gentiles. Hence, where God speaks of Abraham's seed apart from numbers (ver. 18), there is the blessing of the Gentiles. This is what we really need; but it is what we have in Christ. By and by there will be the numerous seed spoken of in verse 17. This will be the Jew; and then the chosen nation will possess the gate of their enemies. I can conceive nothing more admirable in itself, or more complete as a refutation of the Judaisers who would fain have compromised the gospel, and sunk the Galatians into mere Gentiles looking up to their Jewish superiors by seeking circumcision after they had a risen Christ. But the truth is that both are divine, the Old Testament fact, and the New Testament comment. And as the fact itself was most striking, so the application by the apostle is no less profound.

In Genesis 23 another instructive event opens on us. It is not the death of Hagar, who sets forth the Sinaitic or legal covenant: we might have expected some such typical matter, and could all understand that. But the marvel is that, after the figure of the son led as a sacrifice to Mount Moriah but raised from it (the death and resurrection of Christ, as the Apostle Paul himself explains it in the Epistle to the Hebrews), we have the death of Sarah, of her who represents the new covenant, not of the law but of grace. And what is the meaning of

that type, and where does it find its answer in the dealings of God when we think of the antitype? It is certain and also plain. In the Acts of the Apostles, not to speak of any other scripture, the true key is placed in our hands. When the Apostle Peter stood before the men of Israel, and bore witness of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the true Isaac, what did he tell them? This — that if they were willing by grace to repent and be converted, God would assuredly bring in those times of refreshing of which He had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. He added that they were the children not only of the prophets but of the covenant which God made with the fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

There we have the required solution For Peter presented after this the readiness of God to bring in the blessedness of the new covenant, if they by grace bowed their stiff neck to the Lord Jesus. But they would not hearken: they rejected the testimony, and finally put to death one of the brightest witnesses. In point of fact, the unbelief was complete to the testimony of the Holy Ghost founded on the death and resurrection of Christ; and, in consequence, that presentation of the covenant to Israel completely disappears. It was the antitype of Sarah’s death — the passing away for the time of all such overtures of the covenant to Israel. Nowhere do we hear of it renewed after that. No doubt Sarah will rise again, and so the new covenant will appear when God works in the latter day in the Jewish people. But meanwhile the presentation of the covenant to Israel, as that which God was willing there and then to bring in,

which was the offer then made by grace, completely passes from view, and a new thing takes its place.

So it is here. Immediately after the death and burial of Sarah a new person comes before us — another object distinct from what we have seen; and what is it? The introduction of a wholly unheard of personage, called to be the bride of Isaac, the figuratively dead and risen son of promise. It is no more a question of covenant dealings. The call of Rebecca was not thought of before — altogether a fresh element in the history Then again we have the type, so familiar to us, of Eliezer, the trusty servant of all that the father had, now the executor of the new purposes of his heart, who goes to fetch the bride home from Mesopotamia. For as no maid of Canaan could be wedded to Abraham's son; so he, Isaac, was not to quit Canaan for Mesopotamia: Eliezer was to bring the bride, if willing, but Isaac must not go there. Nothing is more strongly insisted on than this, and to its typical meaning I must call your attention. The servant proposes a difficulty: Suppose she is not willing to come: Is Isaac to go for her? "And Abraham said unto him, Beware that thou bring not my son thither again." When the church is being called as a bride for Christ, He remains exclusively in heavenly places. He has nothing to do with the world while the church is in process of being gathered from among Jews and Gentiles. He leaves not heaven, nor comes to the world to have associations with the earth, while it is a question of forming the bride, the Lamb's wife. In relation to the call of the church, Christ is exclusively heavenly. It is the very same Isaac who had been under the sentence of death sacrificially. As Isaac is raised again in figure and must on no account go from Canaan to Mesopotamia for

Rebecca, so Christ is to have only heavenly associations, and none with the world, while the church-calling is in progress. Ignorance of this, and, yet more, indifference to it where it seems to be known, must make the Christian worldly, as communion with Christ where He is makes one heavenly-minded. It shows how irretrievably false any position is which necessarily connects us with the world. The only sure way for the Christian to decide any question aright is to ascertain from God's word how it bears upon Christ and His glory. When Christ has His associations with the world, we may have our place there too; if Christ is entirely outside it, as He is manifestly apart from it now in heaven, so should we be. To judge and walk according to Him is what we do well to cultivate.

Never call it worldliness to discharge aright your duty here below. It is worldly-mindedness wherever the world or its things may occupy us as an object, instead of pleasing and doing the will of the Lord here below. It is not what you are doing which is so important as fellowship with His mind; it may be in appearance the most holy work, but if it links Christ and His name with the world, it is only deceiving ourselves and playing so much the more into the hands of the enemy. But, on the other hand, supposing it is connected with the world, there may be the most ordinary act, yet as far as possible from worldliness, even though it were only blacking a shoe. It is hardly needful to say that the power of Christianity may be enjoyed in the heart and ways of a shoe-black just as truly as anywhere else. Anything that is outside Christ will not preserve, and must have the stamp of the world on it; whereas, on the other hand, so great is the efficacy of Christ that if my

heart is set upon Him, and seeking after what is suitable to Him at the right hand of God, we become truly witnesses of Him; and, supposing there is real occupation with Him there, this will assuredly give to what we do a heavenly stamp, and impart the truest and highest dignity, no matter what we may be about.

The details of this chapter of course it is not for me to enter into now. I have said enough to shew the general principle — first, the novelty and unprecedentedness of what concerns Isaac and Rebecca It was not mere continuance of what had been known already, but a new thing following up not only the typical sacrifice on Moriah, but the death of Sarah. It is happy when the truth of Christ illuminates consecutive chapters of the Old Testament. We know alas! what it is to be uncertain and dissatisfied in presence of the written word, which is really simple to the simple. Again, there is the passing away of all covenant dealings. How long we have known confusion ourselves in all this! Sarah is dead and gone for the time. Then the bride is sought and called, and comes; for it is a question of a bride, not a mother. Again, we have Eliezer, the type of the Spirit of God, marked by this — the heart going out towards the Lord both in entire dependence and in simple-hearted praise as he receives the speedy and unequivocal answer of His grace. Eliezer had his mission from Abraham: so is the Spirit sent from the Father on an errand of love in the church. Prayer and worship accordingly become the members of Christ’s body, and should go forth intelligently with the purpose of God, just as Eliezer’s prayer was entirely founded on the object that he who sent him had in view. He asked much and boldly about

the bride, and nothing else swerved him from this as nearest to his heart.

It is all well for men in an evil world to be filled with enterprises for doing good; but here was one who with the utmost simplicity knew he was doing the best, and this we too ought to be doing. The best of all service, serving the Father's glory in the Son who is to have the church as His bride — this is worth living for and dying too — if it be the will of God that we should meanwhile fall asleep, instead of waiting for the coming of the Lord. It is not merely seeking the salvation of sinners, but doing His will with a direct view to Christ and His love, and accordingly not with prayer only, but the character of it naturally marking this. There is more about prayer in this chapter than in any other in Genesis; but besides there is more distinctly than elsewhere the heart turning to Jehovah in worship of Him. These two things ought to characterize the Christian and the church, now that Christ the Son of God is dead and risen, and we enjoy the immense results by faith — prayer and worship, but prayer and worship in unison with the purpose of God in the calling of the bride, the church; not mere isolated action, although that may have its place and be most true for special need. Still the great characteristic trait should be this — that God has let our hearts into His own secret in what He is doing for Christ. He has given us to know where Christ is and what He, who deigns to be the executive here below (the Spirit), is doing for His name in this world. Consequently our hearts may well go forth in prayer and praise in connection with it, turning to our God and Father with the sense of His goodness and faithfulness now as evermore. The New Testament shows us what the church was and should be; and there

is not a chapter in Genesis which sets them forth as a type in anything like so prominent a form as this. Is it casual, or the distinct design of God that here only in these incidents should be the picture of bridal expectancy and confidence in the love of one not yet seen, and of going forth to meet the bridegroom?

Finally we have Genesis 25 closing Abraham's history, with his relation as father to certain tribes of Arabs, who as being of his stock, mingled with the Ishmaelites. These sons, unlike Isaac, received presents and were sent away. Isaac must be left the undisputed heir of all, and abides ever as son in the father's house. The purposes of love centre in him; as the inheritance was his in its widest extent.

But no more tonight. Though perfectly persuaded that.a cursory sketch has its disadvantages, I am equally assured that it is not without advantages of its own; for it is well for us to have a broad and comprehensive view, as it is well also, when we possess this, to fill up the details. But we shall never approach to a clear or a full intelligence of Scripture if we neglect the one or do not seek the other. Grace only by the written word used in faith can give and keep both for our hearts to the praise of the Lord's name.

Gen. 25:19 to end.

Having already shown the position of Isaac, I resume briefly with the remark that he stands before us clearly as the representative of the Son, and this too as dead, risen, and in heaven. All will understand it who remember that we have had His death and resurrection parabolically in Genesis 22; and then, after the passing away of her who was the figure of the new covenant,

come the entirely novel dealings of God in the call of the bride for the Son here carefully and exclusively connected with the type of heaven. The bearing of this on the great mystery of the heavenly Christ and the church, His body and bride, does not need to be further insisted on now.

We have here, before pursuing the history of Isaac to the end, an episode which brings before us the birth of the two sons of Isaac and Rebecca. God had already affirmed the principle of His choice in the son of the free woman Sarah, when the child of the flesh was set aside. But there was this difference. It only in a preparatory way set out the great principle of God's sovereignty. There was a difference in the mother, if not in the father. There was a need, in the wisdom of God, that the sovereignty should be affirmed still more expressly. And so it was now; for Esau was the son of the same father and of the same mother as Jacob, and in fact they were twins. It was therefore impossible to find a closer parity between any than in these two sons of Isaac and Rebecca. Nevertheless, from the first, entirely apart from any grounds such as to determine a preference, God shows that He will be sovereign. He can show mercy to the uttermost, and He does; but He is God, and as such He reserves to Himself His right of choice. Why even a man does so; and God would be inferior to man if He did not. But He claims His choice and makes it, setting it forth in the most distinct manner, which is reasoned on, as we know, in the power of the Spirit of God, in the Epistle to the Romans, and alluded to elsewhere in the Bible. I only refer to it passingly to show how clearly it is brought out in the circumstances.

At the same time there is another thing to be weighed. The after history illustrates the two men and their posterity; for whatever may be said of the failure of Jacob, it is perfectly clear that not Jacob but Esau was profane, despising God and consequently his birthright. This is brought out in the same chapter. But the choice of God was before anything of the sort, and God made it unambiguous. I would only add one other word, that although scripture is abundantly plain that He chose him apart from anything to fix that choice, it is never said nor insinuated in any part of the word of God, that the prophet's solemn expression "Esau have I hated" was applicable from the first. The choice was true, but not the hatred. In fact, so far is it from the truth that we see the plainest facts in opposition to such a thought. In the first book of the Bible the choice of Jacob, and not Esau, is made plain; in the last book of the Bible, the prophecy of Malachi, the hatred of Esau is for the first time clearly affirmed. How admirable the word of God is in this! Let us delight first that God should have His choice; secondly, that God, far from pronouncing His hatred then, waited till there was that which manifestly deserved it — waited, as we see, to the very last. To confound two things so distinguished, to mix up the choice at the beginning with the hatred at the end, seems nothing but the narrow folly of man's mind. The truth is that all the good is on God's part, all the evil on man's. He is sovereign; but every condemned soul will himself own the absolute justice of it.

In Genesis 26, which follows, Isaac's history is resumed. Let us bear in mind that it is the account of the risen Son. Hence mark the difference when Jehovah appears to Isaac. I call your attention to it as an interesting fact,

as well as an instance of the profoundly typical character of the Scriptures. He appears as Almighty God (El-Shaddai) to Abraham: so He is also revealed as the Almighty to Jacob; but I am not aware that He is ever represented as formally proclaiming Himself in this way to Isaac. The reason is manifest. While surely included in fact like his father and son in such a revelation of El-Shaddai, Isaac has an altogether peculiar place in the record, not connected in the same way with the dispensations of God as either Abraham on the one hand, or Jacob on the other. Here we have God either in His own abstract majesty as Elohim, or in special relationship as Jehovah — the two forms in which God is spoken of. These are used, but not "the Almighty." Isaac indeed speaks of Him as the Almighty when he blesses Jacob; but when God appears, Scripture describes Him simply as Elohim or as Jehovah. The reason is clear: we are upon the ground where God meant us to appreciate the very peculiar dealings with him who sets forth the Bridegroom of the church. Consequently what was merely of an earthly, passing, or dispensational nature is not brought forward.

Again, when God does appear to Isaac, He says, "Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of." Isaac is always a dweller in the heavenly land. How admirably this suits the position of Christ as the risen Bridegroom will be too plain to call for further proof. "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven." Not a word about the sand of the sea. He is as ever exclusively connected with

what is heavenly as far as the figure goes. In the case of Abraham appears the double figure: the children were to be as the stars of the sky, but also as the sands of the sea. Isaac has the peculiar place. Abraham takes in both; as we know, he is connected with that which is heavenly, but also with what is earthly. For Isaac we find the heavenly places, a relationship past resurrection as far as this could be set forth in type. But it was only the shadow, not the very image; and so alas! we find that he who was but the type denies his relationship, which Christ never does. Isaac failed like Abraham before. Unswerving fidelity is true of One only.

At the same time we have the never-failing faithfulness of God. Immediately afterwards he is blessed and blessed a hundred-fold. What is not the goodness of God? And Abimelech seeks his favour too; but Isaac remains always in the emblematic heavenly land, the type of Christ's present position.

The next chapter (Genesis 27) lets us into the sight of circumstances which searched the heart of all concerned. We see the nature which left room for the mingled character which so evidently belonged to Jacob. He was a believer; but a believer in whom flesh was little judged, and not in him only, but in Rebecca also Between them there is much to pain; and although Isaac might not be without feebleness and fault, there was deceit in both the mother and the son. As to Esau, there was nothing of God, and consequently no ground of complaint on that score. At the same time there was positive unrighteousness, of which God never makes light in any soul. Hence we find that though the blessing was wrested fraudulently from Isaac, he is astonished to find where he had been drifting through yielding to

nature; for indeed flesh wrought in Isaac, but for the time it ruled, I may say, in Rebecca and in Jacob. Shocked at himself, but restored in soul, he finds himself through his affections in danger of fighting against the purpose of God. Spite of all the faults of Rebecca and of Jacob, they at least did hold fast the word of God. On the whole it is a humiliating spectacle: God alone shines throughout it all as ever. Isaac therefore, awakened to feel whence he was fallen, affirms the certainty of the purpose of God, and pronounces in the most emphatic terms that, spite of the manner in which Jacob had possessed himself of his blessing, he shall be blessed of God.

In Genesis 28 we have Jacob called by Isaac, and sent to Padan-Aram for a wife, with El-Shaddai's blessing on him. Now the governmental dealings of God begin to appear, and Jacob is the standing type of the people of God not walking in communion with God like Abraham, and consequently the first type of a pilgrim and of a worshipper too; not as the son, risen from the dead and in the heavenly land, but an outcast; forced to be, if a pilgrim, a pilgrim against his will in the government of God, and consequently the most apt possible type of Israel, for unfaithfulness expelled from their own land, passing under corrective discipline, but blessed at last with rest and joy here below. This is what Jacob represents — none more suitable to be such a type, as we shall find by the very name which God gives him. So "Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy

mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee."

Jacob accordingly goes out on his lonely way, and went to Padan-aram, and there it is that he dreams; and he beheld standing above the ladder Jehovah, who proclaims Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers. "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth." Mark again the consistency of the word of God. Not a word here about the stars of the sky. Abraham had both; Isaac had the heavenly part alone, and Jacob the earthly alone. And He says, "Behold I am with thee, I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob awakes; but, as is always the case when a person is simply under the government of God without being founded in His grace, there is alarm. The presence of God is more or less an object of dread to the soul, as indeed he expressed it. "He was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Many of us may be astonished to think of such a conjunction, that the house of God should be associated with terror. But so it must always be where the heart is not established in grace; and Jacob's heart was far from it. He was the object of grace, but in no way established in grace. Nevertheless there is no doubt of God's grace towards him, little as he might as yet appreciate its fulness. Jacob then rises up early, and takes the stone that be had put for his pillow, and sets it up, calling the name of the place Bethel, and vowing a vow; for all here

is of a Jewish savour: — “If God15 will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on” — his demands were by no means large, legalism is of necessity contracted — “so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall Jehovah be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” He was in no way a man delivered from self or from the earth. It is as nearly as possible the picture of a man under law. How appropriate, therefore, for the type of the Jew driven out through his own fault, but under the mighty hand of God for government, but for good in His mercy at the end! This is precisely what Jacob himself has to prove, as we may see.

Thus he goes on his journey; and among the children of the east ensues a characteristic scene, which need not be entered into in a detailed manner — the providential introduction to his experiences with Laban and his family. (Genesis 29)

Now experiences are admirable in their own way as a school for the heart in the soul’s finding its way to God; but experiences completely melt away in the presence of God. This and the grace known there in Him who died and rose again alone can give fully either the end of self or communion with God. Experiences may be needed and wholesome; but they are chiefly wholesome as a part of the road while on our way to Him. Before what God is to us in Christ they disappear — I do not mean the results, but the processes. So we shall find it was with Jacob. He is a man evidently cared for by God. He shows us much that was exceeding sweet and lovely. No doubt he had often to suffer from Laban’s deceit; but

was there not a memorial here of the deceit in which he had acted himself? He is deceived about his wife, deceived about his wages, deceived about everything; but how had he dealt with his father, not to speak of his brother? Deceit must meet with deceit under the retributive hands of God. Wonder not overmuch at the tale of.Jacob; but bless with all your heart the God who shows Himself caring for His servant, and, after he had suffered awhile, giving him although slowly yet surely to prosper. At his setting out he was by no means a young man, being somewhere about eighty years of age when he reached Laban. There he receives, not willingly, two wives instead of one. Leah he did not want, Rachel he did. But in his chequered course, as we know, their maids were given as concubines, with many a child and many a sorrow.16 And spite of Laban abundance was his in herds and flocks. (Gen. 30)

At length, when Laban's sons murmur and their father's countenance was not toward Jacob as before, Jehovah bids him return to the land of his fathers. (Genesis 31:3) His mind is at once made up. He gives a touching explanation to Rachel and Leah, and sets out secretly; for there was no such confidence in God with a pure conscience as divested himself of fear. There was the unseen hand of God; but the power and the honour of God could not be righteously found in such a course. Grace would give these another day: they could not rightly be as yet. He steals away therefore timidly, pursued as if he were a thief by his father-in-law, whom however God takes gravely in hand, coming to him in a dream by night. The Syrian (Laban) is warned to beware what he says or does to Jacob, and even obliged to confess it himself. While Jacob lays his remonstrance

before him, Laban after all cannot but seek his aid, and enters into a special covenant with the very man he had overtaken in his flight.

After this we find the angels of God meeting Jacob. (Genesis 32) “And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host.” They were the witnesses of the full providential care of God; but no such intervention can ever set the heats or conscience right with God. This was proved immediately afterwards. The messengers whom Jacob sent to propitiate Esau returned, saying, that the dreaded chief of Seir was coming to meet him with four hundred men. God’s host then gave no comfort to Jacob against the host of Esau. He is alarmed more than ever. He sets to work in his own way. He makes his plan-and then he makes his prayer; but after all he is not at ease. He devised with considerable skill; feeble was his faith, and where even generous self-sacrificing love for the family? All bears the stamp of anxiety as well as address, if not craft. This was his natural character; for though eminently a man of God, still it is not God who is prominent to his eyes, and leant on, but his own human resources. Ill at ease, he sends over — I am sorry to say — himself last of all! That which he valued most came latest. Jacob was not among the first! His flocks, herds and camels set first, wives and children next, Jacob last. The various bands in order were meant to serve as a breakwater between the offended brother Esau and trembling Jacob. But at length, when all were taken or sent over the ford Jabbok, comes another whom Jacob did not expect when left alone. A man struggled with him that night till break of day.

But it is well to remark, though it has been often noticed, that it is not set forth to the honour of Jacob

that he wrestled with the man, for it was rather the man, or God Himself, who wrestled with him. There was still not a little in him with which God had a controversy for Jacob's good, not without his humiliation. In short God was dealing with and putting down His servant's dependence on his own strength, devices, and resources in any and every way. Hence, as the symbol of this, what was touched and shrank was the known sign of man's strength. The sinew of: the thigh was caused to wither away. But the very hand which touched the seat of natural strength imparted a strength from above; and Jacob on this occasion has a new name given to him. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." He asked the name of God, but this could not, consistently with His character, be revealed yet. God keeps His name in secret now. Jacob struggles all night that he might be blessed. It was no question of peaceful fellowship, still less of earnest intercession for others. It was indeed most significant of divine mercy; but of God's mercy in the dark, where there could not yet be communion. Thus nothing could more truly answer to the state of Jacob. He was no doubt strengthened of God, but it was compassionate mercy strengthening him to profit by a needful and permanent putting down of all his own strength — love that must wither it up, but would nevertheless sustain himself.

In the next chapter (Genesis 33) the meeting takes place. Esau receives him with every appearance of generous affection, refusing but at length receiving his gifts. At the same time Jacob proves that his confidence was far from being restored. He is uneasy at the presence of Esau: his conscience was not good. Esau

proffers his protection. There was nothing farther from the desire of Jacob. Is it too much to say that the excuse was not thoroughly truthful? Can one believe that Jacob meant to visit him at mount Seir? Certain it is that, directly Esau's back is turned, he goes another way. "He journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth And Jacob came to Shalem,17 a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent.... And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel." Thus, it seems to me evident, that although there was unquestionably progress in Jacob's soul, he was far from being brought to that which we find in Abraham from the very beginning. He is still wandering — still under corrective government. All that which hindered the enjoyment of grace was not yet removed. There was earthliness of mind enough to quit the pilgrim's tent and build a house, as well as to buy a piece of ground. What did he want it for? He erected no doubt an altar. There is progress unquestionably; but he does not in this go beyond the thought of God as connected with himself. It was in no way the homage of one who regarded God according to His own being and majesty. Now there never can be the spirit of worship till we delight in God for what He is Himself, not merely for what He has been to you or me. I grant you that it is all right to feel what He has done for us; but it is rather the preparation for worship, or at most worship in its most elementary form. It is more thanksgiving than the proper adoration of God, and in fact a circumscribing of God to our own circumstances. I admit fully that the grace of God does minister to our wants; but then it is to

raise us above them and the sense of them, in order that we may freely and fully enjoy what God is, and not merely feel what He has done for us. Jacob had not reached that yet; for him God the God of Israel is all he can say. Shechem is not Bethel.

This conclusion, as to the then state of Jacob, seems to be confirmed by the chapter which follows The settling down in the city ere long became a sorrowful story for Jacob, who proved it in one that was near and dear to him. It was the occasion of his daughter Dinah's shame, as well as of her brother's cruel and deceitful vengeance, that brought trouble on Jacob, and caused him to stink among the inhabitants of the land, as Jacob so sorely confessed. (Gen. 34)

Once more God said to Jacob, Arise; but now it is to "go to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Here he is not met by a host of angels, nor does the mysterious stranger wrestle in the darkness of the night, crippling him in the might of nature, and making the weak to be strong. It is a more open call in Genesis 35.

Now it is singular to hear, that Jacob says to his household and all that are with him, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." "Strange gods "? Yes, there they were, and he knew it all along, but he never before felt the seriousness of it till summoned to go to Bethel. His conscience is now awake to what previously made no impression on his mind. We easily forget what our bears does not judge as it is before God; but as He knows how to rouse the conscience adequately, so it is a

sorrowful thing on the other hand when a saint forgets what ought to be the permanent object of his soul, still more solemn when his conscience is not sensitive to that which utterly sullies the glory of God. Manifestly it was the case with Jacob; but now the presence of God, not providential power, not disciplinary dealings with him, but the call to Bethel, brings light into his soul, and the false gods must be put away. Jacob will have the household in unison with an altar at Bethel. “Be clean, and change your garments, and go to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.” What in his ways can be conceived more blessed than the patient faithfulness of God? Now at length Jacob is alive to his responsibility toward God. “And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed.”

But was it a flight now? “And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.” All was changed from this point. “So Jacob came to Luz which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el (the God of Bethel).” There Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died and was buried. There God appeared again; and while He repeats the name of Israel instead of Jacob, He reveals Himself as God Almighty, El-Shaddai. “And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and He called his name Israel,”18 — blotting out in one sense all the history from the day when that name was first conferred on

him. It is a sorrowful reflection for the heart when time past is, so to speak, time lost. It is not that God cannot turn it to purpose when grace is at work, but there must be merited self-reproach as we may too well know.

Not only then does Jacob receive afresh his new name, but God shrouds His name no longer in secrecy. Now he has not to ask, “What is thy name?” any more than He who wrestled once had to ask him wherefore he asked it. He was not then in the condition to profit by that name; nor was it consistent with God’s own honour that He should make it known. Now God can reveal Himself to His servant, saying, “I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.” And not unlike what was said of Abraham, so on an occasion of singular nearness it is said of Jacob, — great honour for one after such an experience, — that “God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.” If it was a glorious moment in Abraham’s history, it was especially gracious in God’s ways with Jacob. “And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone, and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon, and called the name of the place where God spake with him Beth-el.” Afterwards comes the passing away of Rachel at a moment of deep interest already noticed, — the birth of her second son, and her burial near Bethlehem. And on the journey there the aged father has a fresh sorrow and shame in the foul sin of his first-born.

Then follows the genealogy of Jacob’s sons; and the long-delayed last sight of Isaac at Hebron, where he dies

at the age of 180 years, and was buried by his sons Esau and Jacob.

But there is another genealogy (Gen. 36), and strikingly introduced in this place. The Edomite interrupts the course of the line of God's dealings. We discern at once what remarkable maturity there was here. It is always so — first that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. Even then we find a rapid development of power in the family of Esau. They were all great people, to be sure — duke this and duke that, to the end of the chapter — even kings, as we are told, reigned before there were any such in Israel. I have no doubt that this is given us as an important element to mark how rapidly what is not of God shoots up. Growth according to God is slower, but then it is more permanent.

Genesis 37 introduces to us a new and altogether different range of events — the very attractive account of Joseph. It is not now a fugitive from the land under the righteous hand of God, but a sufferer who is going to be exalted in due time. These are the two main outlines of Joseph's history — a more than usually meet type of Christ, in that he shone above all his fellows for unsullied integrity of heart under-the several trials. There is no patriarch on whom the Spirit of God dwells with greater delight; and among those who preceded Christ our Lord it may be questioned where one can find such a sufferer. And his suffering too was not merely outside: he suffered quite as keenly from his brethren. Wherever he lived, in Palestine or in Egypt, he was a sufferer, and this in astonishing grace, never higher morally than when lying under the basest reproach. He was one who had true understanding; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Such was

Joseph's great distinctive trait. Thus we find it brings him, first of all, into collision with his father's house. Jacob indeed felt very differently. It was impossible for one that valued holiness to bring a good report of his brethren. But his father loved him, and when his brethren saw their father's estimate of him, they could so much the less endure Joseph. "They hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." The wisdom that follows fidelity — and I believe it is always so as a rule — is furnished and exercised in the communications of God; for if He forms a heart for what is of Himself, He gives the supply of what it craves. He ministers to Joseph dreams that shew the gracious purposes that were before Himself. For first the sheaves pay obeisance, and he with the utmost simplicity of heart tells all to his brethren; for he never thought of himself, and therefore could speak with candour. But they with instinctive dislike and jealousy of what gave glory to their brother did not fail to make the detested application of his dreams. Even the father finds it trying, much as he loved him; for Joseph has another dream, in which the sun and moon, as well as eleven stars, made obeisance to him; and Jacob felt but observed the saying.

The story proceeds: Joseph is sent to see the peace of his brethren, follows them to Dothan, and there the last errand of love brings out their deepest hatred. They determine to get rid of him. They will have this dreamer no more. Reuben sets himself against their murderous intention; but the result is that at Judah's proposal he is cast into the pit, given up for death, yet taken out of it and sold to the Midianites — a wonderful type of a greater than Joseph. It was bad to sell him for twenty

pieces of silver, but this was not the full extent of the wrong; for the same cruel hearts which thus disposed of a holy and loving brother did not scruple to inflict the deadliest wound on their aged father. Sin against the brother, and sin against the father — such is the sorrowful conclusion of this chapter of Joseph's story.

Here again, we have another interruption; but never allow for a moment that anything is not perfect in the word of God. It is right that we should see what the leader in this wickedness was; it is well that we should know what the character and conduct of Judah was, whom we afterwards see the object of wondrous counsels on God's part. The answer lies in the shameful account of Judah, his sons, and his daughter-in-law, and himself. (Gen. 38) Yet of that very line was He born, with her name specified too, which points to the most painfully humiliating tale that we find perhaps anywhere in the book of Genesis. But what humiliation was He not willing to undergo who had love as well as glory incomparably greater than Joseph's!

In Genesis 39 Joseph is seen in the land of Egypt, for there the Midianites sold him. He is in slavery, first of all in the house of Potiphar, captain of the guard; but "Jehovah was with Joseph; and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian." Here again he comes into suffering; here again most unworthily is he misrepresented and maligned, and hastily cast into the dungeon. But Jehovah was with Joseph in the prison, just as much as in Potiphar's house. In verse 2, it is written, He was with Joseph; in verse 21, He was with Joseph, "and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. The keeper of the prison looked not

to anything that was under his hand." It mattered little where he was, since Jehovah was with him. What a difference it makes when God is with us — God too in His special known relationship, which is implied in the use of "Jehovah" here as everywhere. "He looked not to anything that was under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and that which he did Jehovah made it to prosper."

But God works for Joseph, and in the prison puts him in contact with the chief butler and the chief baker of the king of Egypt. (Gen. 40) They too have their dreams to tell. Joseph willingly listens, and interprets according to the wisdom of God that was given him. His interpretation was soon verified. With the remarkable prudence which marks his character, he had begged not to be forgotten. But "his soul came into iron" a little longer. The word of Jehovah tried him. God would work in His own way. If the chief butler forgot Joseph in his prosperity, God did not.

Pharaoh now had a dream; but there was none to interpret. (Gen. 41) It was two years after — a long while to wait, especially in a dungeon; but the chief butler, remembering his faults, and confessing them, tells his master of the young Hebrew in the prison, servant to the captain of the guard, who had interpreted so truly.

"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon," and presented him duly before the king. His interpretation carried its own light and evidence along with it; and Pharaoh recognized the wisdom of God not only in this but also in the counsel that Joseph gave. And what wiser man than Joseph could

take in hand the critical case of Egypt, to husband its resources during the seven years of plenty, and to administer the stores during the seven years of famine that would surely follow? So the king felt at once, and his servants too in spite of the usual jealousy of a court. Joseph was the man to carry out what he had seen beforehand from God; and Joseph accordingly becomes ruler next to Pharaoh over all the land of Egypt.

“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph

called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands."

Then comes another wonderful working of God. The sheaves had not yet stood and bowed; the sun, moon, and stars had not paid obeisance yet; but all was to follow not long after. The famine pressed upon the land where Jacob sojourned, while Joseph was in Egypt with a new family, children of the bride that was given him by the king, evidently corresponding with the place of Christ cast out by Israel, sold by the Gentiles, but exalted in a new place and glory altogether, where He too can say during His rejection and separation from Israel, "Behold I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me." Nothing can be more transparent than the application of the type.

But there is more in the type than that we have just seen. The brethren that remained with Israel have yet to be accounted for; and the pressure of the famine is upon

them. It is so with Israel now, — a famine indeed, and in the deepest sense. But. ten of the brethren come down to buy corn in Egypt; and there it is that God works marvellously by Joseph. He recognizes his brethren. His heart is towards them when they are altogether ignorant who he was that enjoyed the glory of Egypt. The result is that Joseph puts in execution a most solemn searching of the heart and conscience of his brethren. It is exactly what the Lord from a better glory will do ere long with His Jewish brethren. He is now outside in a new position quite unlooked for by them: they know Him not. But He too will cause the pinch of famine to press upon them. He too will work in their hearts in consequence, that He may be made righteously known to them in due time. (Gen. 42)

We find, accordingly, that first of all one of the brethren is taken, Simeon; and the charge is given that, above all, Benjamin should be brought down. There can be no restoration, no reconciliation, relief it is true, but no deliverance for Israel till Joseph and Benjamin are united. He that was separated from his brethren, but now in glory, must have the son of his father's right hand. It is Christ rejected but exalted on high, and taking the character also of the man of power for dealing with the earth. Such is the meaning of the combined types of Jacob's sons, Joseph and Benjamin Christ has nothing to do with the latter yet; He admirably answers to the type of Joseph, but not yet of Benjamin. As long as He is simply filling up the type of Joseph, there is no knowledge of Himself on the part of his brethren. Hence, therefore, this became the great question how to bring down Benjamin — how to put him into connection with Joseph. But the truth is, there was

another moral necessity which must be met — how to get their hearts and their consciences set right all round. This part of the beautiful tale is typical of the dealings of the Lord Jesus, long severed and exalted in another sphere, — first with the remnant, and then with the whole house of Israel. There are various portions. We have Reuben and Simeon; and then others come forward, — Judah more particularly at the close, and Benjamin.

The famine still pressing (Genesis 43), Jacob sorely against his will is obliged to part with Benjamin; and here it is that we find affections altogether unheard of before in the brethren of Joseph. We might have thought them incapable of anything that was good; and it is very evident that their hearts were now strewn to be under a most mighty power which forced them anew, as far as, of course, the type was concerned. More particularly we see how the very ones who had so shamefully failed are now distinctly brought into communion with God's mind about their ways. Reuben is quick to feel, recalls the truth as far as he knew it about Joseph, and shows right feelings towards his father. Yet we know what he had been. Judah is even more prominent, and clearly knew yet deeper searchings of the heart, and particularly too in the way of right affections about both their father and their brother. These, as is plain, were just the points in which they had broken down before. On these they must be divinely corrected now; and so they were.

The issue of all is this, — that at last Judah and his brethren return to Joseph's house. (Genesis 44) Judah speaks. Here indeed we have a most earnest pleading, and full of touching affection. "O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and

let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?" There we have evidently a heart that has been brought right, exactly where the sin lay. "We said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man." Ah, there was no lacerating of his heart now! "And a child of his old age, a little one." How little they thought of that once! "And his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him." Do we not feel how far the hearts of all his brethren were from hating Joseph now because of Jacob's love to him! "And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down. If our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons, and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since; and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us, seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life, it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave; for thy servant

became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." The moral restoration was complete.

In the following chapter follows the unveiling of the typical stranger, the glorified man, to his brethren, who up to this were wholly ignorant of him. "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me; and there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard; and Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father." (Gen. 45:1-9) And so they do. Benjamin then

is embraced by Joseph; and now there is no let to the accomplishment of the purpose of God for the restoration of Israel — for this complete blessing where the reality comes under Christ and the new covenant.

Jacob comes down at length, and on his way God speaks to Israel “in the visions of the night; and said, Jacob, Jacob; and he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.” (Gen. 46:2-4)

Then after the genealogies of the chapter,19 we have the meeting between Jacob and Joseph. Not this only; for some of Joseph’s brethren are presented to Pharaoh; and Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. (Genesis 47) It was a fine sight spiritually (the more so, because unconsciously, without a definite thought, I presume, on his own part) that “the less is blessed of the greater.” But so it is. A poor pilgrim blesses the monarch of the mightiest realm of that day; but the greatest of earth is little in comparison with the blessed of God. Jacob now is not merely blessed, but a blesser. He knows God well enough to be assured that nothing Pharaoh teas could really enrich him, and that there is very much which God could give, on which Jacob could count from God even for Pharaoh.

This table enumerates 32 of Leah, 16 of Zilpah, 11 of Rachel, 7 of Bilhah=66. But the head also goes with his house; and so with the larger list of Leah’s children we see Jacob counted (verse 8), which is confirmed by the

fact of 33 attributed to Leah, whereas no more than 32 literally are named, reckoning Dinah, and excluding Er and Onan who died in Canaan as we are expressly told. Objectors have failed to take into account the peculiarity in the mention of Hezron and Hamul in verse 12. It is merely said (and said only in their case) that the sons of Pharez "were" Hezron and Hamul, not that they were born in Canaan, where those had died for whom they were substitutes; next, that the Hebrew of verse 26 does not go so far as to say with the Authorised Version, "came with Jacob into Egypt," but of, i.e. belonging to, Jacob. It should be borne in mind that there is no reason, but rather the contrary from scriptural usage for construing "at that time," of an isolated point of time, but rather of a general period, consisting as here of a number of events, the last and not the first of which might synchronize with the event recorded just before. It seems clear that Stephen (Acts 7:14) cites the LXX. where 76 are given, as the Greek version (Gen. 46:20) adds five sons and grandsons of Manasseh and Ephraim. Is it not monstrous for a man professing Christianity and ostensibly in the position of bishop, to neglect elements so necessary to a judgment of the question, and to pronounce the Biblical account "certainly incredible," mainly on the assumption that Pharez's sons were born in Canaan, which is nowhere said but rather room left for the inference that it was not so in the exceptional form of Gen. 46:12? Yet after citing this verse we are told, "It appears to me certain (!) that the writer here means to say that Hezron and Hamul were born in the land of Canaan." Is scepticism only certain that its own dreams are true, and that scripture is false? There was a natural and weighty motive for selecting two grandsons of Judah, though no other of Jacob's great- grandsons

are mentioned in the list. For they only were substitutional, as the very verse in which they occur implies. And it was of the deeper interest too, as one of them (Hezron) stands in the direct line of the Messiah, which was, as it appears to me, one chief reason for introducing the details of Judah's history and its shame in Gen 38.. It is vain to quote Num. 3:17 to set aside the peculiar force of the allusion to the sons of Pharez in Gen. 46:12, with which there is no real analogy.

In Genesis 48 tidings of Jacob's sickness brings Joseph and his two sons to the bed of the patriarch. The closing scene of Jacob approaches, and I scarcely know a more affecting thing in the Bible. It is a thorough moral restoration. Not merely is there that which typifies it for Israel by and by, but Jacob's own soul is as it never was before. There is no such bright moment in his past life as in the circumstances of his death-bed. I grant that so it ought to be in a believer; and that it is really so in fact where the soul rests simply on the Lord. But whatever we may see in some instances and fear in others, in Jacob's case the light of God's presence was evident. It is striking that here was the only occasion on which the brightness of Joseph's vision was not so apparent. All flesh is grass. The believer is exposed to any evil when he ceases to be dependent, or yields to his own thoughts which are not of faith. Jesus is the only "Faithful Witness." Failure is found in the most blessed servant of God. So fact, so scripture teaches. Joseph, ignorant of the purpose of God about his sons, allows his natural desires to govern him, and arranges the elder before the right hand of his dying father, the younger before his left. So Joseph would have had it; but not so Jacob. His eyes were dim with age, but he was in this clearer-

sighted than Joseph after all. There never was a man who saw more brightly than Joseph; but Jacob, dying, sees the future with steadier and fuller gaze than the most famous interpreter of dreams and visions since the world began.

And what thoughts and feelings must have rushed through the old man's heart as he looked back on his own early days! Did he fail to discern then how easily God could have crossed the hands of his father Isaac against his own will? Certainly God would have infallibly maintained His own truth; and as He had promised the better blessing to Jacob, not to Esau, so, spite of Esau and the fruits of his success in hunting, he would have proved that it was not to him that willed like Isaac, nor to him that ran like Esau. All turns on God, who shows mercy and keeps His word.

On this occasion, then, Jacob pronounces the blessing — the superior blessing — on the younger of the two boys; and this too in terms which one may safely say, were equal to so extraordinary a conjuncture, — in terms which none but the Spirit of God could have enabled any mouth to utter.

In Genesis 49 we find the general prophetic blessing of Jacob's sons. Here one may convey the scope without ceasing to be brief. As the blessings allude to the history of the twelve heads of the nation, so naturally we have the future that awaits the tribes of Israel. But as this is a matter of tolerably wide-spread knowledge amongst Christians, there is no need for much to be said about it.

Reuben is the starting-point, and alas! it is, like man always, corruption. It was the first mark of evil in the creature. The second is no better, — rather worse it may

be in some respects, — violence. Simeon and Levi were as remarkable for the latter, as Reuben for the former — a sorrowful vision for Jacob's heart — to feel that this not only had been but was going to be; for undoubtedly he knew, as he says, that what he then uttered would sweep onward and befall the people "in the last days." This did not hinder his beginning with the history of Israel from his own days. Corruption and violence, as they had been the two fatal characteristics of his three eldest sons, so would stamp the people in their early history. Israel under law broke the law, and was ever leaving Jehovah for Baalim; yet the sons would be no better, rather worse, than the father; but the grace of God would interfere for the generations to come as it had for their father Jacob, and the last day would be bright for them as in truth for him.

Then Judah comes before us. It might be thought, that surely there will be full blessing now. ''Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.20 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon."

But, first, the ruling position of Judah was not till but after he came to Shiloh. That any one, therefore, during the kings would falsify the events in a pretended

prophecy put into dying Jacob's lips is too much for the credulity of any one but a rationalist. Secondly, one who speaks of others so scornfully as this writer ought not to have exposed himself to the charge of such ignorance as confounding "the peoples" or nations with the people or tribes of Israel. I believe, therefore, with the amplest authority in Hebrew, that as the language admits of our taking Shiloh as the subject, not object, so the sense in the context demands that we render it "until Shiloh (i.e. Peace, or the Man of Peace' the Messiah) come."

Yes, Jacob speaks of Shiloh. But Shiloh was presented to the responsibility of the Jew first; and consequently all seemed to break down, and in one sense all really did. "To him shall the gathering of the peoples be;" and so certainly it will be, but not yet. Shiloh came; but Israel were not ready, and refused Him. Consequently the gathering (or the obedience) of the peoples, however sure, is yet in the future. The counsel of God seemed to be abortive, but was really established in the blood of the cross, which unbelief deems its ruin. It is postponed, not lost.

Zebulun gives us the next picture of the history of Israel. Now that they have had Shiloh presented but have refused Him, the Jews find their comforts in intercourse with the Gentiles. This is what they do now — seeking to make themselves happy, when, if they weigh their own prophets, they must suspect fatal error somewhere in their history. They have lost their Messiah, and they court the world. "Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships, and his border shall be unto Zidon."

The consequence is that the Jews sink under the burden, falling completely under the influence of the nations. This is shown by Issachar — “a strong ass crouching down between two burdens.”

Then we come to the crisis of sorrows for the Jew. In Dan we hear of that which is far more dreadful than burdens inflicted by the Gentiles, and their own subjection, instead of cleaving to their proper and distinctive hopes. In the case of Dan there is set forth the power of Satan (ver. 17). “Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.” We see here the enemy in the serpent that bites, and the consequent disaster to the horseman. It is the moment of total ruin among the Jews, but exactly the point of change for blessing. It is then accordingly we hear the cry coming forth, — “I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah.” It is the sudden change from the energy of Satan to the heart looking up and out to Jehovah Himself.

From that point all is changed. “Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last.” Now we have victory on the side of Israel.

This is not all. There is abundance too. “Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.”

Again, there will be liberty unknown under law, — impossible when merely dealt with under the governing hand of God because of their faults. “Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.” What a difference from him who was bearing like an ass two burdens!

But, more than that, we have Joseph. Now we have the glory in connection with Israel; and finally power in the earth: Joseph and Benjamin are now as it were found

together. What was realised in the facts of the history at last terminates in the blessedness — the predicted blessedness — of Israel.

The last chapter (Genesis 50) gives us the conclusion of the book, the burial of Jacob, the reappearance of his sons left with Joseph, and at last Joseph's own death, as lovely as had been his life. He who stood on the highest pinnacle in the land next to the throne, type of Him who will hold the kingdom unto the glory of God the Father, — that single-eyed saint now breathes forth his soul to God. "By faith Joseph when he died made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." His heart is out of the scene where it enjoyed but a transient and at best typical glory. In hope he goes onward to that which would be lasting and true unto God's glory, when Israel should be in Emmanuel's land, and he himself be in a yet better condition — even resurrection. He had been exalted in Egypt, but he solemnly took an oath of the sons of Israel, that when God visits them, as He surely will, they will carry up his bones hence. He had served God in Egypt, but to him it was ever the strange land. Though he dwelt there, ruled there, there had a family, and there died fuller of honours than of years, an hundred and ten years old, he feels that Egypt is not the land of God, and knows that He will redeem His people from it, and bring them into Canaan. It was beautiful fruit in its season: no change of circumstances interfered with the promises of God to the fathers. Joseph waited as Abraham, Isaac. and Jacob. Earthly honours did not settle him down in Egypt.

On another day we may see how this oath was kept when God brought about the accomplishment of Israel's deliverance, the type of its ultimate fulfilment.

1 Jehovah here, rather than Elohim, would have spoilt the beauty of the divine account. No doubt afterwards God did as the Jehovah of Israel impose the remembrance of the Sabbath every seventh day of the week on His people. But it was important to show its ground in the facts of creation, apart from special relationship, and that made Elohim alone appropriate in this place.

2 We may judge how little the LXX. can claim credit for accuracy from their inattention to this difference in the Greek version. Holmes and Parsons show, however, the omission of κύριος supplied in not a few MSS., whether by the translators or by their copyists may be a question.

3 Is it not the more captiousness of criticism to set the general phrase "the day," etc., against the precision of the six days in the previous section? It is unfounded to say that in the second narrative the present world is supposed to be brought forth at once. The history is in Gen. 1:2: 3: from verse 4 to the end of Gen. 2 is not so much a history of creation as a statement of the relations of creation, and especially of man, its centre and head. Gen. 2. assumes Gen. 1, but adds moral elements of the utmost importance and interest.

4 It seems almost too trivial to notice what Dr. Davidson and Bishop Colenso (or their German sources) say of Gen. 2:5, 6, as if inconsistent with Gen. 1:9, 10. If divine power separated the earth from the waters, why should it remain saturated? In Gen. 1 it is said that "the dry

land" was called earth; in the others, that though no rain yet fell, a mist went up. What can be more consistent?

5 This, not to speak of other reasons, appears conclusive against the claim of the Pison to be the Ganges! set up by Josephus and a crowd of Greek and Latin fathers, the Nile according to Jarchi and other Rabbis, the Indus of late reasserted by Ewald, more than one of the fathers considering it to be the Danube! Caesarius and Epiphanius held it to be the Danube, the Ganges, and the Indus, and that after an extraordinary course in the south it joined the ocean near Cadiz! Those who made the Pison to be the Ganges regarded the Gihon as the Nile. Those who embrace the theory that Eden lay on the Shat-el-Arab consider the Pison and the Gihon as mere branches of the stream formed by the blending of the Euphrates and the Tigris (or Hiddekel). But this seems to me indefensible, though there may be difficulty in reconciling what I regard as the truth with an unusual force of one or two words.

6 This moral and typical bearing is the true key to the record in Gen. 2:4-25, and truly accounts for the differences from 1 - 2:3, which ignorance and unbelief pervert into the discrepancies of two separate and inconsistent writers. It is not the fact that Gen. 2:7, 19, represents man as created first of all living creatures before the birds and beasts; any more than that man created in God's image (Gen. 1:27) contradicts the statement of Genesis 2:7, that he was formed of the dust of the ground. It is not said in Genesis 1:27 that man and woman were created together; or that the woman was created directly, and not formed out of one of the man's ribs.

7 Some have wondered why the serpent and Eve should be represented as saying Elohim (“God”) in the temptation, seeing that everywhere else in the section the name employed is Jehovah-Elohim. Now, not only may it be the simple fact that Elohim alone was used, but, further, on account of it, the historian would not introduce here the name of special relationship which the enemy was above all anxious to have if possible forgotten, and which the woman in fact did soon forget when she allowed one to work on her mind whose first aim was to sow distrust of God. To me it appears that all is in perfect keeping; and that the omission of Jehovah here is equally natural on the part of the serpent and Eve, as it is appropriate to the inspired history of the transaction.

8 How this agrees with the dispensational dealings of God with Israel needs no argument. They were chosen to be the public vessel of divine government on the earth. We have had their failure under law; we look for their stability under Messiah and the new covenant. But it is and will be of the deepest interest to trace these ways of God in earthly government from the first.

9 It is deplorable but wholesome to see how superstition and rationalism agree in the grossest ignorance of man’s condition before the fall and through it. The doctrine in systematic theology is that God’s image within became corrupted and defiled; yet that even then he was not altogether forsaken; and that the course of his history declares by what means it has pleased God to renew, in some measure, His lost image, etc. Another divine, but an infidel, regards the knowledge of good and evil as the image of God by creation. This last is often misunderstood. Scripture is plain and profoundly true:

“And Jehovah-Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore Jehovah- Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

10 As Eve at the birth of Cain seems to have been unduly excited, and expecting I think a deliverer in the child whom she named as gotten from Jehovah, so she seems to me to express a sobered if not desponding sentiment in saying at Seth’s birth, “Elohim hath appointed me another seed,” etc. In the latter she only saw a child given of God naturally. Both appear to me natural and purposed.

11 If Canaan drew his father into the shameful exposure of Noah, all can see how just the sentence was. In any case it was mercy to confine the curse certainly earned by Ham within the narrowest limits, instead of extending it to all his posterity. In judgment as in grace God is always wise.

12 It is wholly unfounded to infer that these words, or Gen. 13:7, imply that, when the writer lived, the Canaanites and Perizzites had been expelled from the land. They show that the first if not the second were in the land when Abram entered it; and that both were settled there when he returned from Egypt. That this was a trial to the patriarch we can readily understand; but he had not to wait till Moses’ time, still less Joshua’s, to know that they and all the other intruders were

doomed. See Gen. 15:16, 18-21. No doubt their expulsion was yet future; but the writer like Abram believed in Jehovah, who knows and reveals the end from the beginning. I am aware of Aben Ezra's insinuation that the clause was interpolated, and of Dean Prideaux yielding to it, though the latter saves the credit of scripture by attributing it to Ezra, an inspired editor. But there is no need of such a supposition here, however true elsewhere and in itself legitimate.

13 Dr. Davidson (Introd. O. T. i pp. 21, 22) construes this into an inconsistency with Ex. 6:3. "In Genesis 15 it is recorded that God was manifested to Abraham, who believed in Jehovah, and therefore his 'faith was counted for righteousness.' There the Lord promises him a heir; declares to him that his seed shall be numberless as the stars of heaven, shall be afflicted in a strange land 400 years, but come forth from it with great substance. Jehovah too made a covenant with Abraham, and assured him that he had given the land of Canaan from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates to his posterity. Here is Jehovah the Covenant-Ggod revealing himself to Abraham in a peculiar manner, encouraging him by a fulness of promise, and confirming his word by a sign, entering into covenant with his servant, and condescending to inform him of the future of his race. That Abraham apprehended aright the character of the Being who thus revealed himself is evident from the words of the sixth verse, as well as from the language he addresses to Him in the eighth, Lord God. Hence on the hypothesis of one and the same writer of the Pentateuch, and the correctness of the alleged explanation, we argue that the contrast between the acquaintance of Abraham with the name Jehovah, and

the full knowledge of that name first made known to Moses, is groundless.... If our view of Exodus 6:3 be correct, it is all but certain that one writer could not have composed the book of Genesis, else he would have violated a principle expressly enunciated by himself in the passage." The mistake throughout is due to the want of seeing that God only in Moses' day gave His personal name Jehovah as the formal characteristic ground of relationship to the sons of Israel. They were to walk before Him as Jehovah, as the fathers had walked before Him as El-Shaddai. But it is in no way meant that the words Jehovah and El-Shaddai were only used, or their import only understood, by Moses and the patriarchs respectively. The words existed and were employed freely before; but as God never gave the right to any before Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to wall; before Him counting on His Almighty protection, so He first gave Israel nationally the title of His eternal unchangeableness as Jehovah as that on which they might count. The use of each name has nothing to do with different authors or documents' but depends on moral motives. It is a question neither of antiquity nor of piety: not of antiquity, for from the beginning Jehovah was freely employed. not of piety, for the Psalms (e.g. Ps. 42, Ps. 63 etc.) show that there may be as genuine and fervent piety in exercise where Elohim is the staple as where Jehovah is. The absence or presence of the display of His covenant character of relationship, especially with Israel, is the true and invariable key.

14 There is some difficulty here as evinced by the differences of translators Thus Benisch translates the last clause, "and thou mayest face every one," i.e. she was made right by the fine as an eye-covering. De Sola,

Lindenthal and Raphall, in their version, go even further, “and unto all others as a vindication.”

15 There is no real difficulty in understanding the propriety of the various divine names in these chapters according to the motive which governs. Thus El-Shaddai is the peculiar patriarchal name of guaranteed protector; Jehovah of special relationship for covenant blessings of Israel according to promise; but then Jehovah is Elohim in His own majesty, or He would be a merely national deity, Compare Gen. 17, where it is expressly Jehovah that appears and calls Himself El-Shaddai, yet immediately after talks as Elohim with Abram. See also Gen. 22:1, 8, 9, 12, and 11, 14, 15, 16, where the various document-system is manifestly disproved. Esau in Gen. 27, has neither covenant nor divine name of any sort.

16 Can it be doubted that this part of Genesis is typical like what goes before and after? Surely Jacob’s love for Rachel first, for whom nevertheless he must wait and fulfil the week afresh after Leah had been given him, is not without evident bearing on the Lord’s relation to Israel first loved, for whom meanwhile the slighted Gentile has been substituted with rich results in His grace. Rachel is at length remembered by God, who takes away her reproach by adding to her a son (Joseph) — type of One glorified among the Gentiles and delivering His Jewish brethren after suffering among both Jews and Gentiles So her history closes in the death of her Benoni and Jacob’s Benjamin son of the mother’s sorrow and of the father’s right hand, as the people of God will prove in the end. I take this opportunity Of noticing the beauty of Scripture in the use of the divine names in these chapters, the best answer to the

superficial folly which attributes them to different writers and documents. In the case of Leah (Gen. 29), who was hated compared with Rachel, Jehovah as such interposed with His special regard to her sorrow, and this was expressed in the name of her first-born son, Reuben; and His hearing in her second, Simeon. At Levi's birth she does not go farther than the hope of her husband's being joined to her; but Jehovah has praise when she bore Judah. In Rachael's case (Gen. 30) there is no such expression at first of confidence in Jehovah's compassionate interest; but in disappointment of heart she gives Jacob her maid; and, when Dan was born, she accepts it as the judgment of Elohim, and at Naphtali's birth speaks of His wrestlings. Leah, following her example, gains through Zilpah Gad and Asher, but makes no acknowledgment of the divine name in either form. After this comes the incident of using mandrakes for hire, when Elohim acts for Leah in sovereign power and she owns Him as such when Issachar was born, and in Zebulun on the pledge of her husband's dwelling with her. In the same power did Elohim remember Rachael, who not only confesses that the God of creation had taken away her reproach, but calls her son Joseph saying, Jehovah shall add to me another son. This is the more striking because it is an instance of the combined use of these names admirably illustrating both sides of the truth, and irreconcilable with the double-document hypothesis. Rachel rose from the thought of His power to the recognition of His ways with His own. And even Laban (verse 39) is obliged to confess that Jacob enjoyed the blessing of One who was in special relationship with him — of Jehovah.

17 Probably, instead of “to Shalem,” etc., we should translate it “in peace to,” etc. Compare Gen. 28:21, Gen. 34:21.

18 Dr. Davidson (Introd. O. T. pp. 65, 66), in his arguments against unity of authorship on the score of diversities, confusedness, and contradictions, alleges this: “In like manner Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, when he wrestled with a supernatural being in human form all night before he met his brother Esau, on his return from Mesopotamia (Gen. 32:28); whereas according to Gen. 35:10 he received the name on another occasion at Bethel, not Penuel, as the first passage states. It is a mere subterfuge to assert that, because no reason is assigned for the change of name in 35:10, it relates no more than a solemn confirmation of what had been done already. A reason for the change does not necessarily accompany its record. The words are explicit: ‘And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name.’ If his name were Israel before, the words plainly assert the contrary. The passages are junior Elohistic, and Elohistic respectively. An analogous example is Bethel, formerly Luz, which was so named by Jacob on his journey to Mesopotamia (Gen. 28:19, Gen. 30:13), but according to Gen. 35:15, on his return. Identical names of places are not imposed twice.” It is evident that the rationalist approaches Scripture, not as a believer and learner, but as a judge, and that his criticism is captious, to say nothing of irreverence. There is nothing to hinder a repetition in giving names either to persons or places. Let those who are affected by such petty cavils weigh our Lord’s giving Simon the name of Peter twice (John 1:42, Matt. 16:18), and the

second time with yet more emphasis than the first. It is the more absurd in the case of Jacob changed to Israel and then confirmed, because the usual plea of Jehovah and Elohim does not apply here. In both cases it is Elohim. Hence the need of inventing a junior Elohist in order to maintain their illusion. Again, the first verse of Gen. 35. furnishes the most direct and conclusive proof that identical names of places may be imposed twice, for God is represented on this second occasion as bidding Jacob go up to Bethel (not Luz) before he calls the place for the second time Bethel. What is the value of Dr. D.'s denial of what Scripture positively affirms?

19 It may be worth while to observe in this and other genealogies not often the object of infidel attack, that the differences between Genesis, Numbers' and Chronicles in their form are due to the motive for their introduction in each particular connection; that the difficulties clearly spring from the design, in no way from error in the writer, but in fact because of ignorance in ouch readers as misapprehend them; and that both the difference and the difficulties are the strongest evidence of their truth and inspired character, for nothing would have been easier than to have assimilated their various forms and to have eliminated that which sounds strange to western ears.

20 The real difficulty in Gen. 49:10 is neither so much the unusual application of the word Shiloh, nor doctrinal zeal, as the desire to get rid of a prophecy. Unbelief sets out with the foregone conclusion that there is and can be no such thing. Hence the effort to destroy its only just and worthy sense. "The Deity (says Dr. D., Introd. O. T. i. 198) did not see fit, as far as we can judge, to impart to any man like Jacob the foreknowledge of future and

distant events. Had He done so, He would not have left him in darkness respecting the immortality of the soul (!) and a future state of rewards and punishments (!) He would not have left him to speak on his deathbed, like an Arab chief, of no higher blessings to his sons than rapine and murder, without the least reference to another and better state of existence on which he believed he should enter, and in relation to which he might counsel his sons to act continually. The true way of dealing with the prophecy is simply to ascertain by internal evidence the time in which it was written, on the only tenable and philosophical ground of its having been put into the mouth of the dying patriarch by a succeeding writer. It has the form of a prediction; but it is a vaticinium post eventum. We believe that the time of the prophetic lyric falls under the kings. The tribes are referred to as dwelling in the localities which they obtained in Joshua's time. The announcement respecting Judah's pre-eminence brings down the composition much later than Joshua, since he is represented as taking the leadership of the tribes in subduing the neighbouring nations. We explain the tenth verse in such a manner as to imply that David was king over the tribes, and had humbled their enemies." The proper translation according to this sceptic is:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,

Nor the stuff of power from between his feet,

Until he come to Shiloh,

And to him the obedience of the peoples be"

Exodus

Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch.

Exodus 1-18

There is hardly a book of the Old Testament that stands out in more decided contrast with the book of Genesis than the one which follows it most closely. And this is the more striking, because God employed the same inspired writer to give us both, as well as others. One of the most salient features of the book of Genesis is the variety in which the Holy Spirit has set forth the various principles on which God deals, the ways in which He manifests Himself, the special foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus, and this not only in respect to man but Israel and even the church in type. Consequently for this various development of the truth there is no book in scripture so remarkable as the very first of the Pentateuch: In fact, in a general way we may say that all the other books take up special truths, which are at any rate in the germ presented there. As for the second book, Exodus, there is one grand idea which pervades it — redemption The consequences of redemption, as well as the circumstances in which it was accomplished, are brought before us in a very full and complete manner, as we shall see. Further, not only the consequences of redemption, but that which may be the result when man, insensible to the grace which has wrought redemption, turns back on himself, and attempts to gain a footing by his own resources and faithfulness before God. How God deals with him thereon we shall also see before we have done with the book of Exodus. In making these few remarks, I believe we have touched on the principal

topics which will come before us, and nearly in the order in which God has presented them.

First of all then we have a sketch of the chosen people in the land of Egypt.1 But a king is seen who knew not Joseph, and the afflictions which the Spirit of God had predicted long before to Abraham begin to thicken on his seed there. Nevertheless God is faithful, and the very efforts to destroy are met by His good hand, who produces faithfulness even in those that might have been supposed most of all subservient to the cruel designs of the king. This occupies the first chapter.

In the second, growing out of these circumstances and of the edict which doomed to death every man-child of Israel, appears the deliverer, — the type of an infinitely greater one. It is Moses, a man of whom the Spirit of God has made the largest use not only in the Old Testament but in the New, as in so many forms shadowing forth the Lord Jesus. His parents' faith is not spoken of here, it is true, but, as we know, in the New Testament. The fact is here named that they hid him; and when they could no longer do so, or it may be, when they had no longer faith to proceed as before, they committed him to an ark of bulrushes in the river, when the daughter of Pharaoh takes up the child and adopts him as her own. Thus Moses was learned, as we are told, in all the learning of the Egyptians. In such a position he had the finest opportunities for assuaging the hard lot of the Israelites, and it might be for accomplishing that which was so dear to his heart, their deliverance from thraldom. This he entirely declines. Undoubtedly it must have been a far greater trial to his spirit than the relinquishment of any personal advantages. It exposed him necessarily to the reproach of folly from his

brethren. For no race ever was more apt to find matter for blame than they, none quicker to see their own advantages or to speak out whatever they did see. But God was working not only for a design according to His own heart, but so that the manner in which that design was to be accomplished should bring Him glory. This Moses in measure understood; for faith always sees it, and holds to it just so far as it is faith. There may be, I grant you, the mingling of that which is of nature along with faith; and from this it appears to me that Moses was far from being exempt, either in his first appearance as one engaged for God with His people here below, or afterwards when God summoned him to accomplish the great work of which he had a certain anticipation, no doubt vague and dark, in his soul.

On this enterprise then we behold him going forth, when he was come to years of discretion. He sees an Egyptian maltreating an Israelite. This kindles all his affections on behalf of his brethren. Undoubtedly the affections were there; but this calls them out, and he acts accordingly, looking, it is said, this way and that way — by no means an evidence of singleness of eye. Yet here was just the situation. It was impossible for the Spirit, on the one hand, to blame the love that prompted the hand of Moses; it was impossible, on the other, to vindicate the act. God has just left it, as He always knows how to do — left what was of Himself to tell its own tale, whilst that which was not of Himself is before the spiritual judgment of those who have confidence in Him. And is there anything that more beautifully shows the character of scripture than this? In any other book there would be a kind of apology, if not an elaborate argument, a discourse on the matter, to vindicate God

from all participation in what was far from being according to His own holiness.

Nothing shows the difference between God's word and the way in which even men of God may handle, or feel it necessary to handle it, more strikingly than this. God is content to speak of things as they are without a word on His side to explain or account for it, or in anywise to soften matters for man. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Accordingly the tale is told with all simplicity. The self-same principle applies to hundreds of passages in the Scriptures; and therefore it seemed well to make a few remarks in a more general shape. We must distinguish between the statement of a fact in the Bible and any sanction given to it. This may help our appreciation of the word of God in all such cases. We are bound ever to refuse the thought that the record of facts in scripture implies that they are according to the full mind of God. The truth is that He speaks of good men and bad men; that He mentions not only what was excellent in the good, but such distressing and shameful things as draw out His own chastening it may be for a long while to come. God, in short, states things exactly as they are. He counts on faith in His own people; but they will always reckon that whatever there may be of good is from Him — whatever may be wrong is surely not so. It is an easily settled principle after all, and it accounts for much on which men's minds otherwise are apt to stumble.

Moses then flees from Egypt, but not so much in fear of Egyptian enmity; against this he might have looked to God to sustain him, no matter what might be the pressure on his spirit. It was the unworthy dealing of his brethren which broke up all hope for the present. The

man who was in the wrong too, as is always the case, had the bitter feeling against him who loved both, and would willingly have set them at one with each other; it was he who taunted Moses with the words, `' Who made thee a ruler and a judge?" The Israelite's own proud spirit was ready to insinuate pride in others. Moses then bends to the blast. The time was not yet come evidently for the deliverance of such a people. He retires from the scene to the land of Midian, and there is put through the necessary discipline for the mighty work he was yet to accomplish. Moses had certainly been hasty; and the Lord judged it. But he was right in the main; and the Lord accordingly left not to another but to him the due accomplishment of Israel's deliverance when the fulness of time was come.

There, in his retirement, he receives from Jethro his daughter a stranger given him to wife, who bears him a son, the name of whom tells whither his heart turns. "I have been a stranger in a strange land," is the word of comment that is made upon him. He was called Gershom, which means this — "a stranger here."

In due time the unforgetting heart of God shows His remembrance of Israel. (Chap. 3) Abroad Moses was discharging his duty long enough for such thoughts to have passed away from him, as we might have supposed. But not so. At the back side of the desert in Horeb, the angel of Jehovah appears to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. "And he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." We are never to suppose that the manner of the revelation of God is an unimportant consideration. No doubt He is sovereign; but for that very reason He is sovereignly wise, and displays Himself invariably in such

a sort as is most appropriate to the object in hand. Hence it was in no casual sort or merely arresting attention by its wonders that Jehovah here appears in the burning bush. It was meant to be an image of that which was then presented to the spirit of Moses — a bush in a desert burning but unconsumed. It was no doubt thus that God was about to work in the midst of Israel. Moses and they must know it. They too would be the chosen vessel of His power in their weakness, and this for ever in His mercy. Their God, as ours, would prove Himself a consuming fire. Solemn but infinite favour! For, on one hand, as surely as He is a consuming fire, so on the other the bush, weak as it is, and ready to vanish away, nevertheless remains to prove that whatever may be the siftings and judicial dealing of God, whatever the trials and searchings of man, yet where He reveals Himself in pitifulness as well as in power (and such it certainly was here), He sustains the object and uses the trial for nothing but good — no doubt for His own glory, but consequently for the very best interests of those that are His.

Hence, when He calls Moses to draw near, He first of all proclaims Himself the God of his fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This was the first announcement that was meant to act on the soul of Moses, and of course in due time on Israel. The time was coming when they should no longer be a family but a nation; and if God was about to reveal Himself after a special sort, He at the same time particularly brings before them His association with their fathers. We must never forget the ways in which God has acted before if we are to appreciate what He is doing now: and, in point of fact, our value for and intelligence of

these things will be found to go together. It is by confounding the scriptures that men misunderstand them: if we would indeed enter into the real force of God's word, it must always be by distinguishing the things that differ. Hence it is to be observed that first God draws particular attention to His being the God of the fathers. This of necessity would recall to Moses the special manner in which He made Himself known to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob as the Almighty God. We shall find this set out in express terms in a later chapter; but the substance of it seems conveyed on this first occasion when He directs attention to His being the God of promise, coupling consequently the names of the fathers with Himself.

God was now about to present Himself as the unchanging One that could and would accomplish His word according to the relation in which He and His people stood. Was it to be in view of His grace or their desert? Whether all were to be fully made good now, or whether only to a partial extent, — whether even the partial accomplishment was to be opposed and weakened, and useless as far as this could do it by Israel's own folly and sin, all this would afterwards appear. In point of fact, as we know, there could be no such thing as a complete fulfilment apart from Christ. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus, the promised Seed, must come, if there was to be the making all the promises of God yea and amen in Him. If this furnish the direct reason why there could be no such fulfilment, the moral hindrances from the state of Israel — from man fallen — were quite as real, though necessarily indirect. Nevertheless God would give at least a partial accomplishment in him that was the type of Christ. How

this was arrested is a most instructive lesson, but it will be found later on in this book.

However Jehovah does declare in full His deep interest in the people. And what a proof is this of never-failing goodness in God! For there was not one quality in the people which could in anywise move the heart towards them except their misery — not one worthy moral feeling, not one generous emotion, not the smallest care for the glory of God. Nay, they were ever ready to turn aside to reproach Himself, to slander His servants, and to abandon His will. All these things we learn in due time as they were known to Him before He began. Nevertheless God expresses in the most affecting manner His tender interest in them even as they were. There is nothing therefore that can hinder a soul from being the object of the most real love to God except the persistent rejection of Himself. There is nothing too low or too hard in man to hinder the power of God's grace except the wilfulness that will not have Him at all.

The Lord then brings before Moses His care, saying, "I have surely seen the afflictions of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of the taskmasters, for I know their sorrow;" but He does not add, their cry to Him. We may say then, as a prophet did later, that they groaned; but they did not groan to God. It was but selfish sense of suffering. They groaned only because of their wretchedness; but there was no looking out to God — no counting on His mercy. Nevertheless, says He, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites,

and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses soon brings forward his difficulties and objections. Jehovah however meets all at first with quietness, and at the same time breathes comfort into the ear of His anxious and hesitating servant.

But what a lesson it is! Is this the man once so ready to smite Rahab and deliver Israel? The very same. Full of courage when God's time was not come, he feels the obstacles when it is. It is often so! Moses thus replies, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name?" Is it not humbling? What a state! God's people do not even know His name! "What shall I say unto them?" says Moses. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." There is great force in these words. It was not merely what God was going to perform. Man probably would have preferred "I shall do;" but God takes His stand upon these weighty words, "I AM THAT I AM," the self-subsisting, ever-being One. In truth, on Him hangs everything. All others are merely beings that exist; God is the only one who can say "I AM." What exists was called into being, and may pass out of it, if God so please. I say not that they do, but that they may. Surely God is evermore and evermore God. This is what describes Him in His being at least. I am not now

speaking of His grace, but of His own essential being — “I AM.”

Accordingly, as a message to Israel, surrounded by the vanities of the heathen — those imaginary objects of adoration whose rôle really was that of demons taking advantage of man’s superstition and folly, it was a fine and an admirable name for those who might ask it: “I AM hath sent me.”

But there is more than this; for God takes care to utter another word: “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you.” He is still more explicit. “Jehovah the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” How infinitely gracious of God, that the name taken for ever in connection with Israel is not that which relegates every other creature into its own nothingness, which makes all to be merely the consequence of His word and of His will! He loves and cherishes the name in which He has bound up the objects of His choice with Himself.

It reminds one of that which the Gospels tell us. When here below Jesus never proclaimed Himself as the Christ on the one hand, or as the Son of God on the other, though truly both, and always accepting and vindicating either when He was thus confessed by others. For we know that Jesus was the Head of the kingdom, and that “Christ” is the title in which He takes His rights over Israel and their land, which will be in force in the day that is coming. And, what is more striking still, He does not even take His stand upon His being the Son of God,

though this was His eternal name. It may be said that it belongs to Him more strictly and personally in the highest sense than any other; for He became the Christ, but He is and will be (as He always was) the Word, the Son, the only begotten Son of the Father. There was no becoming here. This is what He is from everlasting to everlasting. But for all that He does not assert it. What name does He take then? What does He Himself delight in? The chosen name that Jesus habitually puts forward is “Son of man.” “Whom do ye think that I, the Son of man, am?” Where all was morally glorious, there is nothing finer than this. For, as we know, “the Son of man” is not merely the title in which He linked Himself with man here below, but the name of sorrow and suffering, of shame and rejection — it is the name undoubtedly of glory, and this of a richer and fuller sort, according to the counsels of God, than anything connected with His place as the Christ, the object of Jewish hope and promise; for it opens the door into His reign for ever and ever over all peoples, tribes and tongues under the whole heaven, nay, as is known, over all the universe of God the Creator. Nevertheless it was the name of suffering first, if of such high and widespread glory afterwards.

So with Moses, Jehovah seems to be speaking according to the grace, as far as this could be unfolded then, which afterwards shone in the blessed Lord here below. In the latter case, naturally, it was more connected with His own person as known in the Godhead. For we must ever remember that He who showed Himself then as Jehovah was, no doubt, the One whom we know as the Son of God. When revealing Himself as Jehovah their God then, He delighted to take a name which in some way linked

Himself with His people. This was the more touching, because He knew right well how these very men were about to disgrace Him. He knew how they would depart from all that was before His own mind, seeking in self-confidence that which would give an apparent momentary importance, but be sure to bring a blot for ages on His character as well as ruin to themselves, — for so lies the Jew now. The actual wreck of Israelitish hopes is the result both of their assuming legal condition in the first place, and next of their rejection of the grace of God that came in by Jesus Christ our Lord, and was proclaimed by the Spirit sent down from heaven.

There is another important point to note in the chapter. Jehovah shows from the very first how all the consequences of His raising and sending Moses to Pharaoh were before His own mind. He was surprised by nothing. It is of course as simple as necessary for those who know God, but none the less delightful to find it stated clearly. The same thing pervades the New Testament. It is sweet to see these analogies; because in one respect there can scarcely be two volumes more different than the Old Testament and the New Testament; but just as clearly there is everywhere the same mind, and the same source — God Himself dealing with a different subject, but the same God no matter what He deals with. Just so is it in the New Testament. The gospel of John, for instance, discloses the end from the beginning; but that is because here we have Jesus known as the One who is before the beginning. He is the sent One, but a consciously divine person. Consequently in perfect harmony with this all things are known (and no testimony needed by Him), what God is no less than

man, with as absolute a comprehension of the future as of the past or present.

Here then Jehovah says, “I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty.” In truth their wages were of long date, never having been paid. It is mere folly to suppose there was any, the smallest, infringement of what was right and becoming.2 It is a matter, perhaps, too well known to need many words, that every woman was simply to ask of her neighbour, etc., vessels of silver and of gold, with raiment, which were to be put on Israel’s sons and daughters. It was to spoil their oppressors by divine authority, and no question whatever of deceit or dishonesty. The impression of “borrowing” given in the Authorized Version is by no means necessary, nor does the connection justify it. There is no such thought as that they had no right involved in the matter. There was nothing the people and even at last the king of Egypt were not disposed to concede: later on in spite of all their own interests in the retention of the children of Israel, they were willing and desirous that they should go, and that they should not go away empty. Their proud will was broken, although their hearts were by no means with God. There was no kind of communion, I need hardly say: nevertheless they bowed to that which they had so stubbornly opposed before. And then Moses speaks, and says, “But, behold, they will not believe me,

nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee."

Then follow signs of a miraculous kind in proof of Jehovah's mission of His servant. (Ex. 4) The attention of Moses is drawn to what was in his hand — a rod which, when cast on the ground, became a serpent. The word is somewhat vague, and probably has a wider meaning and not so definite as serpent. It is the same word that is used for sea monsters generally. It is commonly known that what is translated "whales" in Gen. 1:21 means the huge creatures of the deep; so that it is not quite correct to restrain it to a "serpent" here, as it is certainly erroneous to call it "whales" there. It properly expresses a monster which might be, I presume amphibious, not certainly confined like a fish, still less like a whale, to the waters, nor confined to the land like a serpent. But, however this may be judged by others, it would appear that, although not specifically a serpent, it was meant here to embrace a creature with such qualities. The point of this wonder was the change of power (which a "rod" means in scripture) into something Satanic. The rod is the symbol of authority; it may also represent chastening. But then no chastening is right unless it flow from just authority; and hence the connection between the two ideas in this emblem. The rod of power then taking Satanic form seems to be meant by the sign first committed to Moses. Such was exactly the state of things in the land of Egypt.

But there was more; and hence a far more personal test. Moses was told by Jehovah to put his hand in his bosom. Undoubtedly the place was significant, as well as the effect; for when he took it out again, his hand was leprous as snow — the well-known type of sin, at least in

its defiling character if not in the powerlessness to which it reduces man. Throughout the word of God there are two standing types of sin. Both appear to be used in the New Testament, as is familiar to us, if one of them is more prominent in the Old. Paralysis, or palsy as it is called in our version, is the type of the effects of sin as thoroughly destructive of human strength — of sin in its plunging the guilty into a state of weakness — "without strength, as it is said in the Epistle to the Romans. Leprosy is the type of it in its defilement. These are the two forms more particularly in which it is presented.

But, on the other hand, when Moses put his hand into his bosom again at the word of God, it became as his other flesh.

If they would not hearken to these two signs, there was a third which would affect the river. We all know what the Egyptians thought of the Nile. That which ought to have been for refreshment as well as for purifying becomes the sign of death — life no longer in the body. Such is the known significance of blood symbolically in scripture.

All this evinces the absolute command of all circumstances by God, but in His servant's hands, and in favour of His people. Let them know that God would work according to what belongs exclusively to Him. There could be nothing more thorough. Look at authority in the world, or at that which pertains to man, or at the resources of nature: a man brings the vouchers of One who was sovereign over every domain. This seems to be conveyed in these three signs. At the same time remember this caution here, my brethren; and it

seems to be a wholesome thought ever to bear in mind. We must not assume in such points that we have ascertained the whole of the truth, even though we may have got some true elements. Confident as we may be that we are taught of God, it does not necessarily follow that there may not be another side of truth which we have yet to learn more fully. In fact it is one of the blessed features of the word of God that we can never assume to possess an exhaustive view of scripture. For scripture savours of God's own infinity, however He may come down to us, and adopt the language of men, as we know He has done. It is owned that of course human language is the finite; but then He who comes down into the finite is Himself infinite, and we must never lose sight of this, although put now in its most general shape. It is indeed a most important truth to hold fast, and no less full of consolation and blessing for our souls.

Let us be thankful then for all that which commends itself to us as true and of God, but never assume that we have apprehended the whole truth. "Now we know in part." Let us depend on God to bring out the truth for our intelligence in the measure which fits His glory, and as He pleases to accomplish more fully the purpose for which He has revealed it.

Then Moses finds another difficulty. He says, "I am not eloquent" — one wonders that he took so long to find it out. "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." If God sent him, what had that to do with the matter? The real difficulty is always this, — one thinks about oneself, instead of the Lord. It is astonishing what a difference it makes when one can afford and has made up one's mind to drop self. It is

clear that God must be the best judge. If He chooses a man that is slow of speech, who can say Nay? Nevertheless let none suppose that this is said in the smallest disrespect of Moses — not so, but for our own profit and instruction, and to guard us lest we should enact the same part with even less excuse; for God has set before us the wavering of a servant so faithful for the express purpose of guarding ourselves from the like or other failures.

The upshot is that at last the Lord is really displeased with His servant's facility in objecting. "The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother?" Great humiliation! He might have been the simple and happy instrument of God in the mighty work; but Aaron is brought forward to share it. "I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart."

Thus we find the junction of Aaron with Moses, which has many important consequences, and some of them of a serious character, as this book records.

Another fact is mentioned before we close the chapter, and one of deep and grave practical instruction. God was going to put honour on Moses, but there was a dishonour to Him in the house of Moses already. God could not pass over that. How came it that Moses' sons were not circumcised? How came it that there lacked that which typifies the mortifying the flesh in those who were nearest to Moses? How came it that God's glory was forgotten in that which ought to have been ever prominent to a father's heart? It appears that the wife had something to do with the matter. Accordingly mark

how Jehovah deals in His own wisdom. There never is a hindrance but through flesh; there is no difficulty brought in to distract a faithful man of God from obedience, but God accomplishes the end, only in a far more painful ‘way, and often by the very one who obstructed. What a safeguard then to be childlike and subject to the Lord! How many sorrows are thus escaped! But no escape would God allow from that which was so repugnant to the feelings of Zipporah. In fact she at last was obliged to do what she most hated, as she said herself in her son’s case. But more than that, it endangered Moses; for God had the controversy with him — not with his wife. Moses was the responsible person; and God held to His order. It is said that Jehovah met and sought to kill him. The consequence was that his wife had to take a sharp stone and execute the work herself. It must be done, and with incomparably greater pain and shame to herself than if done in God’s time and way. Let us remember this.

Now that God was vindicated in the household of Moses, his mission could begin. (Ex. 5) Public work can only rightly follow when all is well at home. So Moses and Aaron go in and tell Pharaoh the message of Jehovah; and Pharaoh, with the insolence natural]. to him, replies, “Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto Jehovah our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.” But the result of their interference is that the tasks are increased, and that the children of Israel groan yet more, quick enough to resent it too, as if, instead of

being deliverers, Moses and Aaron were themselves the more immediate causes of the troubles which thickened on the people. This is described in the rest of the chapter.

But Jehovah, in the beginning of Ex. 6, speaks to Moses once more when he returns,3 and says, “Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” We come to greater precision here. Carefully remember that this does not imply that the word “Jehovah” was not known. We have no real reason to doubt that men heard it from the beginning. As a word “Jehovah” occurs frequently in the book of Genesis, in a way which shows not only that the writer knew the term, but that it was in use from the beginning. What then is the true meaning? That God now takes this name as the revealed character according to which He was going publicly to act on behalf of the children of Israel. Observe, as illustrating what is here meant, that when our Lord came, as scripture says, He declared the Father. What an absurd inference it would be that the term “Father” had never been known before? This clearly is not conveyed anywhere, but that God had not before revealed Himself in that relationship as He did then. It is so precisely with the term “Jehovah.” Thus, in Gen. 22, when Isaac was taken from under the sentence of death, Abraham calls the place “Jehovah-Jireh.” The word therefore must have been well enough known: only God did not yet take it as

the form and ground of His dealings with any people on the earth; now He does with Israel. It was not enough to be the almighty shield of the children as of the fathers: no matter what their weakness and exposure in the midst of jealous and hostile and wicked Canaanites, He had been the protector of the wandering patriarchs. It was what was involved in the formula of His revelation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But now He goes farther, showing Himself the unchangeable and eternal God, the God who was indeed as a governor true to the promise He had made of old. Accordingly this is precisely what is involved in the name of Jehovah. Here He was ready for His part to accomplish. There might be unreadiness on their part, but He at any rate was able to make good all He had promised. And thus fittingly He, as Jehovah their God, pledges before them His own unchangeable character to accomplish His promises. Whether it would come to a result or not depended on altogether different circumstances — not on any failure in Him.

This then is brought before Moses and Aaron, and soon after we find the message given, “Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.” They were not to be in anywise cast down by the first replies. They must not be disheartened even by the growing troubles of the children of Israel. They had this warrant to go on in the name of Jehovah.

Then (Ex. 6:14-27) the genealogy is given, which calls for no remark, save only to notice how grace cannot but assert itself. For Moses was not the elder brother but Aaron, and in the genealogy the order of nature is maintained, as, for instance, in verses 20, 26, “These are

that Aaron and Moses, to whom Jehovah said, Bring out the children of Israel." But the moment we come to spiritual action, it is always "Moses and Aaron" — never "Aaron and Moses." How slow we are to learn the perfectness of the word of God! Yet nothing is like it for simplicity and accessibility. Our difficulty is that the very familiarity of men with it hinders their taking notice of what is under their eyes. There it is: when our eyes are opened, we see how unique its character is. And this has an amazing effect upon the spiritual man, who nourishes himself on the sound words of God, because we are all apt otherwise to be careless and to use words lightly. If it is a great thing to enjoy the profit of good company, there is no company or converse like that of God. This is the way in which the Lord gives us simplicity, and at the same time a depth entirely beyond ourselves. How good the Lord that speaks to us about the things not of grace only but of nature! Do we as Christians quarrel with such matters? We acknowledge them, owning nature in its place; and quite right. It is all a vain thing to deny that which is right according to the order of nature. Always avoid onesidedness. There is nothing more dangerous in the things of God. Give nature its place, and what belongs to it; but always maintain the superiority of grace in order to do so. And take care that, not only knowing and enjoying it, we walk suitably to grace: else it loses its character. Grace is then no more grace, but only a vain pretension — the flippant use of words without power.

In Exodus 7 begins the great struggle, and wonders upon wonders awfully fall on the devoted land of Egypt. Observe, as to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, that this was in no-wise the case before the pronounced

infidelity of Pharaoh. God never compelled a man to be au unbeliever. In short, unbelief in the first instance is never the consequence of judicial hardness on God's part. Is there no such thing then as hardening? Does not scripture mean that there is? Undoubtedly hardening there is. It is an equal error to suppose that God hardens a person when He first sends a testimony as to deny that He does harden after His testimony has been refused. The fact is, both are true, and this is just another instance of the importance of not taking up particular views of scripture, but of being guided and formed in our thoughts by all scripture.

God then sent a testimony to Pharaoh, as He does to everyone in some form or another. But man left to himself invariably refuses the testimony of God. He knows it is God; he has the consciousness that he is doing wrong in refusing it; yet he does refuse because he does not like and dare not trust God, whose word interferes with everything that he likes. Hence man gives himself up to unbelief, and then God may either at that or a later time, according to His own wisdom, seal up a person in a judicial hardness which is a distinct positive act on God's part. I hold therefore most strongly that hardening is not merely on man's side, and in the judicial sense not on man's at all, though no doubt the result of man's sin. God hardens because man refuses His word. Thus the hardening is a judicial act on God's part, which comes in after man has proved himself an unbeliever, and has persisted in it. It was so with Pharaoh, and his is a typical case, the permanent warning in the New Testament, as it is the first specified instance in the Old It is the one which the apostle Paul quotes for this purpose. Consequently it is the standing

witness of this solemn truth. And remember that this is not a mere exceptional fact. It is commoner than people imagine. It will be on a great scale in Christendom shortly (2 Thess. 2), as I have little doubt that it may be in many individual cases now, and has always been so. Thus it was when our Lord Jesus was here, and the presence of the Spirit, instead of preventing, confirmed it. Hence, whether on a great scale or in individual dealings of God, nothing can be more certain than that there is such an action on His part. At the same time it is never God who makes man an unbeliever. Hardening is a judgment which comes when man persists in unbelief in the face of distinct and repeated testimony from God.

The ten plagues follow (Ex. 7-11), on which one or two general remarks may be made. They were particularly suited in the wisdom of God to humble Egypt. It was not only an infliction on the land; it was not only a deep pain and anguish to the natives, and this with increasing intensity; but it was a solemn contest between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt. The plagues were calculated to smite them most acutely in what constituted their religion. For instance, take the Nile: we know the boastfulness of Egypt in that river which they supposed to be the great earthly emblem of God. On the other hand it is well known what all these ancient nations thought of the light of the sun, and how preternatural darkness (with light for Israel in Goshen) must have struck them. Again, bodily cleanliness was no small part of heathenism which could do nothing for the soul: more particularly was it so with Egyptian heathenism. It is plain that the infliction of lice or gnats, if either be the meaning of the term — at any rate a loathsome insect which made life almost intolerable to man and beast —

was particularly humiliating to Egypt. Thus a few of those points are merely touched without entering into details; for it is evident that this would keep us longer than is suitable in what I propose for the present. In these repeated strokes we find then God dealing with the gods as well as with the men and habits of Egypt. The controversy was with their opposition to the true God, as well as with their oppression of His people.

Even rationalism does not in every case venture to deny the supernatural character of the phenomena related in Ex. 7-12. Some of the most sceptical are compelled to admit that the ten plagues were all actual and historical events. Their effort is to strip and reduce them to the uttermost by exalting circumstances, which bear a somewhat similar appearance either ordinarily or occasionally, to a measure of correspondence. Thus, alongside the first plague (Ex. 7:15-25), they put the fact that Ehrenberg in 1823 saw the inlet of the Red Sea, near Sinai, stained a blood-red colour by cryptogamic plants. Did this kill the fish in the sea or make the waters to stink? Did it affect every pond and stream, nay every vessel of wood and stone? They cannot deny that there is all possible difference between the reddish tint of the Nile for some weeks in June, without one of these consequences as compared with so severe a blow in or about January on the river of their pride and idolatry, which had seen the cruel death of Israel’s male children.

Again, after that plague of blood bad run its course in vain for seven days, that of frogs rose up from the streams, rivers, and ponds, and the land was covered with these actively disgusting objects, as the waters had shocked and sickened them before. (Ex. 8:1-15) How humbling this second judgment must have been to a

people who included frogs among their sacred animals — to see them, an object of detestation, crowd their houses, and beds, and ovens, and kneading-troughs! Never do these animals annoy the Egyptians at the beginning of the year; still less do they come and go at the command of a man like Moses.

The third and fourth plagues (in our version, lice and swarms of flies, Ex. 8:16-32,) may be open to discussion as to their specific character; but there can be no doubt that they dealt with man and beast with increasing intensity and the more distressingly if they interfered with personal cleanliness, and made the killing of what they venerated needful in self-defence. The rationalist counts at least the first of these “a natural phenomenon of the country,” the wonder being its origination by Aaron and the exemption of the Israelites. He is thus more incredulous than the magicians who said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God” — not a mere combination of unusual circumstances with a natural phenomenon.

The fifth plague (Ex. 9:1-7) was a very heavy pestilence which at Moses’ word fell the next day on the cattle of Egypt, not on those of Israel. This was the sharper a blow as immediately before Pharaoh went back even from his promise of three days’ absence, Moses had pleaded the inexpediency of their sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes. How many victims fell now! It is well known what the ox and the sheep were in their eyes.

Then came the sixth judgment (Ex. 9:8-12), a boil breaking forth with brains on man and beast in all Egypt, and notably on the magicians who could not

stand before Moses. Such a purulent eruption baffled their scrupulous avoidance of impurity. The vanity of their divinities was as manifest as of their own arts of healing.

Next, the seventh plague (Ex. 9:13-35), hail with thunder and consuming fire, drew from Pharaoh the confession of his sin and a promise to let the people go, broken by him as soon as Jehovah heard the intercession of Moses. Perversity alone could in this see phenomena ordinary in Egypt, let the time or other circumstances be what they might.

The threat of the locusts to eat what remained from the hail brought Pharaoh's servants to their senses; but on the demand of Moses that all should go, old and young, children and cattle, to keep their feast to Jehovah (not a word of three days now), they are driven out from before the king, and the eighth blow falls all over the land. The powers of the air were at the command of Jehovah and against Egypt. (Ex. 10:1-20)

So still more solemnly in the preternatural darkness of the ninth plague. (Ex. 10:21-29) The sovereign who derived his name from the sun availed nothing for all the land of Egypt, while the darkness which might be felt was made visible in its source by the light which all the children of Israel had in their habitations.

It is sad to hear a so-called orthodox antagonist of rationalism weaken the tenth infliction (Ex. 11) by the remark that "it must not be inferred that none of the first-born remained alive in the land, or that none besides the first-born died." And it is rank infidelity to say that "the eternal (?) laws of nature are sufficient to effect whatever he intended to bring about in the history

of redemption." It is to deny God's word, if not God Himself.

At last in Exodus 12 comes the grand decisive stroke, where there was no appearance of second causes, and the hand of God made itself felt in an unprecedented way. Murrain and even hail were not such uncommon visitors in Egypt, still less so were other plagues. It was impossible to deny the peculiarity of some of the plagues. At the same time all were so distinctly according to His word, and fell one after another with such alarming frequency and tremendous force on them, that they confessed the hand of God. The very magicians themselves owned themselves defeated; for whatever they might do with their enchantments at first, they were soon silenced. But at length comes the last plague inflicted, the slaying of the first-born in the land, and with it the line of demarcation still more evident between the friends and foes of Jehovah. Even in the third and fourth plagues we find God marking off His people. At first they may have been involved in a general way, but gradually a separation is made more and more plain. Now it was undeniable. Another plague might, if not must, be the destruction of the nation. Israel must leave now. Pharaoh had scorned Jehovah's call for the homage of His first-born Israel; and from the beginning had been warned that if he refused to let him go, "behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born." (Ex. 4:22) Heads of houses did fall afterwards at the Red Sea with Pharaoh's host; but the ten plagues were in the way of preparatory chastenings, not the figure of so wide and indiscriminate a judgment.

But the question which was decided that paschal night affected the Jew not less than the Egyptian. God was

there as a Judge, dealing with man's sin. How then could Israel escape? This was what had to be set forth: a slain lamb becomes the sole means of security4 — the sprinkled blood of the lamb. There were other requisitions on God's part which showed that this had another and an infinitely more solemn character than the preceding plagues. Not a fact only but a type, still it was a type not of an earthly woe but of a judgment before the eyes of God — judgment of sin. Hence there were not merely insects, or the elements brought in, but God employing a destroyer for the first-born of man and beast. Here man had to face death, and that in what was dearest to him — his first-born.

As to the difficulties raised in Bishop Colenso's chaps. 20, 21, the small number of priests for their work, they are imaginary and prove great inattention to the facts in Scripture. Thus Aaron and his sons had no such duty in the Passover, as we find in the extraordinary temple celebration recorded in 2 Chr. 30:5. In Egypt it was essentially a family feast, and so probably in the wilderness: certainly not one word then ties it to the presence or action of the priests. Its family character appears in the New Testament also. The Israelites who were not circumcised in the wilderness could not have found work for Aaron and his sons; for that rite was the basis for all the rest, and yet it was certainly neglected there and then.

Hence the Passover is brought before us of which the New Testament makes great account — the type of Christ the Lamb of God sacrificed for us, with the striking accompaniment of leaven absolutely excluded Leaven represents iniquity in its tendency to extend itself by assimilating what was exposed to its action This

ordinance then means the disallowance and putting away of all evil that belongs to man in his fallen state. The flesh of the lamb was to be eaten not raw or sodden, but roast with fire, the strong and evident sign of fierce unsparing divine judgment It must and ought to be so; for herein Christ's death met our sins and God's judgment. Thus and thus only was the Israelite to eat of the lamb, sanctified by and to this holy feast, eating of its roast flesh that night and leaving none till the morning, or, if aught remained, burning it with fire. It was a matter between God and the soul, outside the domain of sense and nature. It was apart from all common food. All the congregation of Israel might and must eat it, but no stranger — unless circumcised, no foreigner, no hired servant, but only he who was bought and circumcised; and when eaten, bitter herbs must accompany it — repentance on our part, the fruit of the truth applied to us by grace. "And thus then shall ye eat; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah's passover."

On the other hand the feast of the Passover did not comprehend in its type the full result of Christ's work in comfort and blessing. There was no communion. As it is said of this feast elsewhere, "Every one went to his own tent;" so although it was here the house of the Israelite in the land of Egypt, still communion is not seen. In a certain sense what was set forth is yet more important, as it lies at the bottom of communion, without which there could be none according to God's holy nature.

In short, the Passover was the judgment of sin before God. As He never loses sight of its need, so we never can make light of it without loss to our souls. Much as

one rejoices through the mercy of God in that which is built upon it and is its complement, sweet and precious as it is to follow by the way of resurrection into heavenly glory itself, never forget for a moment that what stands alone in depth of suffering and in efficacious value before God is the death of Christ. This then is brought before us here with the utmost possible care; as the Spirit of God gives immense scope to the allusions elsewhere. Indeed, it is one of those feasts that are never to cease while souls are to be saved. Peculiar to the land of Egypt as the only feast that could be celebrated there, it was laid down specifically for the wilderness (Num. 9); and when Israel shall enter the land again, even when the time of glory arrives for the world, still there will be the feast of the Passover. So will it be for earthly people, when gathered back to God's land here below. Thus the Passover has, above all, a fundamental and a permanent character beyond all other feasts. Hence therefore the children of God may surely gather what its antitype must be to God Himself.

But the subject is so familiar to us that we need not enlarge upon the minutiæ of this feast. I will only add, that in Exodus 13 we find another thing — a character stamped on the firstborn brought into connection with the Passover.5 They belonged to God henceforth after a special sort as the consequence of deliverance from Egypt. But besides this complete devotedness we see also the ordinance of the unleavened bread in this connection, that is, unfeigned purity of heart by faith.6 The two things are here put together as flowing from the sense of a divinely wrought deliverance. This is remarkably evinced in the character now given them, as well as their preciousness with God. He who delivered

them claimed them as His own. If the firstborn of an animal could not be sacrificed, it must like man's firstborn be redeemed. "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn." This, as well as the connected eating of unleavened bread, is founded on the Passover.

But Exodus 14 brings before us another order of ideas. Though there can be no stable foundation without the sacrifice of Christ, in itself it does not give, but only lays the basis for, the full blessing of grace in redemption. Without it there is nothing good, righteous, or holy, as far as we are concerned; without it there is no adequate dealing with sin; without it there is no vindication of the majesty of God. Nevertheless peace is impossible if we have only that which answers to the Passover. The soul must enter into what is beyond, if we are to have real rest and enjoyment and communion. Hence we find here that God permits the full power of the enemy to be arrayed against Israel. They never were in greater alarm than after they had partaken of the paschal feast; but that alarm was used of God to show the total inability of Israel to cope with the difficulty. It was for the purpose of having the full power of Satan brought out against His people that He might demolish it for ever. And so He does. Pharaoh, his host and his chariots, — all the flower of Egypt — were there drawn up and ready to devour the poor children of Israel. Destruction in one way or another seemed to be inevitable. The sea was before them; they were hemmed in on every side, with Pharaoh and his host behind them: how was it possible to conceive a door of deliverance there? God there and then was about to accomplish a deliverance without precedent, which remains the bright and strong ground for counting on such a God. Thus, whatever difficulties

might rise before Israel, no matter what their source or character, the day of the Red Sea is always, whether in the Psalms or the prophets, the point to which the heart of an instructed Israelite turned. It was there that God showed, not merely what must be in order that He should be able righteously to abstain from judging (and hence destroying) a sinful people, but what He is in defence of His people against all their foes, were they the mightiest.

Accordingly then this is the great truth taught in Ex. 14; and it is here that God takes the place properly of Saviour-God. Salvation always means a great deal more than that my sins are judged in the death of Christ. Salvation means that I am brought consciously to know God in the triumph of redemption by Christ for me. Hence it will be found that in the doctrine of the New Testament there is never the allowance of such a thought as that salvation is only the beginning of the blessing. People not imbued with scriptural truth are often apt to talk of salvation in a slighting or at least superficial way. They speak of a person perhaps as “not happy; but at any rate he is saved.” Never do we meet with language like this in the New Testament. Salvation means known conscious deliverance. It is not merely a good hope of being delivered, but that the person himself by grace has no doubt about it. Of this people often lose the true force by an unscriptural phraseology. Indeed the denial of salvation as a present status is part of the current coin of Christendom, and the truth is opposed in one way or another by the parties who otherwise oppose each other. Arminianism naturally resists it, as its doctrine causes salvation to turn largely on man’s deserts; while Calvinism would consent to

salvation in “the purpose of God” or some jargon of the kind, while meanwhile the object of it may have no comfort, nor solid footing whatever for his soul. Far removed from both is the truth and the language of scripture; and to scripture we must hold.

Thus in Romans 5 salvation is very clearly referred to, and put in full contradistinction to what God has wrought for us by the blood of Christ. The apostle says, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: much more then, being now justified by his blood” (it is evidently the same grand truth as the Passover), “we shall be saved from wrath through him.” It is clear that salvation here is not simply that a person is purged from guilt, but the real application of Christ’s work in all its fulness; only that we have it not yet for our bodies. “We shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (this was the beginning), “much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.” It is plain therefore, that salvation requires and involves not only the death but the life of Christ; that salvation supposes not merely guilt removed through His blood, but ourselves maintained, and to be brought through all difficulties, past, present, and future. Thus it is a complete deliverance from all that can be brought against us; not a going through the world with hope of protective mercy, which is the notion of man, but a complete victory over the foe present and future.

The type or principle of this we have here for the first time when Moses says “this day” and speaks about the salvation of Jehovah; and again, later on in the chapter, “Jehovah saved Israel.” How beautiful the accuracy of

scripture! We might have put in that Jehovah saved Israel on the night of the paschal lamb; but nowhere then is such an expression heard. No; they were sheltered, but in the true sense not yet “saved.” Salvation means the known destruction of their foes, God having risen up in the majesty of His power, and manifested it completely in their favour. Here they were clearly on the simple ground of grace; and immediately afterwards we have the triumphant song of Moses and the children of Israel — “I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. Jah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation.” This last phrase then is not merely a casual expression; it is the purposed and suited language of the Holy Ghost. We are meant to take notice that now we can speak of “salvation,” not before. (Ex. 15)

But there is more than this. There are some weighty consequences of this wonderful work of God, and one of them is this: “He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation.” It has been often remarked, and very justly, that although Genesis is so prolific of the various counsels and ways of God, there is the more marked an absence of the special truth of Exodus in it. Thus, although we have sacrifice as such, covenant and other kindred dealings of God, redemption in its full import at least is never brought before us in that book. I am not aware of anything of the sort. By redemption I mean not merely a price paid to purchase us that we may belong to God (this indeed is not the proper import of the word), but rather in its precise meaning this too that God has broken the power of the adversary, ransoming and freeing us for Himself. Such is redemption. I arrant

you that to the Christian both these truths are made good. He is bought with a price, as we are often told in scripture, and we know it. But the effect of the purchase is that we become the bondmen of the Lord; the effect of redemption is that we become the freemen of the Lord. As ever, man is quick to put the two things in opposition. He cannot understand how a person can be both a freeman and a bondman. But the truth is certain, and both clearly revealed. The reason why a man finds it hard to put the two truths together is that he trusts himself and not God, and this because he wants to be free from the restraints of His will and word. It wants but little thought and reflection for a person to understand that each of them is not only quite just, but that they are both thoroughly compatible and harmonious. Can we not comprehend brethren, that we were under the power of an enemy of God? In the face of this, when enslaved to him, redemption was the putting forth of God's own power in Christ in a way suitable to His majesty and holiness, in which not a single claim was left unsettled, not a single requisite was not answered, not a single sin of man but was judged, yet all and every quality in God was honoured, and we are brought out triumphant and free. Thus we are made to be the Lord's freemen; and what should do it if Christ's redemption could not? He did indeed accomplish it, but at all cost to Himself.

But there is more than this in the work of Christ which broke the power of Satan, "that by death he might destroy him that had the power of death." He has perfectly annulled his power, and met all on God's part needful for us; but there is another thought. It is of all consequence that we should feel that we are

immediately responsible to God according to the new, intimate, and holy relationship which is ours in virtue of redemption. We are bought with a price. (And what a price!) Thus we belong to Him — we are not our own, but His. These two truths combine in the Christian; but there is this difference between them — that the world also is “bought,” and every man in it; whereas it would be false to say that every man in the world is “redeemed.” If we are subject to scripture, we must say that there is no such thing as universal redemption; but we must confess the truth of universal purchase.7 Christ’s blood has purchased the whole world with every soul and every other creature in it. Therefore in 2 Peter 2, for instance, we hear wicked heretics spoken of as denying the Lord (δεσπότην), not that redeemed, but “that bought them.” The Sovereign Master made them His property: they are a part of that which He purchased to Himself by blood. They do not own it themselves; they treat the Master’s claims and rights with indifference and contempt, as every unbeliever does. The believer is not only bought by the precious blood of Christ, but delivered from the power of the enemy, just as Israel was in type here. The two things are therefore as clear as they are also harmonious. The effect of the one is that the enemy has no longer the slightest claim to us, or power over us; the effect of the other is that the Lord has a perfect right to us in every particular. Let us own the grace and wisdom of our God in both.

What Christ has done is the right thing as well for us as for the glory of God; but then there is another result which should be noticed as the consequence of redemption, and so, beginning to appear in this chapter, it is brought out more fully elsewhere. It is now, after

redemption, that God reveals Himself as “glorious in holiness.” He never did before. No one could be expected to believe this (if he did not look into the Bible and bow to the truth), that God could have written a whole book and never once have spoken of holiness before this. That God should not have touched on the matter in a book so fertile of truths as Genesis would hardly be credible to a mere theologian. But when we begin to be subject to the truth, instead of getting up technical theology, when we look into that which is divine, not the mere science that man has made of it to the utter havoc of its bloom and beauty, — when we search into the word of God, we then see and enjoy its perfection. Holiness in Scripture is as much made to depend on redemption as God’s being able righteously to come and dwell in our midst. How could He do this till sin was gone? And how till redemption could sin be gone for God to have a holy resting-place in the midst of men?

Here then having the typical redemption of Israel from Egypt — the greatest and fullest type of it in the Old Testament, immediately after (without even allowing a single chapter to intervene) we hear of God glorious in holiness, as well as of a habitation prepared for Him. This again is not an immaterial expression by the way, but bound up with the truth now first brought before us: “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Jehovah, which thy hands have established. Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever.”8 Thus the dwelling of God amongst His people is revealed immediately after we have the express type of redemption. Now in Christianity this has a most blessed

antitype. Not that there will not be the dwelling of God in the midst of His people by-and-by; but the peculiarity of our calling is, that we wait for none of our characteristic joys: we have all in Christ now by the power of the Spirit before we go to heaven. We have in principle everything while we are on the earth. We have what belongs to heaven while we are here. We wait for nothing except Christ Himself in actual person to take us above. Of course by many this will scarce be understood. Hope undoubtedly has its full place; for we suffer still, and Christ Himself is gone to prepare a place for us, and is coming again to receive us to Himself, and that we may be glorified together. But what else is there that we have not? All the promises in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. I grant you that my body is not yet changed, nor yours; but then we have got infinitely better than even the body changed for us if alone; we have Christ Himself, and this risen and in God's presence on high. Therefore the change in the body is the mere consequence of what we have already; whereas Christ in heavenly glory as the fruit of redemption and of God's righteousness is the hinge of all that will glorify God and secure the blessing not of the Old Testament saints and the church only but of Israel, the nations, man, the earth, heaven, and all things for ever, around the mighty centre of all. In Him is concentrated the full power of the change that will follow in due time, as He is the firstfruits of that glorious harvest.

So it is with all other truths; and amongst the rest with this, that God, instead of waiting to have us in heaven, and taking up His abode in our midst there, makes us to be His habitation while we are here — a proof of His

love and of the perfectness of Christ's redemption incomparably greater than waiting till we are actually changed and taken to heaven, because here He deigns to dwell with us spite of all we are. We are here in the place where we may, alas! think, feel, speak, and act unworthily of such a habitation; and yet in the face of all He here deigns to dwell in us. If He thus dwells in us, is not this one of the capital truths which we are called to make good in our faith and practice day by day? When we come together as His assembly, should we not remind ourselves that we are not only members of the body of Christ, but God's habitation through the Spirit? When held thus in faith it becomes a most practical test for souls; for nothing should be said or done in that assembly but what is suitable to God's dwelling-place.

In the latter part of the chapter there is another topic. After the triumph the children of Israel are led by Moses into the wilderness where there was no water. A most astonishing thing it might seem at first sight, that after having been thus blessed, the first thing the people find is a wilderness where there is no water; and that, when they do come to water, it is so bitter that they cannot drink it. "Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" But the resource was at hand. "He cried unto Jehovah; and Jehovah showed him a tree which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There he made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he proved them." God was showing that the privileges and power of redemption in Christ are one thing, and the necessary practice that follows from redemption another. But we are now in the place where all this is put in fact to the test; and the only

power to sweeten what is bitter is by bringing in Christ. Else we find either no water whatever, or the water brackish and undrinkable. Thus we have to make death and resurrection good in our practice, learning the reality of the wilderness and the utter want of all power of refreshment in the place and circumstances through which we are passing. We owe everything to Christ.

After this is proved, abundant refreshment is given. How truly of the Lord! “They came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.”

But there is another lesson also. Whatever may be the refreshment by the way, the Lord sets forth in a full and distinct manner the need of absolute dependence on Christ in another form for support all the wilderness through. Here comes in that most remarkable type of Christ personally given as the bread of life for the people of God to feed on. This is in Exodus 16.9 It has been well remarked that it is as connected with this we have the Sabbath introduced, type of the rest of God. This is alone marked out and secured for us by Him who came down from heaven. Christ Himself is the manna of the people of God. Elsewhere we see Christ, not humbled, but heavenly and in heaven the food for the people viewed as in heavenly places. But it is well to note at the end of the chapter the omer of manna laid up before Jehovah for the generations of Israel, which Aaron laid up before the Testimony. It is Christ the hidden manna, Christ in His humiliation never to be forgotten by our hearts.

The force of this is made still more manifest by what follows. In Exodus 17 we have not Christ given from

above, the bread of God for us while we are in the world, but the rock smitten with Moses' rod when the waters flow abundantly. It was the last place where man would have looked for refreshing streams. But the rod of God smites the rock, and the people drink of the waters it gave out.10 But the name of the place was called Massah and Meribah, because of Israel's strife and tempting of Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us or not? Immediately after they came into conflict at Rephidim with Amalek, the proud enemy of Israel. Joshua (who always represents Christ acting by the Spirit) fought and won, while Aaron and Hur held up the heavy hands of Moses on the top of the hill. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." The bearing of this on the Christian is most evident. The free gift of the Spirit of God to us in our thirst and weariness depends simply on Christ suffering for us — Christ coming under judicial dealing, the rod of God as applied to that rock. As then the living streams flowed, so the Holy Ghost, we know, was not given till Christ was glorified as the result of redemption. But then what follows this is not the Sabbath, but conflict with the enemy. Amalek has to be fought. And here comes in another principle of immense importance. For the believer it is not prowess or wisdom that secures the victory. It is entirely dependent on the uplifted hands of the Mediator on high. Here Moses was but the type, and consequently there is feebleness. On either side Aaron and Hur support his arms when heavy, and thus victory is secured for the people of God. Whatever may be the power, there is no taking them out of the place of dependence. They are made to feel the necessity of

dependence on the one who is not in the fight, but outside it, and above it all. They must fight; but victory turns on the one who is pleading for them on the hill. Need I add that we have a better than Moses, who requires neither Aaron nor Hur to support His arm in interceding for us? Nevertheless it remains true, that although the victory is assured, the fight must be maintained to the very last. “And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: For he said, Because Jah hath sworn that Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”11 This is a war which must be without intermission maintained by His people; but it is Jehovah’s war. What shall man do to us?

That any difficulty should be raised about the name “Meribah” being used twice on those two contrasted occasions where man behaved equally ill, God equally in grace, only proves the disposition to cavil, especially as on the first occasion their chiding gained them a specific name, which was not given the second time.

The last of these chapters that I would now notice is the typical picture of the scene of glory; and there too is seen the Gentile in singular prominence — Jethro eating bread with the elders of Israel. Thus there are all the great elements of the future kingdom. We have the type of Christ; we have Israel in their proper place and order; we have the Gentile represented there. This will be found in the reign of glory that is coming But it is well to direct our attention to the order of the millennial day, foreshown in the regulations made by the legislator for the due administration of justice among the people called to be the display of Jehovah’s will in earthly righteousness. The Gentile will unfeignedly rejoice for all the goodness Jehovah will have done to Israel,

delivering them from the hand of all enemies from first to last. The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness when His judgments are in the earth, and will then know with Jethro that Jehovah is greater than all gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly [judgment came] upon them. And He shall be fling over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Jehovah, and His name one. None but God could have drawn the picture. It is only to be read in the light of Christ and of God's revelations about Him: all then is clear and plain. And there cannot be a more affecting feature than that the very people to whom these living oracles were committed are those who see least in them, unless it be those apostates from Christianity, who borrow but exceed the unbelieving thoughts of the Jews, and then vaunt their destructive system as critical and rational. What beauty can they trace in that which has been occupying us? It must be so because of their rejection and scorn of Christ, whereas the whole secret of entering into the mind of God is that we know and have believed His Son — that we have received Him as indeed the Saviour of the world, as was confessed by the Samaritans when they heard Him themselves. The Holy Ghost can then lead on in the growing discernment of His image impressed on each incident which is made to be the means of setting forth His glory in the written word. How far does Christendom, more than the Jews, own either salvation by grace, the gift of the Spirit, or the kingdom when Christ appears in glory?

May the Lord then grant us unfeigned and growing confidence in all that which He is!

In the next part of the book of Exodus is a change of the greatest magnitude; but we shall find also that God

never forgets His own people. Although circumstances may alter, He abides alone wise and alone good. May we delight in all He has given us!

Exodus 19-40

“In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.” Up to this point all the dealings of God have been the simple application and outflow of His own grace. This is all the more striking too, because even after the redemption of the people from Egypt there are grievous faults, unbelief, complaints, and murmurs; nevertheless, not a blow, not a single answer on God’s part save in tender mercy towards a poor and failing people. All changes now.

The reason is manifest. They left the ground of the grace of God, which they had in no wise appreciated. Their conduct proved that His grace had not at all entered into their hearts. It was a perfectly righteous thing therefore that God should propose terms of law. Had He not done so, we should not have had duly raised the solemn question of man’s competence to take the ground of his own fidelity before God. Not a soul that has been since brought to the knowledge of God but what at least ought to have profited — in point of fact, must have profited by this grave lesson. It is true that God had taken every care to show His own mind about it. From the time that man fell, He presented grace as the only hope for a sinner. But man was insensible, and therefore, inasmuch as his heart was continually taking the place of self-righteousness, God’s law put him thoroughly to the test. This accordingly was proposed. Had there been any true understanding of their own

state in the sight of God they had confessed that, however righteous the obligation to render obedience to the law, they being unrighteous could only be proved guilty under such a proof. The test must have brought inevitable ruin. But they had no such thoughts of themselves, more than real knowledge of God.

Hence therefore, no sooner does God propose to them that they should obey His law as the condition of their blessing at His hands, than they at once accept the terms: “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.” The result soon appears in their ruin; but Jehovah shows that He knew from the first, before any result appeared, their inability to stand before Him: “Lo,” says He to Moses, “I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever.” But in this chapter, and indeed in the next still more, the people entreat that God’s voice should not speak to them any more.

Then (Exodus 20) are uttered those wonderful ten commandments which are the great centre of divine communications through Moses — the fundamental expression of God’s law. On this, being so thoroughly familiar to all, I of course do not enlarge. We know from our Lord Jesus its moral summary and essence — the love of God, and the love of man. But it was presented here for the most part in a way that betrayed the condition of man — not in positive precepts but in negative ones — a most humbling proof of man’s estate. He loved sin so well that God had to interdict it. In the greater part of the ten commandments, in short, it was not “Thou shalt,” but “Thou shalt not.” That is, it was a

prohibition of man's will. He was a sinner, and nothing else.

A few words on the law may be well here. It may be looked at in its general and historical bearing, more abstractly as a moral test.

First, God was dealing with Israel in their responsibility as witnesses of Jehovah, the one true self-existing God, the almighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His relationship was with them as they then were, redeemed from Egypt by His power and brought to Himself indeed, but only after an outward sort, neither born of God, nor justified. They were a people in the flesh. They had been wholly insensible to His ways of grace in leading them out of Egypt to Sinai. They lost sight of His promises to the fathers. They stood in their own strength to obey the law of God, as ignorant of their impotence or of His holy majesty. Accordingly we may regard the law as a whole, consisting not only of moral claims but of national institutes, ordinances, statutes, and judgment) under which Israel were put. These consequently were to form and regulate them as a people under His special government, God suiting them to their condition and in no way revealing His own nature as He afterwards did personally in the Word made flesh in the New Testament as a full display of His mind, and in the Christian individually or the church corporately as responsible to represent Christ, like Israel in relation to the tables of stone. (2 Cor. 3) Hence we can understand the earthly, external, and temporal character of the legal economy. There were believers before it and all through; but this of course wholly distinct from Judaism. It was now a question of a nation, and not of individuals merely, thus governed — of one nation in the midst of many which

were to behold in it the consequences of fidelity or the lack of it toward the law of Jehovah. The Old Testament proves, and indeed the New Testament also, how utterly Israel failed, and what the consequences have been alike in the justice and in the grace of God.

But, secondly, the law is a test morally and individually. This always abides; for the law is lawful if a man use it lawfully. Christianity teaches its value instead of neutralising it. It is false that the law is dead. It is not thus that the believer, even if a Jew and therefore under law, was withdrawn from its condemning power. By the law he died to the law that he might live to God. He is crucified with Christ and nevertheless he lives, yet not himself but Christ in him. He underwent death to the law by the body of Christ that he should belong to another — Him that was raised from the dead in order that we should bear fruit to God. But it is as far as possible from the truth that "the discipline of the law comes in to supply the deficiencies of the Spirit, and curb the still remaining tendencies to sin."12 Such was no doubt the doctrine of those whom the apostle censures as wishing to be law-teachers, understanding neither what things they say nor whereof they stoutly affirm. It is not Christianity to talk of "deficiencies of the Spirit," any more than of "still remaining tendencies to sin;" still less to call in the discipline of the law to mend matters. Is it not known that for a righteous man (which assuredly the believer is) law is not in force, but for lawless and insubordinate, the ungodly and sinful. They that are of Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. It is a question of mortifying our members which are on earth, on the ground of our being dead, and of walking by the Spirit, even as we live by

Him, and of those not in anywise fulfilling flesh's lust. Thus, if the law be the power of sin, grace is of holiness. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, we find that God was pleased to give subsequently and separately, but yet in connection with the ten words, certain ordinances which concerned Israel in their worship.

All the people then saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, and stood afar off, asking that not God but Moses should speak with them. He accordingly drew near into the thick darkness; for so God dealt with Israel as a people in the flesh. For the Christian it is not so. The veil is rent; and we walk in the light as He is in the light. Yet even then Jehovah, while warning against making gods of silver and gold, deigned to direct them to make to Him an altar of ground for burnt-offerings and peace-offerings: if of stone two prohibitions instruct His people. It must not be of hewn stone, as their work would profane it; neither must the Israelite go up by steps, as thereby his nakedness would be manifested. Grace covers through the expiation of Christ, as it flows in virtue of God's work and in maintaining God's order.

In the beginning of Ex. 21 we find the type of the servant. There cannot be a more striking illustration of the truth that Christ is the continual object of the Holy Ghost than that, even in these temporary ordinances, God cannot refrain from looking onward to His Son. No doubt it was connected with the earth, and what was in itself anything but a condition suitable to the mind of God. It is the condition of a slave; nevertheless even

there God has Christ before Him. If a Hebrew servant were bought, he was to serve for six years, — in the seventh to go out free for nothing “If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.”

Such was the choice of Jesus — not to be merely a servant here on the earth for a time — He has chosen of His own gracious will to be servant for ever. No doubt He cannot but be a divine person, the Son, as He is also the exalted Lord; but He is nevertheless by His own grace the servant for ever. Even in glory we shall know Him thus. What is He doing now? He gave a sample of it before He went up on high. When the time was come, He took a basin of water and a towel, and washed His disciples’ feet. What they knew not then, they were to know hereafter, as we know it now. Intimacy with what is unseen and heavenly is quite as much the portion of a Christian and even more characteristically so than the knowledge of what passes around us now. We ought to know heaven better than the earth. We may know and ought to judge what is passing in the world, though it be through an imperfect medium; but we know heaven and heavenly things from God. It is not merely as having the word that reveals heaven; but we know it from Him who

comes from heaven and is above all, and testifies what He has seen and heard; we know it through the Holy Ghost who has come down from it, and hence should know it better than the earth, and the things of the world which ensnare the flesh. But looking onward to the day of glory that is coming, when the Lord will be publicly manifested, and we manifested with Him, changed into His glorious likeness, it might have been thought that surely His service will cease then. But not so: it will take a new shape. He is the servant of His own choice for ever. As He will never cease to be God, He will never cease to be man. In His love He is become a servant for ever; and He loves to be so.

After this follow the general institutions of the law, which mainly insist on retribution. Advantage must not be taken of the weak or subject; violence cannot go unpunished, any more than dishonour where we owe reverence; responsibility for what is allowed, were it but a mischievous brute; restitution must be made, and this double, fourfold, or even fivefold, according to the wrong; neither a witch nor an offender unnaturally could live; neither stranger nor widow nor orphan must be vexed or afflicted; neither poor must be burdened, nor judges reviled; but God is to be honoured with the first of the fruits, and of the sons, as well as of the cattle. Israel are to approve themselves as holy men to God. False report and testimony are forbidden, were a multitude to lead the way; as on the other hand there must be no partiality to the poor man’s cause, nor a refusal to help an enemy, nor falsehood, nor bribery, nor oppression. The seventh year was to be enjoyed as the land’s Sabbath, even as the seventh day by each Israelite, who must avoid naming false gods, but keep

the due feasts thrice a year to the true God, not offering blood with leavened bread, nor letting the fat remain till the morning A prohibition occurs of a peculiar kind, and is repeated not only in a later part of this book, but also in Deuteronomy: “Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother’s milk.” God would guard His people from an outrage in comeliness, were it even about a dumb or dead animal; as Satan triumphs in all that is abnormal and unnatural in the superstitions which usurp the place of the truth, and are bound up with idolatry. His angel is promised, not only to keep and lead Israel, but to bring them in, spite of the doomed Canaanites, who should be driven out: they should have no covenant with them or their gods. (Ex. 21-23) These points do not call for particular remarks.

Along with them there is the greatest possible care for the maintenance of one true God an immense principle. No doubt the time was not yet come for God to reveal Himself as He is. Into that wondrous knowledge we are brought by the Son come down here below; and above all by the Holy Ghost, now that Christ is gone up on high For in point of fact, when God was only known as the one God, however true this may be, He could not really be known as He is. Now we do so know Him. We know Him better than even His earthly people will know Him by and by. The knowledge of Israel in the millennium will be genuine, for they shall be all taught of God. But there is now an intimacy of acquaintance with the God and Father of the Lord Jesus which none on earth can ever know as a Christian ought to know it. The reason is manifest; for the proper knowledge of the Christian is such knowledge as the Son, speaking according to His own communion with His Father, communicates to us.

Now the Lord Jesus will not be dealing then as Son, though then as evermore the Son of God. He will not undertake to unfold His Father's words to men in the millennium. He will reign as the great King — King of kings and Lord of lords, but still as King. It would not be suitable to such a position that there should be undue familiarity. The very notion of a king and a kingdom puts the subjects at a greater distance. A certain reserve becomes requisite to majesty; whereas such considerations disappear in the nearness of relationship He is pleased to enter into with us. It is true He was born King of the Jews, and He never can cease to be really so; but it is not so that we know Him. The Son of the Father, He brings us into the knowledge of the true God — as the Son knew Him in heaven, as the Son still of course knew Him on earth. And the Holy Ghost completes this wonderful circle of divine intimacy. If I may venture on such an expression without irreverence, it is the introducing us into the family circle of the heavens — the Father made known in the Son by the Holy Ghost. This I maintain to be peculiar to Christianity in all its fulness. When God the Father shall have accomplished His present purpose here below, then will be caught up to meet the Lord those among whom the Spirit is thus making known God; and after that the ordinary dealings of God will resume their course through this world. No doubt all was advancing as regards the world; but that which was brought to us now was before the world, and altogether above the world in its own nature. How greatly blessed then is the Christian, and what the manner and measure of the worship and the walk which become those to whom grace has given such a knowledge of God!

At the end of these communications a call is given Moses to come up to Jehovah. (Ex. 24) “And he said unto Moses, Come up unto Jehovah, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship ye afar off.” There is distance, even though they are called to this place of distinction. “And Moses alone shall come near Jehovah, but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the people go up with him.” And there the solemn compact into which Israel had passed is renewed. All the people answer when the words and judgments are pronounced, “All the words which Jehovah hath said will we do.” They promise obedience, but it is obedience of the law. Now we must always bear in mind that, though in the Christian walking aright the righteousness of the law will surely be fulfilled, never has Christianity either a legal principle or a legal character: not a legal principle because it flows from the known grace of God to the soul; not a legal character because it is consistency with Christ risen from the dead, not merely with the Ten Command meets. But inasmuch as Christ differed from Moses, as grace differs from law; as that which suits God the Father known in heaven, though manifesting Himself upon earth, differs from a process of mere dealing with the first man according to righteous claim; so it is with the Christian man: while faithful to Christ, as he knows Him, he will never do anything which the law could possibly condemn. Against the fruits of the Spirit there is no law, as the apostle so emphatically says to the Galatians. But then the fruits of the Spirit can never be attained by the law; nor are they even contemplated by a legal measure.

In short therefore the children of Israel stood on the ground of man in the flesh; and man in the flesh, as he is

a sinful being, can neither deny nor accomplish his obligation to do the will of God. As surely as God is, man's conscience bears witness to Him. If the true God deigns to give a law to man, it must be an unimpeachably wise and worthy law adapted to the condition of man, as far as a law possibly can be; and such is God's law — holy, just, and good. But the difficulty is this, that man being a sinner is as far as possible from ability to meet God's law; for how indeed can there be any real stable bond between a bad man and a good law? There lay the insuperable difficulty once; but now grace perfectly meets it, and meets it in a way which evinces alike the goodness and the wisdom of God.

Law is essentially incapable of helping, because being only a claim on God's part, and a definition of His demands, it can only condemn him whose condition makes due obedience impossible. It is evident that law as such, first of all, has no object to present to man. It can press duty to God and man on pain of death, but it has no object to reveal. Secondly, it cannot give life; and this is another necessity of man. In addition to atonement, these are the two urgent wants of fallen humanity. Without life it is impossible for one to produce that which is according to God; and without a worthy object, nay without a divine object presented, there can be nothing to draw out divine affections. As divine life alone can have affections according to God, so a divine object alone can either act on those affections or minister to them. Now this is exactly what grace does in Christ. He who has wrought expiation for our sins is our life, and at the same time He is the object whom God has revealed to our faith. This shows the essential

difference between law and grace, which last means God giving in Christ all that man really needs for His own glory.

Undoubtedly there is another measure of responsibility. A few words on this subject may not be amiss for any souls that have not adequately considered the matter, as there is hardly anything on which men are so much at fault as this question. Some seem on the very verge of denying it altogether, in their one-sided zeal for the grace of God; others who stand stoutly and so far well for the responsibility of man misuse this truth so as apparently to swamp God's grace. Scripture never sacrifices one truth to another. It is the peculiar property and glory of the word of God that it communicates not merely a truth here and there, but the truth; and this in the person of Christ. The Holy Ghost is the only power for rightly using, and applying, and enjoying the truth; and therefore He is called "the truth" no less than the Lord Jesus. He is the intrinsic power by which the truth is received into the heart, but Christ is the object. Where Christ is thus received in the Holy Ghost, a new kind of responsibility is created. The measure of it for the Christian is based on the fact that he possesses life, and that he has Christ Himself, the object which shows him the position in which he stands, and consequently the character of the relationship that attaches to him. His relationship is that of a son, not merely of one adopted into that place with no more reality than he obtains in human things. We are adopted sons; but then we are more than that. We are children, members of the family of God. That is, we are children as having God's own nature. We are born of God, and not merely adopted as if we were strangers to Him.

Every Christian has a nature that is intrinsically divine, as we are told in 2 Peter 1.

Thus, it is plain, nothing can be more complete. We have a nature which answers morally to God whom we imitate as well as obey in light and love, in holy and righteous ways, in mercy, truthfulness, and humility. We have the position of sons, a relationship which the Lord Jesus had in all its perfection, and in an infinitely higher sense, in which no creature can share it along with Him. Still Christ does bring us into His own relationship as far as it is possible for the creature to possess it. Hence, as duty is ever measured by responsibility, that of the Christian is according to the place in which grace has put him. It is certain therefore that all the common-places about the law as the rule of the Christian's life are practically a denial of what Christianity is. Those who reason from Israel to us, without intending it, ignore the relationship of the Christian, and set aside the bearing of redemption on our walk: so serious is that error which to many seems a pious thought, and I am sure taken up by them with the desire of honouring God and His will. But sincerity will not serve in lieu of His word; and our own thoughts and desires can never be trusted as a standard of principle or of practice. God has revealed His mind, and to this, if wise, we must needs be subject. In divine things there is nothing like simplicity; by it we enjoy a wisdom far higher than our own and real power to strengthen and guide the heart.

In Israel's case it was not so. First of all they promised obedience; but it was the obedience of the law. Secondly, when the blood of the victims was shed, it was sprinkled on the book as well as on the people (verses 7, 8). What was the meaning of the blood? Not atonement. The

prime idea in blood seems always to be the life given up, i.e., death, in acknowledgment of the guilt of the one concerned. This is true, no doubt; but unless it goes farther than this, it is a declarative sanction of God's punishing in case of failure to meet His demands. The grace of God applies the blood of Christ in a totally different way; and this is what is referred to in 1 Peter 1:2. He describes the Christian in terms which at once recall Exodus 24. He says that we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. The Israelites were elect as a nation according to the sovereign call of Jehovah — the known God of their fathers. Ignorant of God as well as of themselves, they dared to take their stand on His law. Accordingly they were severed by the ordinance of circumcision and other rites. They were sanctified from the nations by this fleshly separation to obey the law under its solemn and extreme penalty. The blood threatened death on every one who transgressed. The Christian position is altogether different: we are elect as children "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit," meaning by this the separating power of the Holy Ghost from the very first moment of our conversion. This vital separation to God, and not practical holiness, is what is here called sanctification of the Spirit — the most fundamental meaning of it indeed anywhere. But practical sanctification there is, and amply insisted on elsewhere; but it is not the point here, and if we attempt to bring practical sanctification into this verse, we destroy the gospel of grace. Nobody doubts the good intentions of such as interpret it thus; but these are not enough with the word of God.

We must take care that we receive the sense which God intends, otherwise we may err seriously, to His dishonour and to our own hurt and that of others. Let us then bow to God instead of forcing our own meaning on scripture. What for instance would be the meaning of our being practically sanctified to obedience as well as to have the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon us? It simply proves that he who expounds unwittingly sets aside the gospel. Practical sanctification for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus! What do people mean by restricting themselves to a sense of sanctification which necessarily involves in it so portentous a conclusion? Evidently the language of the Spirit of God is as unambiguous, and the construction as plain and simple as possible.

Take a case in illustration. A man hitherto has been altogether indifferent to the word of God. He hears it now; he receives Jesus as the gift of God's love with all simplicity. Perhaps he has not peace at once, but at any rate he is thoroughly arrested; he desires earnestly to know the gospel from the very first. If the Spirit of God has thus wrought in him, he is separated to God from what he was. This is here called "sanctification of the Spirit." For, as we said, the sanctification is "to obedience;" and this is the very first desire implanted in a soul from the moment that there is a real divine work in him. Such an one may be very ignorant, no doubt; but at any rate his heart is made up to obey the Lord — his desire is Godward. It is not a merely legal way of escaping the dreadful doom that he sees is the just portion of those that despise God. The truth has touched his conscience by grace, and God's mercy, however dimly seen, is enough to attract his heart to obey. Thus

he is sanctified by the Spirit unto the obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. He would now obey, because he has the new nature through receiving the name of the Lord Jesus, and would enter into the grace of God that sprinkles the guilty with the blood of Jesus. He would obey like Jesus, not under compulsion like a Jew, and is sprinkled with His blood in remission for his sins, instead of having the blood sprinkled on him as a menace of death in case of disobeying the law. The Christian loves to obey, and is already forgiven through faith of Jesus and His blood. This I believe to be the true meaning of the passage, and especially of the term "sanctification of the Spirit" here; though it is frankly and fully allowed that this is not the only meaning of "sanctification" in scripture.

The sanctification here in question then applies from the start of an effectual inward work even before a soul knows pardon and peace, but there is also room for the practical power of the Holy Ghost in subsequent work in heart and conscience severing us more and more by the truth to the Lord. The latter is practical sanctification, admits of degrees, and is thus relative. But in every soul there is the absolute separation of the Holy Spirit from conversion. Thus there are plainly two distinct senses of sanctification: one absolute, in which a man is severed once for all from the world to God; the other relative, as being practical and hence differing in measure in the after career of each Christian. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Here it seems in substance the same thing as in 1 Peter 1:2. "Sanctified" in this sense is clearly before justification; and so the apostle puts it. It is of no use to decry the

plain meaning of the scripture because the Romanist theologian perverts the fact more fatally than the Protestant. If the Spirit of God here puts “sanctified” before “justified,” our plain duty is to learn what is meant, not to wrest His word because of Popish misuse of it — a misuse due largely to the common ignorance of the primary force of sanctification. Why should souls be driven from the truth by prejudice or clamour? It is not to be allowed that God’s word makes mistakes: man does, but is it with the Spirit of God? Does not He mean what He says? When He says they were washed, He is referring to the water of the word used by the Spirit of God to deal with man. This looks more at evil; “sanctified” to the good which attracted the heart now. But these are not the only things. “Justified” is not when the prodigal son returns to his father, but when the best robe is put upon him; then he is, according to 1 Cor. 6, not washed and sanctified alone but “justified.” It is the application of the full power of the work of the Lord Jesus. It is not always immediate on conversion It may be, and, if you please, ought to be, soon; but still it is far from being always so; and in fact there is and perhaps must be always an interval more or less before comfort or peace is enjoyed. It may be ever so minute, but there is habitually a dealing of Christ between the touch that stays the issue and the word which declares with no less authority than love, “Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” Very often it is not so little a while, as many of us know to our cost. But it remains always true that there is this difference. And it seems well to remark it, because it is of considerable practical and also doctrinal importance, contrasting as it does the place of the Christian with that of the Jew. The tendency of some to insist on the whole in an instant is a

reaction from the popular unbelief, which, if it allow peace at all, allows it as a matter of slow, laborious and uncertain attainment. But we must not be driven into any error, even the least to avoid the greatest; and it is certainly an error to swamp in one all the ways of God with the soul.

In the latter part of the chapter we have clearly the legal glory. This does not take them out of their condition of flesh and blood and all that pertains to it. It is in no way the glory which is the hope of the Christian.

Exodus 25 introduces us to a new order of figures, not only earthly ordinances, but that which appertains to the tabernacle. Undoubtedly in itself it composed a worldly tabernacle; but this does not hinder these figures from typifying what was to be for the most part of a heavenly character.

After the call to the people to bring their offerings, we find the use to which they were to be applied First and foremost stands the centre of Levitical worship — the ark. We must remember that they are but shadows, and not the very image of the thing. In none of these types can one find the full truth of Christ and of His work. They are only a faint and partial adumbration of the infinite reality, and could not possibly be more. Hence they have the imperfection of a shadow. In fact we could not have the full image till Christ appeared and died on the cross and went to heaven. As Christ is the true and perfect image of God, so is He the expression of all that is good and holy in man. Where will one find what man should be but in Christ? Where the faultless picture of a servant but in Him? And so one might go through every quality and every office, and find them only in perfection

in our Lord Jesus. There indeed is the truth. The legal ordinances and institutes were but shadows; still they were types distinctly constituted; and we should learn by them all.

In these shadows13 we may see two very different characters or classes, we may say, into which they are divisible. The first and foundation of all the rest is this: God would disclose Himself in some of them to man, as far as this was possible then; secondly, founded on that and growing out of it, man would be taught to draw near to God. Impossible for such access to exist and be enjoyed till God had drawn near to man and shown us what He is to man. We can see therefore the moral propriety and beauty of this distinction, which at once separates the shadows of the latter part of Exodus into two main sections. The ark, the golden table, the golden candlestick, the tabernacle with its curtains, the veil, the brazen altar, and the court, form the first division of the types, the common object of them all being the display of God in Christ to man.

Of these the highest is the ark. It was the seat of Divine Majesty in Israel; and as all know (and most significant it is), the mercy-seat was pre-eminently that throne of God — the mercy-seat which afterwards we see with blood sprinkled on it and before it — the mercy-seat which concealed the law destructive to the pretensions of man, but maintained it in the place of highest honour, though hidden from human view. Was this nothing? Was there not comfort for any heart which confides in God, that He should take such a seat as this, and give it such a name, in relationship with a guilty people on the earth?

Next came the table,14 and upon it a defined supply of bread. For what was presented there? One loaf? No such carnal thought entered as if God had need of bread from man. The bread that was set on the golden table consisted of twelve loaves — in evident correspondence with the twelve tribes of Israel, but this assuredly in connection with Christ, for He is ever the object of God's counsels. It is God displaying Himself in Christ; but those who had this connection with Christ were Israel. Of them He came, and He deigned to have the memorial of them on this table before God.

In the candlestick another truth comes before us. It is not God who thus deals with humanity, of which Israel was the chosen specimen, and the one remembered before Him; but in the seven candlesticks, or rather the candelabrum with its seven lights, we clearly see the type of Christ as the power and giver of the Holy Ghost in testimony for God. This is in connection with God's sanctuary and presence. Now, in all these things it is the display of what God is to man; God Himself in His own sole majesty in the ark, — God Himself associated with man, with Israel, in the show-bread, — God Himself with this light of the sanctuary or the power of the Spirit of God.

All this was plain, but in the tabernacle we have more than this. (Ex. 26) Christ is set forth in various ways by the curtains — Christ in His human purity and righteousness — Christ in what was heavenly — Christ in His glory whether Jewish or extending over Gentiles also, with His judicial title asserted. The goats' hair would seem to speak of Christ in His prophetic separateness; the rams' skins dyed red point to His absolute consecration to God; as the power which kept

out all evil would appear to be meant by the badgers' or tachach skins, which covered the tent above. The reference is to the fine linen and blue, etc., with the various coverings of goats' hair and badger skins. All these, I have no doubt, have their own proper significance, as manifesting the character of Christ here below.

Next (verses 15-30) follows the account of the acacia boards with their tenons and bolts, the sockets of silver and the rings of gold.

Then we have the veil and screen. Now we know what these mean. Scripture is positive that the veil is His flesh, but then it is as manifesting the Lord as man here below. As long as this was the case only, man could not come to God. When the veil was rent (namely, by Christ dying as a man), man could go into the presence of God, — at least the believer. I do not mean man as man, but that there was no bar to man. The way was now open into the presence of God.

In the brazen altar it is the same side of truth, but there is this characteristic difference. (Ex. 27) Not less than the ark, the golden throne of God in the most holy place, it shows us God's righteousness; but with this difference between them — that gold is the righteousness of God for drawing near where God is; brass is the righteousness of God for dealing with man's evil where man is. Such is the line which divides them. It is the display of God in both cases — the one in the presence of God where He manifests Himself; the other in dealing with man and his wants in this world. Hence we find, for instance, the righteousness of God in Romans. If we consider with any care Romans 3, it is the righteousness

of God presented to man as a sinful being in this world. But if I look at the passage where it is said, “He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” it is evident that we are brought into the very presence of God. Thus 2 Cor. 5 corresponds with the ark rather than the brazen altar. Everything has its beautiful and perfect answer in the word of God; but then all is useless to the soul, except just so far as one sees and receives the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, from the latter part of Exodus 27 we have a change evident, and of more weight.

The last two verses are, I think, transitional. They prepare the way for types which, instead of displaying God in Christ to man, set forth rather man drawing near by the appointed channel to God. They are occupied with the provision of light where God manifested Himself, and in order to the due service of those who entered the sanctuary. “And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.” It may be added here, as some have found an apparent inconsistency in comparing the passage with 1 Sam. 3:3, that the Hebrew means not “always” in the absolute sense, but continually or constantly. It was from evening to morning” and of course uninterruptedly for that time. “In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before Jehovah.” This is greatly confirmed by what follows.

In Exodus 28, 29 is given the prescribed ceremonial in consecrating the priesthood. And what was the object of

the priesthood? Clearly it was for drawing near to God. This is the new division brought in and what might seem at first sight a notable irregularity, as has been observed before, is simply an effect of the perfect arrangement of God's mind. Doubtless to a superficial glance it appears somewhat unaccountable, in the midst of describing the various parts of the sanctuary, to interrupt the course of it by dragging into the very midst of it the consecration of Aaron and his sons. But if there be two separate objects in these types — first, God displaying Himself to man; and, secondly, man in consequence drawing near to God — the way of all is clear. The priesthood undeniably consisted of that class of persons who had the privilege and duty of going into the sanctuary on behalf of the people. And the vessels of the sanctuary described after the priesthood are those which preserve the same common character of presenting the service due to God approached in His sanctuary. Now, let me ask, what mind of man could ever have thought of a decision so excellent, though surely far below the surface? As the foolishness of God, says the apostle, is wiser than man, so (may we not say?) the seeming disorder of God is incomparably more orderly than man's best order.

Thus it will always be found in the long run. We may have absolute confidence in the word of God. Our only business is to learn what He is, what He says, and, more than that, to confide in Him; and when we do not know what He means, always to take the ground of faith against all adversaries. We may be ignorant, and unable to expose them; but we may rest perfectly sure that God is never wrong and man ever untrustworthy. The habitual means whereby God gives proof that He is

right, graciously enabling us to understand is by His word. There is no other means of knowing the mind of God; the power for understanding is the Spirit of God; and the object in whose light alone it can be understood is Christ. But the written word of God is the sole instrumental means and the revelation of it all.

Then, after the priesthood has been fully brought before us, we have the various portions of their dress. A few words will suffice here before passing on. A remarkable provision is that the ephod of the high priest, which was the most important part of his costume, had the names of the children of Israel twice over. One inscription was in the shoulder-pieces. There were the names in a general way — six on one shoulder, six on the other. Besides this their names were written on the breastplate. There the names were all found together on his heart. He who cannot appreciate the blessedness of such a place, with the great high priest bearing up thus the names of God's people before God, must be very insensible to the highest favours. But God, who showed how He would continually remember those He loved, and who could not have a high priest without having their names in honour and love before Him — that blessed God has given us much more. He ordered that there should be the Urim and the Thummim connected with the high priest's breastplate; that is the means of divine guidance for the people. The Christian has it also, and in a far better way. The Jew had it after this outward sort, all being comparatively external in Israel. We have it intrinsically by the Holy Ghost Himself. It is in vain for any person to pretend that it was better to have the Urim and Thummim, for which one had to seek the priest from time to time when wanted, than to be

indwelt always by One who knows all the truth. May Christians believe and use for God the portion each has in Christ!

But besides, when the high priest went into Jehovah's presence, there was the sounding of the bells between the pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet on the skirts of his garment. Such is the effect, it is to be observed, "when he goeth in" and "when he cometh out." Under this falls the Christian testimony now, as the result of the entrance of Christ into heavenly places; and under this will fall the future fruit-bearing portion and testimony of Israel in the day when Christ will appear in glory from the heavens. The bells give their sound when the high priest goes in and when he comes out. When Christ went into the presence of God, what a mighty effect did not the Spirit produce! The church comes under that now. When Christ returns the Spirit will be poured out once more on all flesh, and Israel will be brought into the blessed position of bearing fruit in testimony for God. But, again, Aaron with the golden plate (engraved "Holiness to Jehovah") always on his forehead, bears the iniquity of Israel's holy things that they may be accepted; an important consideration, especially when we know the seriousness and the facility of iniquity therein. Is it not true that there is scarce anything in which we feel more the need of gracious care than in the holy things of God? We know His tender mercy in the smallest matters; but in that which so nearly concerns His honour, it is indeed a truly merciful provision that the Great High Priest bears the iniquity of holy things, where other wise defilement would be fatal. The coat of fine linen embroidered means personal righteousness in ways, set off with every beauty of

grace. Aaron's sons were to have coats, priests' girdles, and bonnets for glory and for beauty. It is Christ put on us. Then follows the ritual required in the act of consecrating Aaron and his sons.

In the hallowing of the priestly family the following points are observable. First, they were all washed in the water, Aaron and his sons. "He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Christ is essentially apart from sin and sinners; we by grace are set apart. Further, our Lord says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself (i.e. on high), that they also might be sanctified by the truth." Then Aaron is duly clothed; as in the priestly character Christ appears before God for us. Then the high priest alone was anointed; as we know Christ could be and was sealed of God the Father without blood, the Spirit thus attesting both the absolute purity of His person and the truth of His Sonship as man. Aaron's sons were then clothed, and girded for priestly work. The blood of the bullock for a sin-offering was put on the horns of the altar; the blood of one ram for a burnt-offering was sprinkled round about upon the altar; and the blood of the other ram for consecration was put on Aaron's right ear, and that of his sons, on their right thumb and right great toe. It was necessarily so with the high priest taken from among men, after the witness already given to Christ's exceptional place. So Christ entered by His own blood — entered in once for all — into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption that we might have a common place with Him by blood and in the Spirit's power. Grace binds us with Christ as Aaron with his sons. As no sacrifice was absent here, so we enjoy all the value of Christ and His work.

But after the form of hallowing the priests, the Spirit prescribes in the end of Exodus 39 (ver. 38-46) the sacrifice of the daily lambs which presented the continual acceptance of the people of God, with the renewed and most express assurance of His dwelling among them. Exodus 30 resumes the account, for a reason already explained, of the various vessels of the sanctuary which had to follow the priesthood, and pursue the truth meant by it, namely, the means of access to God.

Among the vessels of the sanctuary the altar of incense stands first (verses 1-10). Who does not know that this was to secure the people always being acceptable before God! It is the type of Christ interceding for us, and along with this the high priest's work that the manifestation of the Spirit be not hindered.

In verses 11-16 is introduced the ransom money of the people, rich and poor alike, as an offering to Jehovah, their atonement money for the service of the sanctuary (for this is the great point here), the link of all with the priests who actually entered on their behalf.

But there was another requisite next set forth. The brazen laver judged sin by the word of God, just as the brazen altar judged it sacrificially. We need "the washing of regeneration" and generally the washing of water by the word. This follows here. The former in its scriptural usage is not merely, I apprehend, that we are born of God, but goes beyond new birth. It is the putting the believer into an entirely new place before God, which is a different thought from his receiving a new nature. As being a position, it may have so far a more external sound, but it is a real deliverance, which grace now

confers on us in Christ Jesus, not merely the communication of a life which hates sin, but the putting one according to the new place of Christ Himself before God. With this goes also the action of the Spirit of God in dealing with us day by day according to such a beginning. This we need, — the application of the word of God by the Spirit to deal with every kind of impurity. Just as in the type the priests had not only to be washed completely in the laver in order to be consecrated; but whenever they entered into the presence of God, they washed their hands and feet. We have what answers to it. Let us not forget it.

Then we have the holy anointing oil, which also had to do with fitting the priests for drawing near to God. It was the power of the Spirit. It was not merely a new nature or a new position, but it was a corresponding power of the Spirit of God. For the bare possession of a new nature or place would not enable us to do the will of God. It would make us feel what ought to be done, but gives not of itself the power to do it. The Spirit given to the Christian is of power, love, and a sound mind. A new nature finds its great characteristic in dependence — in weakness, or sense of weakness certainly; but the Holy Ghost gives the consciousness of power, though no doubt exercised in dependence. The new nature accordingly has right affections and gracious desires; but there is power in the Spirit through Christ Jesus. God “hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

The last of these types is the holy perfume. Here it seems to be not so much what we have by Christ, but that fragrance in Christ Himself of which God alone is the adequate judge, and which rises up before Him in all

its perfection. How blessed for us! It is for us, but it is only in Him before God.

In Ex. 31 we have all this closed with two facts — the Spirit of God empowering man to make a tabernacle according to the pattern, and the Sabbath-day connected with the order of the tabernacle. It has been remarked by another, and it is perfectly true, that in this book when we meet with any dealing of God, of whatever kind it may be, the Sabbath-day is always introduced. For instance, in the earlier half of Exodus, where we have God's dealings in grace, the Sabbath-day is brought in, marked out by the bread God provided for His people, the manna — the figure of Christ come down from heaven to be the food of the hungry on earth: then followed the Sabbath at once. Next, when the law was given, in the very centre of its requirements stands the Sabbath-day. Again, in these various figures or institutions of good things to come, the Sabbath re-appears. Thus it is evident that, no matter what the subject may be, the Sabbath has always a place assigned to it. God therefore makes much of the sign. The reason is that He would impress on His people that all His dealings, varied as they may be, are intended to keep before their minds that rest to which He was steadily working, and into which He means to bring His own in due time. Therefore whatever the work introduced meanwhile — whether of grace, as the effectual working of God, or whether of law as proving the inefficiency of man — He always holds out His rest, to which He would also direct the eyes of all who love Him.

Exodus 32 reveals a sad interruption after the wonderful communications of God to His servant. Here at least the people are at their work — earnestly at work in

dishonouring God — striking at the very foundation of His truth and honour to their own shame and ruin. Poor people! the objects of such countless favours, and of such signal honour on God's part. They, with Aaron to help them, aimed a blow at the throne of God by making a golden calf. It is needless to linger on the scene of the rebellion. Jehovah directs the attention of Moses to the camp, saying, "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." He wanted to prove and manifest the heart of His servant. He loved the people Himself, and delighted in Moses' love for them. If the people were under the test of law, Moses was under the test of grace.

"And Moses besought Jehovah his God and said, Jehovah, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and [not merely Jacob, but] Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever."

See the ground Moses took — the unqualified promises of God's mercy, the grace assured to the fathers
Impossible for Jehovah to set aside such a plea
Nevertheless Moses comes down with the two tables in

his hand, the work of God. He hears the noise, which Joshua could not so well understand, but which his own keener and more practised ear fails not to interpret aright; and as soon as he came near, and saw the confirmation of his fears — the calf and the dancing — his “anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.”

At once we find him reproaching Aaron, the most responsible man there, who makes a sorry excuse, not without sin. But Moses took his stand in the gate and said, “Who is on Jehovah’s side? Let him come unto me.” Thus he who rejected every overture for his own advancement at the expense of the people now arms the Levites against their brethren. “And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.” Yet we know on the best authority that Moses loved the people as not another soul in the camp did. There is hardly a subject on which men are so apt to make mistakes as the true nature and application of love. Moses loved Israel with a love stronger than death; yet he who thus loved them showed unsparingly his horror of the leprosy that had broken out among them. He felt that such evil must at all cost be rooted out, and banished from amongst them. But the same Moses returns to Jehovah with the confession — “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin -; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”

Jehovah however stands to His own ways, and says to Moses, “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And Jehovah plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.” Nevertheless Moses persists in his plea with Jehovah, who does not fail to try him to the utmost by adopting the language of the people. They had denied God, and attributed their deliverance merely to Moses: so Jehovah takes up these very words, and says, “Depart and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it.” He reproaches them once more with being a stiff-necked people; He will not go up in the midst of them, lest He should consume them in the way. The people thereon mourn; and Moses has recourse to a remarkable act. He takes and pitches the tabernacle, it is said, “without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the Congregation.” After this follow two things worthy of all heed, — a nearness of communication between Jehovah and His servant never enjoyed before, and more than that, — a blessing secured to the people never vouchsafed before.

From this moment a new plea is urged: the faultiness of the people is used as a reason why God should go up — the very reason which righteousness made a ground for refusing to go with them, lest His anger should burn against such a stiff-necked people. But, argues Moses, for this very reason, we most of all want Jehovah’s

presence. Astonishing is the boldness of faith; but then its pleading is grounded on the known grace of God Himself. Moses was near enough to God in the tabernacle, outside the camp, to get a better view of His grace than he ever enjoyed before. And so it always is No doubt there was large and rich blessing and of the most unexpected kind when God sent down the Holy Spirit here below, and His church was first seen. But is it a fact that the church at Jerusalem had the deepest enjoyment of God in apostolic times? This, one may be permitted to question. I grant you that, looking at the Pentecostal saints, in them we see the most powerful united testimony that ever was borne in this world; but it was borne in what was comparatively not the severest trial — in earthly things chiefly, — the superiority of those who had been newly created in Christ to the wretched selfishness of human nature. But is that the highest form of blessedness? Is that the way in which Christ was most glorified?

When the earliest phase of things passed away — when not merely there was the unbelief of the Jewish people but the unworthy sights and sounds which Satan introduced among that fair company — God, always equal to the occasion, acts in the supremacy of His own grace, and brings out a deeper understanding of His truth more difficult to appreciate; not striking the people of the world perhaps in the same way, but that which I think has a more intimate character of communion with Christ Himself than anything that was found before. It will scarcely be affirmed that what we discern in the church, while limited to the circumcision, had the same depth and heavenly character stamped upon it, as what was found when the full grace of God broke all barriers

and flowed freely among the Gentiles. It is in vain to argue that the fruit of the teaching of Peter or of James had the same power with it as the fruit of Paul not very long after, or of John latest of all. I grant you this — that, looked at as a whole, distressing failure was setting in just as it was here; yet as here the very failure isolated the truehearted, but isolated them not in want of love but in the strongest possible manifestation of divine charity and sense of God's glory. Assuredly Moses in the tabernacle outside had not less love for the people, nor more loyalty to God, than within the borders of Sinai when the ten commandments were uttered.

In the scene which follows we have the magnificent pleading of Moses still more touchingly, and, I am persuaded, in advance on what went before. This is not the time to enter into details; but hear what Moses says to Jehovah now: "See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight." What can be more lovely, more according to Christ, than this? He uses all the personal confidence that God had in him on behalf of the people. That is the bearing of it all. "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thine." He will not give up his love and desire for Israel. God may treat them as the people of Moses, and say, "They are the people you have brought up: they are your people." "Oh no," says Moses, "they are Thine; and Thou art their only hope." He will not be put off. Jehovah loves to surrender to Moses, as of old to Jacob with far feebler forces. Faith, hope, and charity abounded in the

mediator; and if the people were to be blessed, from God he drew on every spring of the blessing for His own glory. Mark the answer of Jehovah: “And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” Moses wanted` nothing apart from the people; even if he went out of the camp, it was to gather so much more of blessing for the people that he had left behind. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou has spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by thy name.” He asked to see His glory. This was impossible yet. It awaited the coming of a greater than Moses. But at any rate His goodness is caused to pass before him, which in Exodus 34 he sees.

But here we must take care. It is a great mistake to suppose that the proclamation of divine goodness in this scene is the gospel. They greatly err who in this sense quote “Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,” and stop there. God does not stop here. He immediately adds, “and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.” There is no doubt that it is the goodness and mercy of God; but it is to a people still under the government of the law. This is the peculiarity. What we find here then is not law pure and simple, but law with mercy and goodness and long-suffering in the government of God — His condescending love and patience mingled along with law. Hence we see its character and the reason why it appears here. Without it the guilty people never could have been spared, but must have perished root and branch, as it was in consequence of this change that a

new generation of the people of Israel entered into the land at all. Had He dealt on the ground of pure law, how could it have been? They were guilty, and must have been cut off.

Now this mingling of grace with the law is the kind of system which Christians have accepted as Christianity. No real believer ever takes the ground of pure law. They take a mingled system; they mix up law and grace together. This is what is going on every day now in Christendom. It was the state in which the children of Israel were put here, and was a very great mercy for them in a certain sense. It is no less a misfortune for the Christian, because what those in Christ are called to is neither law, nor the mingled system of law interspersed with the gracious care of those under it (who must have been consumed had law reigned alone), but pure grace in Christ without the law. At the same time the righteousness of the law is fulfilled so much the more in those that “walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

In answer to Moses who advances in his demands, yet withal no less suiting them to the divine glory than to the people’s wants according to the light then vouchsafed, God makes a covenant different from what went before. (Ex. 34:10) Moses had prayed Him as Adonai to “go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.” Thus he avails himself of the special affection God had shown him to put himself with the people, and to secure God’s presence going with the people, who otherwise could never enter the land. It was bold faith, working in unfeigned love of the people, and with a deep sense of what God is spite of all demerits; yet its highest petition

is based on revealed grace, and is therefore the very reverse of human presumption.

The Lord accordingly hearkens in grace, and undertakes for Israel against the Canaanites, warning them against a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and insisting on His own sole worship, His feasts, His firstlings and firstfruits; on His sabbaths, on the absence of leaven and unseemly ways, the fruit of Satan's wiles among the heathen.

This is pursued to the end of the chapter, and in a very interesting way. We have a figure to which the apostle refers (2 Cor. 3), confirming what has just now been stated. For the first time the face of Moses shines after communications with God. There was no such effect when it was merely the ten commandments or the ordinances connected with the people and the land; but after the communications of heavenly shadows and the mercy of God which intermixed itself with the law, Moses' face shines, and the people of Israel could not bear it. The glory of God, or at any rate the effect of seeing His goodness, was brought too near to them. He had to put a veil on his face. The apostle uses this to show that, as the veiled Moses speaking to the people of Israel is the most apt possible figure of the actual state in which they were placed (that is, not law simply, but with gracious care for the people mingled with it), so the condition of the Christian is in marked contrast. For our position the true image is Moses not when speaking to the people, but when he goes up into the presence of God. In him unveiled there we have our figure, not in Moses veiled, still less in Israel The Christian in his full place is nowhere set forth by the Jew. Certain things which happened to Israel may be types for the Christian,

but nothing more. As far as this figure is concerned, then, our place is represented by Moses when he takes off the vail and is face to face with the glory of God Himself. What a place for us, and for us now! Surely this is a wondrous truth, and of the greatest possible importance. We should remember that we are heavenly now (1 Cor. 15) as truly as we ever shall be. More manifestly we shall be heavenly at the coming of Christ, but not more really than at present. I speak of our relationship and title. “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” By and by we shall bear the image of the heavenly. This is another thing, and only a consequence when the due moment arrives. For the soul the great change is a fact; it remains for the body when the Lord comes.

The rest of the book of Exodus consists of the people’s response, and the actual accomplishment of the directions that were given in Exodus 25-30, and calls for no lengthened remarks in such a sketch as this. But we may refer to Exodus 35 as the witness to the zeal of the congregation for the construction and service of the sanctuary, opened by the law of the sabbath stated here for the last time in the book. Whatever be the work of God, His rest remains for His people. The utmost alacrity in answer to the call for material, useful and ornamental, common or costly, is shown by all. “And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought Jehovah’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold:

and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto Jehovah. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought Jehovah's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastplate: and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto Jehovah, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which Jehovah had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses" (verses 21-29).

Nevertheless, here as everywhere God maintains His right to call, and gives the requisite gifts. "And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Abisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner

of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work" (verses 30-35).

Exodus 36 shows us the chosen workmen engaged in their allotted tasks, and even begging Moses to check the over-abounding supplies of Israel's liberality. The work is described with as much minuteness, in the execution as in the plan, throughout Exodus 36-39 till Moses, inspecting all and seeing that they had done it as Jehovah had commanded, blessed them.

It is of great interest to observe that the silver paid in by the children of Israel, a bekah or half shekel each, was applied to the production of the silver sockets of the veil, and the hooks of the columns. Now if gold represents God's righteousness which we approach within; and if brass or rather copper means, when thus symbolically viewed, His righteousness as applied to man outside in His immutable judgment, what is the force of silver in this connection? Is it not His grace shown in man, even in the man Christ Jesus? Thus the redemption price was the basis; and on hooks made of the silver expiation money were suspended the hangings of the court which separated the sanctuary service of God from the world. The judgment of One who could not bear sin was represented in the copper sockets of the boards which gave immutable stability; but grace in redemption was that on which all hung and shone in the chapiters and fillets also, the ornament of the work. Both unite in Christ and His atoning death.

The last chapter records, first, Jehovah's call to Moses to set up the dwelling of the appointed tent on the first day of the first month (i.e., in the second year, ver. 17), with all its parts and vessels in due order; secondly, the obedience of Moses according to all that Jehovah commanded him. It is remarkable that on this occasion the tabernacle and all within it were anointed with oil. Thus, whatever sin on our part may call for, we have here the whole scene of creation, all things in heaven and all things on earth, claimed in the power of the Spirit in virtue of Christ's person and title, just as He was in fact anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power apart from blood-shedding.

Finally, when the work was finished and all duly set up, a cloud covered the appointed tent, and the glory of Jehovah filled the dwelling. And Moses was not able to enter because the cloud dwelt thereon, and the glory filled the tabernacle. Thus solemnly did Jehovah mark His dwelling-place in the midst of His people redeemed from Egypt; and He deigned to guide their journeys through the desert also by the same sign; for when the cloud was taken up, they journeyed; and if not taken up, they abode till it was. But cloud by day and fire by night, the token of is presence was ever before all Israel (verses 34-38).

1 To argue against the increase of Israel in Egypt from the data of the Pentateuch is the more unreasonable as the record does not give it as an ordinary ratio, but from the direct blessing of God according to His appearance to the fathers, and the more striking, because He kept them comparatively few till the descent into the house of bondage, and there multiplied them in the face of the

hottest persecution long before they were led out in triumph. (Compare Deut. 26:5)

Apart from the power of God accomplishing His word, the objectors seem to be ignorant that doubling the population in fifteen years or less is by no means without example. Mr. Malthus, who had no bias in favour of the Bible, will be allowed to speak on this subject. (Essay on the Principle of Population, ii. p. 190, 5th edition. 1817.) There was nothing incredible to his mind in the rate of increase assigned to Israel in Goshen, supporting it by a reference to Dr. "Short's New Observations on Bills of Mortality, p. 259, 8vo. 1750. Speaking of America, he remarks (ib. pp. 193-4), "In the back settlements, where the inhabitants applied themselves solely to agriculture, and luxury was not known, they were supposed to double their number in fifteen years. Along the sea coast, which would naturally be first inhabited, the period of doubling was about thirty-five years, and in some of the maritime towns the population was absolutely at a stand. From the late census made in America, it appears that taking all the states together, they have still continued to double their numbers every twenty-five years; and as the whole population is now so great as not to be materially affected by the emigrations from Europe, and as it is known that, in some of the towns and districts near the sea coast, the progress of population has been comparatively slow, it is evident that in the interior of the country in general the period of doubling from procreation only must have been considerably less than twenty-five years." In a note he adds "From a return to Congress in 1782, the population appeared to be 2,389,300, and in the census of 1790, 4,000,000;

increase in nine years, 1,610,700; from which deduct ten thousand per annum for European settlers, 6 per cent. for 4.5 years, which will be 20,250; the remaining increase during the nine years, from procreation only will be 1,500,450, which is nearly 7 per cent.; and consequently the period of doubling at this rate would be less than sixteen years. If this calculation for the whole population of the States be in any degree near the truth, it cannot be doubted that in particular districts the period of doubling from procreation only has often been less than fifteen years. The period immediately succeeding war was likely to be a period of very rapid increase." Thus, even supposing with Ussher, Clinton, and others that the 430 years date from the call of Abram, and that just half this period, or 215 years, can strictly apply to the stay in Egypt, the objection is utterly irrational.

Nothing can be conceived more captious than to take Gen. 15:16 as limiting the Israelites who sojourned in Egypt to just the fourth succession in family birth, or to assume that they had no children beyond those named for special reasons.

2 The remarks of Dr. D. (Introd. O. T. i pp. 236, 237) seem to me the wantonness of incredulity, which, irritated by the divine authority of Scripture, yields to the merest calumny. "If the words in Ex. 3:20-22 be taken literally or historically, they represent Jehovah as commanding an immoral thing. Hence this method of interpretation must be abandoned. The writer, giving expression to his own moral consciousness, represents the Deity as directly enjoining the people to do a thing dishonest in itself. This shows the imperfect

development of the divine to which the author's age had attained," etc. The rationalist never suspects himself.

3 The attempt to eke out proofs of diversity of authorship from alleged contradictions and confusion is not only futile, but evidence of incapacity to discern what is excellent and full of instruction. Dr. D. says (Introd. O. T. i. 65) that "the Israelites did not listen to Moses at first for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage. (Ex. 6:9, 12) But in Ex. 4:31 they believed and rejoiced when he announced deliverance to them. It may be said that the elders were the persons spoken to in the latter case, not the people; and that they were induced to believe in him by the signs he wrought. But if the heads of the people were convinced of his divine mission, the people groaning under their burdens would be ready to follow them."

"According to Ex. 6:2, etc., Moses received his divine commission to deliver the people out of bondage in Egypt. But in Ex. 3:1, etc., he received it in Midian. It was not first received in Midian and afterwards repeated in Egypt, because the former call is followed by Moses and Aaron going in to Pharaoh and asking him to let the Israelites go for the purpose of holding a feast in the wilderness. Had Moses not visited the king to ask for the thing he was called by God to effect, we might suppose that the call was repeated; but since he did so a second call was unnecessary! The two calls are in reality the narrations of different writers, giving a somewhat different version of the same thing. The one represents Moses as asking for a temporary release of the people (Ex. 5:3, etc); the other for their entire deliverance (Ex. 6:11; Ex. 7:2; Ex. 9:35; Ex. 11:10)."

The fact is that all is clear and consistent but progressive; and the petty pretence of Elohistic and Jehovistic documents manifestly fails; for Exodus 3 is characterised by the use of Jehovah in a way exactly similar to Exodus 6. Elohim in both reveals Himself or is spoken of as Jehovah. When the signs were wrought at first, the people and Moses asked leave of absence for three days only. When the king haughtily refused, and increased their oppression, God gave His servant a still fuller revelation of Himself for the people, now utterly cast down, and a commission in Egypt more peremptory — armed not with signs only but judgments on their oppressors — and the demand now was for an absolute departure of Israel. If the prince of the world made their burdens heavier, the assurance of deliverance becomes more distinct, and the temporary release vanishes. The second call in Egypt is therefore not only a fact but necessary as an introduction to new dealings after Pharaoh despised Jehovah's claim according to the first call in Midian.

4 Bishop Colenso (part i. ch. 11) has heaped together objections to the account of the Passover as weak as they are malicious. His main point seems to be that "in one single day, the whole immense population of Israel, as large as that of London, was instructed to keep the Passover, and actually did keep it." For this the text not only gives no ground but furnishes its unequivocal disproof. On the face of it the prescribed mode required the lamb to be taken on the tenth day of the month of Abib and kept till the fourteenth, in the evening of which it was killed. "This night" and "that night" can in no way invalidate these directions, nor is their own meaning doubtful. Besides there may have been notice given long

before the tenth of Abib. Every one knows the habit in Hebrew, and indeed other languages, for the speaker to throw himself forward into the chief event in question, even if there had been no express preliminaries which evince the futility of the statement. All the other elements are exaggerated by the objector, the number of the lambs requisite, as well as the degree of haste, which affected scarce anything but their bread, as otherwise they stood ready for their move, which they were fully expecting.

5 It is a fair question, which has perplexed translators and commentators in ancient as well as modern times, what is meant by the Hebrew word translated "harnessed" (with the marginal alternative "five in a rank") in verse 18. Bishop Colenso (part 1, chap. ix.) will have it to mean "armed," in flagrant inconsistency with the context, because it is so taken elsewhere; and this in order to urge the impossibility of 600,000 "warriors." But even Gesenius and Knobel take the word otherwise, and so do Onkelos and Aben Ezra, as Dr. McCaul has shown. It is unwarrantable, therefore, to reason on what is so precarious. The men might be "girt" or "in regular order" without all being armed, and very far indeed from being all "warriors"

6 It is alleged by Dr. D. (Introd. O. T. i. 65,) that "according to Exodus 12:16, etc., the feast of unleavened bread was introduced before the exodus; but from Ex. 13:3, etc., we learn that it was instituted after that event at Succoth." The latter statement is perfectly fictitious. Not a word implies that the feast was instituted in Succoth, the mention of which is severed by three important verses (17-19) from the close of all that refers to the feast. It is evident that there is an addition

of consequence in Exodus 13 to what Jehovah had prescribed in Exodus 12. No date or place is named. It may have been, and probably was, after the sons of Israel left Egypt, as it throughout supposes the feast already instituted. Here too there is no excuse for a different author or document, as the codicil of Exodus 13 is Jehovistic equally with Exodus 12, and adds the fresh thought of the sanctification to Jehovah of all the first-born in Israel, whether of man or of beast. The males were to be His, and must be either sacrificed or redeemed. The tenor of Dr. D.'s statement is the more remarkable, because the reference to Succoth occurs in a distinct clause that follows where is only Elohim, after which we have Jehovah once more as before.

7 The Authorised Version does not distinguish as it evidently ought between ἀγοράζω or ἐξαγοράζω on the one hand, and λυτρόω on the other, meaning “I buy,” and “I redeem.” God makes both true in Christ of the believer; but purchase is unlimited, as an examination of the Greek Testament will convince any soul who reads the word of God with a subject spirit; while redemption has its defined objects.

8 The unbelief expressed in Dr. D.'s Introd. to the Old Testament here for instance is astounding. The author boldly says, “The Song of Moses in the fifteenth chapter was not written by Moses himself It is a Palestinian production. If any part of it was sung at the time the Hebrews passed over, it was probably the words of the first verse… Allusions are made in it to a time considerably after the song is said to have been first sung; for example in the seventeenth verse… Here the temple on mount Zion seems to be meant. If so, the poem was not prior to Solomon's time” (i. p. 226)! Thus,

as it is an axiom with these men, that there can be no prediction of events which God alone could foresee, and as this song clearly anticipates what was not realised till the reign of David's son, it must be as late as his days at least; and Ex. 14 is pronounced to be later still, because the hand of the Jehovist appears in it, not in the fifteenth! Can there be more absurd trifling than the sentence that Exodus 15 (“the poem as we now have it”, is Elohistic as contrasted with Ex. 14?

9 It is alleged that there is “a double description of the manna in Exodus 16:11, etc., and Numbers 11:7-9. In the former it is said that it fell from the air, was white like coriander seed, and melted if the sun shone upon it; in the latter, that it could be pound (sic) in mills, or beaten in mortars, or baken in pans, and prepared in cakes. Thus two (?) writers appear. Had one and the same author described this extraordinary food of the Israelites, he would not have presented such varying accounts. Kalisch (Commentary on Exodus, p. 213 et seq.) can only explain the fact by assuming that two sorts of manna are meant; what he calls air-manna and tree-manna. He omits to notice the true cause of diversity in the description — difference of authorship. The tamarix manifera or tarafa shrub yields the substance in question by the puncture of an insect, the coccus maniparus, Exodus 16:9-26 is Elohistic; Numbers 11 is Jehovistic.”

“There is also a double account of the miracle of the quails in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. The former represents them as a boon given by God to satisfy the people’s hunger, and convince them of their dependence on the covenant God. (Verses 4, 12) The gift of manna to the people is also connected with that of the quails. Both

were granted together in the second month of the first year after the exodus. The latter account is very different. The quails are brought by a wind from the sea, and the eating of them produces a plague among the people. Because the people lusted, this food was sent in anger to destroy them. The book of Numbers does not contain the least hint that quails had been previously sent to the people; but the narrative leaves the impression that this was their first and only bestowal, a year after the time specified in Exodus 16 at Kibroth-hattaavah, after the people had become tired of the manna. Is it not probable then that the writer in Exodus puts two different facts together which were separate in time; viz., the sending of quails and manna? It is no explanation to assert that there is nothing improbable in supposing that the Israelites twice murmured for flesh, and that God twice sent them quails. The manna of Numbers 11 renders this supposition extremely improbable. Part of Exodus 16 is Elohistic; Numbers 11 is Jehovistic."

First it is not the fact on the ground of rationalistic theory that one is a whit more Elohistic than the other: Jehovah is the term used in Exodus 16 as certainly and exclusively as in Numbers 11. Next the difference of description is not only not inconsistent, but most natural in the circumstances respectively. When first given, its appearance to the eye, and its novelty suggesting its name, are dwelt on; later not only is it more minutely compared, but the methods of using it are given, in connection with the lusting after the old food of Egypt. But both accounts concur in representing it as "air-manna," not as the exudation from a tree, which is medicine, not food.

But as to the second point, it is plain that not the writer but the rationalist is guilty of confusion, and loses the profit of the two accounts, which are alike circumstantially and morally distinct. Not only are they represented as happening more than twelve months apart, but the truth conveyed depends on the deepest possible difference. In Exodus 16 the people murmured before the law was given and God gave them freely quails in the evening as well as manna in the morning. Guilty they were, but He acts only in grace till Exodus 19, 20. Then, when the people who had voluntarily accepted legal conditions murmured once more for flesh, tiring of the manna, they were dealt with according to the law under which they stood, and judgment fell on them from God, instead of the grace they had originally known. If we had not the two facts, resembling each other on the surface but contrasted in principle, neither the believer could have had so profound a lesson, nor the rationalist have so fully displayed to his shame his ignorance of God. Psalms 105:40, 106:14 16, might be profitably compared by friends or enemies of the Bible. The one will find the amplest confirmation of Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 as distinct accounts illustrating sovereign grace and creature-responsibility; the other can hardly avoid seeing a further and independent proof of his ruinous unbelief. The psalmist sets forth at full length the distinction which pseudo-criticism would destroy; and this too in such a way as to prove that they are but cases out of many facts which fall under the principles already indicated.

10 ”Another duplicate account,” says Dr. D. (Introd. O. T. i. 63), “is in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20:1-13 of the

water brought out of the rock, and the origin of the name Meribah. As the same name could not be given twice, both must have grown out of one. It has been ascertained that Exodus 17:2-7 is Jehovistic; while Numbers 20:1-13 contains portions of different documents." A more unintelligent criticism it is impossible to conceive. The point of both histories is absolutely lost for those who fail to see a contrast in them, instead of both having grown out of one. We have apostolic authority for believing that the rock is Christ. In Exodus the rock was by divine direction smitten — smitten by Moses' rod of judgment. The gift of the Spirit is from Christ after He was smitten, and suffered for us. In Numbers, on the contrary, Moses was told to take the rod (i.e. Aaron's rod of priestly grace from before Jehovah), and he and Aaron to speak to the rock before the eyes of the people, when it should give forth water. But there they failed. For whilst Moses took the rod, Aaron's rod as Jehovah commanded him, he smote the rock twice with his rod. Thus they failed in faith to sanctify Jehovah before Israel. Smiting was as wrong now as it was right before, and so consequently was the application of Moses' judicial rod. The repetition of the work of humiliation is uncalled for. Had Moses only spoken with the rod of the priesthood in his hand, the sign of grace which brought forth fruit out of death, all had been according to God's mind and the provision of His mercy to bring a weak and faulty people through the wilderness. It is not true that there are different documents in Numbers 20:1-13 any more than in Exodus 17:2-7: "Jehovah" characterises both as any one can ascertain.

11 Is not this literally, Because the (or a) hand (is) on the throne of Jah, war (is) from Jehovah with Amalek from generation to generation? The Authorised Version gives the sense.

12 Dr. P. Fairbairn's Typology, ii. p. 190.

13 Dr. Fairbairn's “Typology” is here, as in general, poverty itself. He considers that distinct meanings to be attached to the materials, colours, etc., can have no solid foundation, and are “here out of place”! Even the force of the silver redemption-money he thinks disproved by the fact that the sockets of the door were made of brass. This is the way to lose all but a minimum of truth.

14 Dr. Fairbairn views Christ's whole undertaking as symbolized already in the furniture and services of the Most Holy Place, and therefore considers the things belonging to the Holy Place as directly referring only to the works and services of His people. The consequence of such a division is indeed lowering in the extreme.

Leviticus

Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch.

Leviticus 1

The book of Leviticus has its own character quite as manifestly as Genesis or Exodus. Its peculiar feature is that from its very starting-point it is the revelation of what God saw in Jesus Christ our Lord, the typical application which grace made of Him and His work to souls, to a people and their land. It is the most complete direction-book of the priests, setting forth in all the detail of the Levitical service the various offices of the Lord Jesus. For this reason we see the propriety of the ground and circumstances with which it opens. “Jehovah called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation.” There is not the rich variety of Genesis, neither is there the special object of Exodus as unfolding redemption or the legal conditions which the people undertook through ignorance of themselves and of God. Here we have, as its characteristic feature, access to God; not God acting in grace toward men to deliver, but Christ as the means of approach to God for a people in relationship with Him, sustaining them there or warning of the ways and consequences of departure from Him. It is admirably calculated to act on the soul of the believer and acquaint him better with God as He reveals Himself in the Lord Jesus.

Thus the Spirit of God begins not with the sinner and his wants, but with Christ, and gives in the opening types a wonderful analysis of His work and sacrifice. This is a

familiar remark, but it is well to repeat it. And as He begins with Christ, so in the first place is given the highest thought of our Lord's death in atonement — the burnt-offering. It is that aspect of His sacrifice which goes exclusively God-ward — an aspect which believers are apt to be in no small danger of attenuating, if not losing sight of altogether. There is no child of God that does not see the need of Christ to be a sin-offering for him, but far too many stop there. In a general way they have the sense of His grace undoubtedly; but as we are now occupied with the offering of Christ in all its fulness, it does not seem too much if one deplores the habitual disposition, in looking at Christ's sacrifice, to think of nothing but His adaptation to our wants. Indeed this is the very reason why many souls so fail to appreciate the boundless grace which has met them in their wants, but which would raise them to enjoy that which is incomparably above themselves.

Hence we here commence with the type of the burnt-offering, the sweet savour of Christ to God for us indeed, but not limited by the circle of human thought, — not His bare adaptation to our need. Freely I must grant that the man who begins with Christ apart from his own necessities and guilt is but a theorist where it most of all becomes one to be real. We may well distrust the faith of the soul which, professing to be awakened from the sleep of death, only cares to hear of the profound truth of the burnt-offering in the death of Jesus. Must we not fear that such an one deceives himself? For, when dealing with the sinner God begins with him as he is. And sinners we are, verily guilty. Doubtless God meets the man in the mind and heart, yet never truly saves but through the conscience; and if there be an unwillingness

in any one to have his conscience searched — in other words, to begin as nothing but a poor sinner in the sight of God, he must be brought back to it some time or other. Happy he who is willing to begin where God begins. Happy he who escapes the painful sifting and humiliation too, when, for the time he ought to be making advance in the knowledge of Christ and of His grace, he has to turn back again through having overlooked his real state in the sight of God; when he has to learn what he is himself, it may be years after he has been bearing the excellent name of the Lord.

In Leviticus then the Spirit of God shows us the all-important truth that, whatever may be the divine way of dealing with individuals, God has Christ before Himself. He surely thinks of His people as a whole but, above all, He cannot overlook His own glory as maintained in Christ.

First of all then we are in presence of the holocaust or burnt-offering. (Lev. 1) We have to learn that special aspect of the Lord in which He, “by the Eternal Spirit, offered himself up without spot unto God.” This is the burnt-offering. There, if anywhere, it could be said that God was glorified in Him. Apart. from this, Scripture nowhere says that God, as such, was glorified in the Son of Man till Christ gave Himself up to death. The Father had been glorified in Him in every step of His life; but our Lord Jesus refrains from saying that God was glorified in Him, till the fatal night when Judas goes out to betray Him to His murderers, and the whole scene is before His eyes. (John 13) He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

And this principle we find in a very lovely way brought before us in John 10. Undoubtedly He laid His life down for the sheep; but the believer who sees nothing more than this in the death of Christ has a great deal to learn. It is very evident he does not think much about God or His Anointed. He feels for himself and for others in similar wants. It is well that he should begin there unquestionably; but why should he stop with it? Our Lord Jesus Himself gives us the full truth of the matter, saying, “I am the good Shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine; even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, one shepherd.” After these words, we come to what gives the more particular import of the burnt-offering in the total and willing surrender of Himself in death. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again.” The only One who, as a man, had a right to life — to all blessedness and glory as a living man on the earth — is the only One entitled to lay down, His life of Himself. And this He did — not merely for the sheep, but He laid it down of Himself; and yet He could say, “This commandment have I received of my Father.” It was in His own heart, and it was obedience too, absolutely, with trust in God. It was glorifying God in the very matter of death, and, as we know, on account of sin — our sin.

Thus Christ glorified His God and Father in a world where His enemy reigned. It was the fullest proof of One

who could confide for everything in Him who sent Him; and this He did. God was glorified in Him; and if the Son of man glorified Him, no wonder God glorified Him in Himself, and also that He straightway glorified Him. This He did by taking Christ up and setting Him at His own right hand in heaven. This of course is not the burnt-offering, but its consequence to Him who was so. The burnt-offering exhibits the absolute devotedness of the Lord Jesus atoningly to death for the glory of God the Father. It is allowed fully that there is nothing here which seems to make blessing to man prominent. Were there no sin, there could be no burnt-offering, nothing to represent the complete surrender up of self unto God, even to death But the expression of sin in its hatefulness and necessary banishment from God's presence was reserved for another offering and even a contrasted class of offerings.

The prime thought here is, that all goes up as a savour of rest to God, who is therefore glorified in it. Hence it is that in the burnt-offering of this chapter, in what is called the meat-offering, and in the peace-offering, no question of compulsion enters. The offering was in nowise wrung out from Israel. So, as we see, in the words of our blessed Lord, no one took His life from Him; He laid it down of Himself. "If any man of you bring an offering unto Jehovah, ye shall bring your offering of the beasts, even of the herd and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it for his acceptance at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before Jehovah;" but there was no demand.

This is so much the more pointed, because from Leviticus 4 we find wholly different language. We enter on another character of offering there, as we anticipate for a moment. “If a soul shall sin,” it is written, “against any of the commandments of Jehovah, then let him bring for his sin,” so and so. This was an absolute requirement. There was no discretion left to the Israelite. It was not an open matter. Be must do it; and accordingly it was defined in all respects. A person had no option in bringing what he liked. If he were a ruler, he must bring a certain kind of offering; if he were one of the common people, another kind was prescribed. There was both the command in the first place, and next the signifying of what must be brought to God in case of sin.

But all the earlier offerings in Lev. 1-3, the burnt-offering, the oblation, and the peace-offering, were left to the heart of the offerer — were left open, and with the fullest consideration of the means. God would make no burden of that which should be a joy. It was the heart giving to Him what it might otherwise value, but what expressed at any rate its value for the Lord. How perfectly Jesus met this — how He surpassed all that it was possible for a type to represent — our souls know well. He gave Himself.

The offerer then brought for his olah or burnt-sacrifice which ascended up to God the best animal of its kind according to his heart and means, of the herd or of the flock, of turtle-doves or of young pigeons. In the nobler forms (i.e., when from the herd or flock) an unblemished male was taken, on the head of which the offerer laid his hand. It is a mistake to suppose that this act in itself involves confession of sin, or was always accompanied

by it. It was quite as often the sign of the conveyance of a blessing or official honour. And even if we look at it only as connected with sacrifices, it had an import in the burnt-offering quite different from its bearing in the sin-offering. Transfer there was in both; but in the former the offerer was identified with the acceptance of the victim; in the other the victim was identified with the confessed sin of the offerer. The sweet savour of the burnt-sacrifice represented him who offered it. The animal was killed before Jehovah. The priests sprinkled its blood round about upon the altar. The victim itself, if a bull, was flayed; if a bull, sheep, or goat, it was severed. The pieces, head, and fat, were set in order upon the wood on the fire of the altar; the inwards and legs were washed in water; and then the priest caused all to ascend in fumes on the altar, a fire-offering of sweet odour to Jehovah All was laid open; and when in the victim any question of defilement could be, the washing of water made clean the parts, inward or outward, to be a fit type of the Holy One of God.

On another fact let me say a word in passing. Not only is there a tendency to confound things that differ, and to make Christ's sacrifice to be solely one for our sin, for our wants before God, but there is in these various forms of the burnt-offering a little intimation, it seems to me, of that very tendency; for as we gradually go down it will be noticed that the offering approaches in some slight degree that which might be more appropriate for a sin-offering. "And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to Jehovah be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtle-doves, or of young pigeons. And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out

at the side of the altar. And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar." There is not the whole animal going up to God in the same marked way as in the first case. That is, the lower the faith (which I suppose is what is meant by the sinking of the value of the offering) the more the offering approaches to the notion of one for our sins: we see what is unworthy and cast away as well as what goes up to God.

In the meat-offering is quite another thought. There is no thought whatever of atonement here. It was really the best of food given up to Jehovah, corn and oil, not without salt, as we see later on. But it was only for priestly food, besides Jehovah's memorial and all the frankincense, not for the offerer or his friends. Here it is well to bear in mind that the word "meat" might convey a wrong impression. This rendering of minchah,, possibly obsolete now, seems somewhat faulty, as the idea is an offering of what was bloodless, emphatically that which never possessed animal life. Clearly therefore the burnt-offering and the meat-offering stand in distinct contrast. The very essence of the burnt-offering is the surrender of life absolutely to God. This no man but a divine person was capable of doing; but, Jesus being such, infinite is the value of His self-sacrificing death on the cross. In the meat-offering the Lord is pre-eminently viewed as a man living on the earth. That there is no thought of death, but of life consecrated to God, is the general truth of the food or cake-offering.

Hence, "when any will offer a meat-offering unto Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon" It is simply the beautiful emblem of Christ as man in this

world. His humanity is represented by the fine flour, and the power of the Holy Ghost (which is so set forth in scripture from His very conception) by the oil poured on the flour. The frankincense shadowed His ever acceptable fragrance which went up to God continually. All this was brought to the priests, one of whom took out his handful. "And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests; and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah. And the remnant of the meat-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons." Therein we see another marked difference. The burnt-offering as a whole went up to God, or in its lowest form a part might be thrown away; but all that was used was solely for God. In the oblation-offering it was not so. Part of it went to the priestly body — to Aaron and his sons.

Thus here we have devotedness not in death so much as in life — the Holy One absolutely consecrated to God, in whom the power of the Holy Ghost moulded every thought and feeling, and this viewed as a man here below in all His ways and words. Of the oblation-offering not merely has God His portion, but we too are entitled to feed on it. Aaron and his sons represent the Lord Jesus and those that He has made priests; for He "loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," and made us not only kings but "priests unto God." Clearly then in Christ and Christians we have the antitype of Aaron and his sons. Now we are entitled to delight in that which Jesus was here below; and certainly it were a great and irreparable loss to the soul if a Christian said or thought that he had nothing to do with Christ thus —

that he had the death of the blessed Lord, but no special portion in Him as He lived for God here below. It is well to resent those who slight or ignore the value of Christ's sufferings, but we must beware of error on the other side. Why such scant measure? why such carelessness? You who by grace are priests to God — you at least should value that which is so distinctly marked out as your portion and proper food. Is it not the miserable working of unbelief, similar in principle though opposite in form, to what we have already noticed — the heart rising in faint degree above the sense of sins, and after all sins but poorly felt? God would give us communion with Himself in Christ — in all that He is.

The first presentation is simply the oblation in its constituents, setting forth Christ as a living man, His nature in the power of the Spirit with every grace offered to God without distraction or deflection or drawback (verse 1-3).

The second part (ver. 4-10) distinguishes between the mingling and anointing with oil — holiness in nature and power for service. For there are different forms of which it may be well to speak. "If thou bring an offering of an oblation baken in the oven;" and, again, "an oblation-offering baken in a pan." In the latter case the oblation was parted in pieces, when oil was poured on all, as before sundering it had been mingled with oil. Thus, besides being conceived of the Spirit, Jesus knew this trial to the uttermost; and His suffering in obedience displayed most intimately the power of the Spirit in every pang" when He knew as none ever did rejection, desertion, denial, treachery, not to speak of the ignominy of the cross. The break-up of every hope and prospect which befell Him at the close only revealed His

perfectness of spiritual power in an inward way and in the least particular. Surely this is not a mere figure without meaning: there is nothing in vain in the Bible. It is not for us to presume or to exceed our measure, but we may search with at least the earnest desire to understand what God has written.

I take it then that in the first part we have the simple typical expression of the nature of our Lord Jesus as man; that in the second, the oblation baken in the oven, the pan, and the frying-pan, we see the Lord as man exposed to various phases of severe trial. The oven indicates trial applied in a way of which man may not particularly be the witness. The oven does not so much represent public manifestation; the pan does. If the pan means that which was exposed to others, which I suppose to be its force here, the frying-pan1 is only another shape of the same principle, the shade of difference being in intensity. Thus we have secret trial, public trial, and this to the utmost — in different forms the Lord Jesus tried in every possible way. Fire is always the emblem of that which searches-judicially; and the Lord Jesus, it is not too much to say, in every way was put to the proof. What was the effect? His excellency shown more than ever — the manifestation of the perfection, and of nothing but perfection, that was found in Him.

There is a further point which may be profitably noticed here: the Spirit of God particularly mentions that this cake-offering is “a thing most holy of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire.” There is another offering which is said to be most holy. This remarkable phrase the Spirit of God applies in two cases out of the four. Not only is it used about the cake-offering which represents

His life as man here below, the very thing in which man has dared to suspect a taint; but in the sin-offering the same expression again occurs — the very occasion which man would have suspected, if anywhere, of sullying the perfectness of His glory. He was as really man on the one hand, as on the other our sins were really borne by Him. Nothing seems to exceed therefore the perfect care of the Holy Ghost for the glory of Christ. For in the offering for sin, where man would imagine Him in some way lowered, He takes care most of all to say that it is “a thing most holy.” Or again, if man inferred a taint in His humanity, the word of the Spirit, ever jealous to glorify Him, is “most holy.” If the golden plate on the high priest’s forehead displayed holiness to Jehovah, not less is the stamp “most holy” placed by God precisely where man has allowed his mind to speculate to the dishonour of Christ as man and as a sacrifice for our sins.

Again, in the meat-offering observe other traits, before we pass on (ver. 11). Leaven was absolutely to be excluded from it, the familiar figure of sin as in us. There was none in Him: He “knew no sin.” Again, there was the prohibition of “any honey.” It means a thing pleasant and not wrong, but incapable of being offered to God. There cannot be a finer proof of the absence in Christ of a sweetness merely natural than the way He acted even where His mother was concerned; for scripture has not recorded it in vain that she did ask our Lord, but had not her requests granted. He came to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. As a child He lived subject to Joseph and Mary; for Him when entered on the service of God it would have been mingling honey with the cake-offering if He had

answered her petitions. What an anticipation, and indeed rebuke, for the vain superstition of men who would make Mary the chief means of access to God by influencing His Son! He was perfect. He came not to gratify even the amiable side of human nature. He came to do the will of God. This He did, and the oblation or cake-offering shows it. There was the unction of the Spirit, not leaven, and the salt of the covenant (ver. 13), not honey. This did not exclude, as we are told, the offering as first-fruits honey or even loaves baked with leaven (though in this case with an accompanying offering for sin, Lev. 23); but they could not be burnt, as not being in themselves a sweet savour (ver. 12).

The oblation of first-fruits, typifying Christ, in verses 14-16, must be carefully distinguished from that which represents the Christian assembly. In Lev. 23 we have first the wave sheaf offered on the morrow of the sabbath after the Passover, where there was no sin-offering, but a burnt-sacrifice and meat and drink offerings; and then, when Pentecost was fully come, the new oblation of two wave-loaves offered but not burnt, with a kid of the goats for sin, but with all the other offerings also. For what could be wanting now? In Leviticus 2:14-16 however, as distinguished from verse 13, only Christ appears to be set forth in the tender stalks of corn parched by the fire — corn mature out of full ears (or fruitful fields). Oil and frankincense were duly added, and the priest causes its memorial to rise in fumes, a fire-offering to Jehovah.

The “peace-offering” (Lev. 3) might be somewhat mistaken. The phrase used in the authorised version does not fully if it truly convey the force, as it appears to me at least. The real idea of it is a feast, or communion

sacrifice. It is not a question merely of the word, but of the truth which is intended by it. In no way does it indicate the means of making peace for a sinner with God, though it may, as in the plural, imply things relating to peace, of which communion and thanksgiving are chief. The ground of peace for us laid in the blood of the cross so naturally suggested by the common rendering, is what one would guard souls against: it could only mislead. The thought seems to be a feast-offering. It is not here all going up to God (Christ surrendering Himself to God up to His death); nor only has God His portion, but the priestly family have theirs (Christ surrendering Himself in His life); but Christ is alike the means and object of communion. It rightly therefore follows both the offerings of a sweet savour, — the holocaust and the oblation; it approaches the former, in that it supposes the death of Christ; it resembles but it surpasses the latter, in that if part is for God there is part for man. It was pre-eminently therefore what united all who partook of it in joy, thanksgiving, and praise. Hence the fellowship of God, the priest, the offerer and his family, is the impression engraved on it. We need not anticipate more of the details now, as it is in the law of the peace-offering that we find the particulars just referred to.

A few words will suffice for the sacrifice itself. The victim from the herd or flock was not necessarily a male. This more perfect image of Christ was not here sought as in the burnt-offering. The feast-sacrifice descends more to man and his having part in Christ. Still the offering must be unblemished; and here as always the priests alone sprinkle the blood, though anyone might slay. We find here much stress laid on the inwards being

offered up to God, — “the fat that covereth the inwards, all the fat that is upon the inwards.” Some expressions bring this out very strongly, as “It is the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah.” “And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour: all the fat is Jehovah’s.” The fat and the blood were claimed exclusively for Him in the very offering which apart from that admits and displays the communion of others with Him. Now what is the meaning of that? And why such prominence given to the offering of the fat? For of the blood I need say no more here. Where anything is diseased or poor, the fat is the first thing to betray it. Where some state wholly wrong exists, energy in evil would be displayed by the condition of the fat. Where all was good and sound, the fat would manifest that all was perfectly according to normal condition. On the one hand, it was a sign of flourishing in the righteous; on the other, of self-complacent evil in the wicked. Hence, in describing Israel as a proud and self-willed people, we well know how Moses used this very figure as the index of their energy in evil. They waxed fat and kicked. It was evil unchecked in will and its effects, and the extreme sentence of judgment on the people of Israel. In our blessed Lord it was the energy that went forth in the continual business of obeying His Father with joy of heart. “I do always the things that please him.”

It is here then that we find our fellowship in Christ Himself, all whose strength of devotedness and self-sacrifice were for God; and here is the basis and substance of fellowship, for this was what the Father tasted there, and delights that we should enjoy. The fat and blood are His “bread,” as the prophet says, — the

blood sprinkled by Aaron's sons round about on the altar, and the fat and inwards burnt carefully there. "All the fat is Jehovah's. It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings that ye eat neither fat nor blood." But save His claim, the peace-offering was for communion in joy, not at all for expiation. It was eucharistic. It was not for Aaron and his sons like the mincha or oblation, but for the united joy of all who partook, Jehovah, the priest, the offerer and his guests. But Jehovah's portion was to be burnt on the burnt-offering; the link was thus manifest on an occasion of joy with that deepest display of Christ's obedience up to death.

In the sin and trespass offerings which follow (Lev. 4 — Lev. 6:7) we have another line of truth, in which the person ("soul") as well as the nature of the offence are characteristically prominent. It is not now the truth of Christ's dedication of Himself in death as well as life to God; neither is it the eucharistic character of the thank or peace offering in praise, vow or free-will. We have here vicarious offerings for sin, a substitute for the sinner. Different measures are defined.

In the case of the priest that was anointed (verses 3-12) — for this comes first — a bullock was to be offered "without blemish unto Jehovah for a sin-offering. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before Jehovah; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before Jehovah. And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before Jehovah, before the veil of the sanctuary." He had to put

some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense. It is of deep interest to note that here is no promise of expiation for the high priest, nor consequently of forgiveness, as in all the other cases. Is this accident? or part of the profound mind of God in scripture?

It is the same thing substantially when the whole congregation sinned (verses 13-20). In this case also a young bullock had to be slain, and the elders must do what the anointed priest did in the former case, The blood was sprinkled precisely in the same way, and put on the horns of the same altar, and the rest poured out as before. So too the fat was burnt on the brazen altar, and the rest of the victim burnt outside the camp as in the former case.

But when we come down to a ruler, there is another procedure. The word in this case is, that he shall offer “a kid of the goats,” not a bullock; and the priest was to put of the blood on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering — not on the golden altar.

When a private person or one of the common people sinned, there was to be a female kid, the blood of which was put on the same brazen altar. In neither case of the two last was the body burnt outside.

It is evident therefore, we find a graduated scale in these different instances. Why so? Because of a most solemn principle. The gravity of sin depends on the position of him who sins. It is not so man is prone to adjust matters, though his conscience feels its rectitude. How often man would screen the offence of him that is great, if he could! The same might be hard on the poor, friendless, and despised. The life of such at any rate

seems of no great account. It is not so with God, nor ought it to be in the minds and estimate of His saints. And another witness of this in the last instance is not without interest for our souls. Only to one of the common people is allowed the alternative of a female lamb instead of a kid (verses 32-35), the offering of which for his sin is reiterated with the same minute care.2 When the anointed priest sinned, the result was precisely such as if the whole congregation sinned. When a prince sinned, it was a different matter, though a stronger case for sacrifice than where it was a private man. In short, therefore, the relationship of the person that was guilty determines the relative extent of the sin, though none was obscure enough for his sin to be passed by. Our blessed Lord on the other hand meets each and all, Himself the true anointed priest, the only One who needs no offering — who could therefore be the offering for all, for any. This is the general truth, at least on the surface of the sin-offering. The offence was brought forward, confessed, and judged. The Lord Jesus becomes the substitute in this case for him that was guilty; and the blood was put in the case of individuals on the brazen altar, as it only needed to be dealt with in the place of sinful man’s access to God. But where the anointed priest, or the whole congregation sinned (either interrupting communion), it was done in a far more solemn manner. Consequently the blood must be brought into the sanctuary, and be put on the horns of the golden altar.

There is a sensible difference in the offerings which follow. It would seem that the sin-offering is more connected with nature, although it might be proved by a particular sin; and that the trespass-offering is more

connected with that which, while it might be in the holy things of Jehovah, or at least against Him, involved the offender in a fault or wrong towards his neighbour, and needed amends as well as a confession of guilt in the offering. On this however there is no call for discussion at present. There might be a kind of mingling of the two things, and to this there seems to be regard in the beginning of Leviticus 5:1-13. There is nothing more astonishing than the accuracy of the word of God when we submit humbly as well as honestly search into it.

Let it be observed, moreover, that in all the proper sin-offerings, the priest not only put some of the blood on the altar (golden or brazen, as the case might require), but poured all the blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering It was a substitute for the life of the sinner, and was thus poured out where God, in righteousness but in love also, met him in virtue of Christ, who, lifted up from the earth, drew thither to Himself. There accordingly, precisely as in the directions for the peace-offerings (Lev. 3:9, 10), the fat, especially on the inwards, kidneys, and caul (or lobe) above the liver, were taken and burnt on the altar, while the bullock as a whole, skin, flesh, head, legs, inwards, and dung, had to be taken3 without the camp and burnt in a clean place there, in testimony to God’s vengeance on sin — at least wherever the blood was sprinkled before Jehovah, before the veil. (Compare Lev. 4:7-12, 17-21.) In the case of an individual Israelite, whether a prince or a soul of the people of the land, there was neither sprinkling of the blood before the veil of the sanctuary nor burning of the body without the camp, and the blood was put by the priest on the horns of the brazen (not the golden) altar.

In the transition cases of Leviticus 5:1-13, the offering seems to be called both a trespass4 and a sin-offering (compare verses 6, 7, and 9, 11, 12); yet only a connecting particle opens the section. The former class regarded sin in itself where the conscience was bad from the first; the transitional class that follows treats rather of sin viewed in its consequences, and admits of consideration, which the first class did not with a single and slight exception. But here we have an option of unexampled largeness, and the more to be noticed because sin was in question. When the sin came to be known, the guilty person confessed it, bringing a female lamb or kid; if his hand were insufficient for this, two turtle-doves or two young pigeons — one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering; and if his hand reached not to this, the tenth of an ephah of flour was brought by the sinner, but no oil nor frankincense, as it was a sin-offering. The priest grasped his handful, its memorial, and burnt it on the altar in expiation for his sin which should be forgiven, retaining the rest as an oblation. Here, again, what compassion for the poor in divine things! Yet there is the nicest care of holiness, not only where conscience at once told the tale of sin, but where it may not have been bad till it knew the consequence of overlooking some ordinance of government or legal purity. When it thus became bad, there must be both confession and sin-offering in order to forgiveness. On the other hand, God would not let circumstances hinder the poorest from the comfort of atonement as well as the duty of confession. The offering of fine flour for sin is exactly the exception which proves the rule, as it was manifestly owing to destitution on the offerer’s part, and only a graciously allowed substitute for a bloody offering otherwise indispensable. A soul

may feel its need of atonement, and look to Christ as a sin-bearer without anything like a full perception of His blood and death: will the grace of God shut out from the effects of His work because of untoward circumstances which hindered more knowledge? Assuredly I do not think so.

Dr. F. (Typ. ii. 348) remarks truly that the section to the end of verse 13 was added to the end of Leviticus 5 without the formula, “Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying.” But does he not go too far in asserting that it was to specify certain occasions in which it should be presented, and to make provision for the destitute? Is it not plain that Leviticus 4 is the full ordinary case of sin in error, but against commandments of Jehovah, doing what ought not to be done? and that Leviticus 5:1-13 is an appendix of defilement through Jehovah’s ordinance, rather than a violation of natural conscience? These oases of refusal under adjuration (1), ceremonial uncleanness (2, 3), and the breaking of rash oaths (4), are specified in a way which is not seen in the more solemn sin-offering, which was also general. Hence, being peculiar, we have a variety of offerings quite as distinct from the usual sin-offering as from the formal trespass-offering where separation was made. It is true that in these appended oases “sin-offering” is used (Lev. 5:6-9, 11, 12); but I do not think it correct to say that a “trespass-offering” in verse 6 is a mere mistranslation, or that the expression in the original is the same in verse 7. For although asham is not always determinately a trespass-offering, but is used more generally, sometimes for guilt and its punishment, yet it can hardly be assumed without good reason where we are on ground so precise as the distinct offerings. And to me it

is evident that the word is not used in exactly the same way in Leviticus 5:6, 7, “for his sin” following in the former case, not in the latter, which makes all the difference, and justifies, I think, the Authorised Version, the Samaritan, De Wette, Dr. Benisch, and Mr. Young. The Vulgate is vagueness itself; the LXX. and the Targum of Onkelos seem to favour Dr. F., and so probably Luther. Thus ancients and moderns differ, and the point is evidently not easy to decide The word may be used in a general rather than its specific sense.

Leviticus 5:14 gives a new word of Jehovah to Moses, as we see in the beginning of Leviticus 6 also. Both sections however (Lev. 5: l4-19 and Lev. 6:1-7) share the common principle of making amends, or restitution, and the common name of trespass or guilt-offering, which was necessarily a ram, the blood of which (as we learn from its law, Lev. 7) was sprinkled round about upon the altar, not poured out or shed at its base as with the sin-offering. The proper offerings for guilt or trespass, then, consist of two classes: first, wrongs done in the holy things of Jehovah (probably firstfruits, tithes, etc.), or by doing something against Jehovah’s commands, afterwards found out; secondly, wrongs which Jehovah counts done against Him, though not sacrilegious or transgressive like the former, but acts of fraud and violence with deceit against men. In all such cases, besides an unblemished ram for the trespass-offering, with the payment of the value of the wrong that was done, a fifth was added according to the valuation of Moses, and given either to the priest in the former class, or to the party wronged in the second class.

Then follow the various laws of the offerings. (Lev. 6:8, Lev. 7)

As before, the burnt-offering stands first. Here it is an interesting fact to learn that the fire burning on the altar was never to go out. Nothing can be more express than this repeated injunction. All night it must burn, and never go out. It is night as regards the world — not for those that are children of the day — in a certain moral sense at any rate. But the fire never goes out, and when God wakes up His people and the nations, how precious to find that the offering has been once offered by reason of which those who submit to His righteousness will be acceptable to God! All was burnt to God, nothing eaten by man.

Next comes the law of the oblation or food-offering, in which we find particularly specified that Aaron and his sons are to eat of it. “With unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place.” Those that partake of Christ and are priests to God enjoy by faith His devoting Himself in life unto God, and had better beware of that which ill assorts with it. With unleavened bread, which sets forth absolute separation from the evil of nature, it was to be eaten, as also in the holy place. Is it not most derogatory to the grace which brings us nigh to trifle with Christ thus known? I know nothing more hatefully defiling than the way in which men who have no faith in Christ, nor sense of their sin or need, nor care for the glory of God, affect in an eulogistic way to take up the life of Christ and pronounce on His excellency here or there. Is not this to eat the oblation in the world and with leavened bread?

Besides we have the offering of Aaron and his sons on the day of his anointing — a peculiar case of the oblation.

At the end of Leviticus 6 is the law of the sin-offering; and in the beginning of Leviticus 7 that of the trespass-offering. Here, as in the oblation, the priests were to eat in the holy place: in the former it was communion with His grace as man, in the latter communion with Him on behalf of the sinner through His work.

But, remarkably enough, and nicely distinguished as we shall see, the thank or peace-offering only appears after these, and at great length. Thus it stands last in the list of the laws, whereas it preceded the sin and trespass-offerings themselves. Can it be doubted that all this has designed significance, and that here the Spirit of God reserves for the last place the sacrifice which typifies Christ for communion, when it is a question of the law of its use? For there is nothing finer among the offerings than this sacrifice when we come to practice. Whatever may be the order of communication on God's part as we look at Christ; whatever the application to the sinner as we look at ourselves, the peace-offering is the last when we come to take it up as a matter representing practically the state of our souls. Communion as set forth by the peace-offering is what most of all answers to our soul's state, in order that we be able to turn to God in praise and thanksgiving. There were two chief forms. If offered as a thanksgiving, it was to be offered on the same day, and no part kept. But if it was a vow or voluntary offering, on the morrow the remainder might be eaten. We constantly find the same thing true in our souls now. There are two different measures in worshipping God; both real, but by no means possessing the same power. We see souls thoroughly happy in the sense of what the Lord has done for them, and they break forth in grateful thanks. Who would not join them

in it? It is truly delightful, and quite right in its place. It may be elementary, it is true, but real worship of God. Yet it wants the power that sustains. In the vow we see more, where it is not simply a question of what has been done for us, and what we have ourselves received, but the heart can thoroughly delight in what Christ is Himself before God. This abides. There is no change here.

In Leviticus 8 we begin the history of the consecration of the priests; for now having been given the offerings, with their laws, we in due order come to the persons who had, if not to offer them, certainly to act for the people as to them in the sanctuary. That which had been laid down as a requisition in Exodus 28, 29 is now carried out practically as to the family of Aaron. “Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him.” And there Moses brings forth Aaron and his sons, and washes them with water. In this we see the failure of any type to represent Christ. Aaron of course, as well as his sons, had to be washed. In Christ there was no need; nay, He came to cleanse others. What the washing did for Aaron, Jesus was, and infinitely more. The absolute purity of Christ as man no doubt fitted Him so far to be a priest. At the same time, we must carefully remember that there is an element in the priesthood of Christ that could not be given in any type, of which the epistle to the Hebrews makes much. The personal basis of the priesthood of Christ consisted in this, that He was the Son of God. Others were merely

sons of men; and so in this case a priest was one taken from among men. This was not the ground of Christ's priesthood. It was no doubt necessary that He should be a man, but that which attested His distinguishing character as Priest was that He was the Son of God. And hence the title applied to Him in the second Psalm the Holy Ghost reasons on in the same fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in contrasting Him with Aaron and his sons. Accordingly they, as knowing what man was, could feel for poor man, because they were poor men themselves. But the Son of God was altogether different. Immeasurably above man, all His heart could go out for man. He was absolutely above the condition in which man was involved by the fall, not merely in so much as He was a holy man, but as the Son of God. For this very reason there was perfect liberty of heart to take up the need of others; and so He did. This does not at all clash with the distinct truth of His suffering. Much which He endured was just because He was the Holy One. His sufferings therefore essentially differed from that kind of chastening which we, alas! know when buffeted for our faults. There never was in Jesus anything short of sufferings for grace or for righteousness, except when we come to the cross, when there was suffering for sin; but it was ours entirely — not His.

In this case then Aaron washed could be but a feeble type of Jesus in His own essential purity. Upon him the coat and the girdle and the robe and the ephod were put, and with the curious girdle bound upon him. "And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his

forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head." Mark that it was without blood: a most striking fact. Although a sinful man like the priests, his sons, still (that he might not stand in flagrant contradiction to Him of whom he was a type) Aaron was anointed with the oil before the blood was shed. It is worthy of observation that the tabernacle was anointed (verse 10) and all therein, the altar and all its vessels, with the laver and its base, before the sprinkling with blood. The force of this is plain and momentous as applied to the power of the Spirit in which Christ claims the heavenly things and indeed the universe; especially when we notice that the altar is purified by blood but no anointing follows.

Afterwards (verse 13) we find Aaron's sons brought, and they are clothed too, but they are not anointed. "And he brought the bullock for the sin-offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin-offering." Indeed, Aaron was a sinful man; but there was this careful reserve — that Aaron received the anointing oil before the sin-offering was killed, and before the blood therefore was sprinkled on him. Notwithstanding, when the sin-offering was slain, Aaron and his sons alike laid their hands on its head; and Moses took the blood and put it on the horns of the altar to purify it, and poured the rest at the base. Then, after burning the sin-offering without the camp, we are told of

one ram for the burnt-offering, and another for consecration, to set forth special devotedness to God as priests. Thereon the blood is put on Aaron's right ear and thumb and foot, as well as on his sons. But we must remember that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as here, the points of analogy, however strong, always fall short of the full glory of Christ. They were the shadows, and not the very image, as we are told. The anointing oil was not wanting, nor the appropriate oblation and peace-offering — Christ in all His acceptance.

In Leviticus 9 we have the eighth day, when Aaron and his sons were to stand forth fully consecrated, and the glory of Jehovah appears. After the various offerings in their order, all closes with a very striking scene. "Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings." The eighth day sets forth the time of resurrection glory. Then we read, "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the people."

The bearing of this cannot well be doubted. First of all the high priest acts alone in blessing on the conclusion of the consecration and according to the efficacy of all the sacrifices. Then Moses and Aaron go into the tabernacle. It is the type of the full character of Christ, when there is the blending of regulative authority with the priesthood. Now Christ acts simply as priest; by and by He will take the kingdom, as well as maintain priesthood. As a sign of this, Moses and Aaron come out together, and bless the congregation, and the glory of Jehovah appears to all the people. It evidently prefigures the day of Jehovah, when the Lord Jesus shall be

displayed in glory to every eye, and shall be a priest upon His throne. Our portion is a very different one, and is defined and distinguished from that of Israel, as far as a type could be, in Leviticus 16; but this I will not now anticipate.

In the next chapter (Lev. 10) we have a humiliating fact — the total feebleness of man in this new relationship of blessing to which he was called. “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from Jehovah and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah.” The consecration was but complete. Scarce did they actually stand forth as priests of Jehovah, when two of them had so failed that the fire of divine judgment devours them instead of signifying in peace the acceptance of the victims. “then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that Jehovah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.”

You will find this always to be the difference between that which is of God and that which is of man. A human religion instinctively makes excuses for its officials, and never fails to allow a certain latitude and license for those that propagate it. The true God nowhere maintains the nice exigencies of His own character so much as in those who are nearest to Him and most favoured by Him. There is not a heart and conscience renewed of God but must feel how right and becoming it is that so it should be. No doubt flesh shrinks from such searching work; but Christianity means and is based on the judgment, not the sparing, of the flesh — the gospel of Christ, and the Christian boasts in it with the apostle.

There is nothing like the cross for God morally; but it is God acting in our interest, as well as for His own glory. Nothing more dishonouring to Him, nothing less wholesome for us than to give a dispensation for unholiness — to sell indulgences; yet it is what every religion under the sun has done in effect, save that which is revealed of God. Even in the lowest form of God's revelation, when it was a question of schooling the first man, not yet of the Second, we see man's way judged unsparingly: how much more where all sin is discerned and dealt with fully, whether in the cross itself or by the power of the Spirit of God in the consciences of those that believe! But immediately God with solemn severity is seen gravely resenting the liberty which two of those standing high in religious rank took that day; — so much so that men might taunt and say that the whole building had broken down before the very walls were complete. But the mediator was enabled to meet the occasion, and turns the chastening into matter for holy exhortation. "And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which Jehovah hath kindled." He felt that it did not become those so near to Jehovah to yield themselves up to natural grief, any more than to allow a carnal excitement in His worship. Henceforward this is forbidden. The outward signs of mourning for death are prohibited for the priests. Certainly the occasion was a serious one, and fully tested the principle. But connected with it we learn that excitement is just as uncomely on their part who enjoy such nearness to God. "And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink

wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations." No doubt it had also a practical bearing. Drinking wine or the like might unfit one for putting difference between holy and unholy. But first and foremost, and most rightly, it did not suit the presence of God: next, it unfitted for the safe and holy help of man surrounded by evil and perplexity.

Afterward oversight appears even in the rest of Aaron's sons, inasmuch as they burnt the goat of the sin-offering, for which Moses was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar. The failure thus was complete. Two of them paid the penalty with their lives; the other two were only spared in answer to the intercession of Aaron.

The next chapter (Lev. 11) gives in detail this very difference of clean and unclean, but here the multiplicity of minute points admonishes for this sketch no more than a passing survey. It was not the point to furnish information as to the wholesome or unwholesome; but a moral end is everywhere uppermost. Jehovah would have Israel confide in Him and His choice for them as a peculiar and consecrated people. Doubtless He chose what was good, nay, the best; and His restrictions were not without the discerning insight of One who made each creature and had called out His people to be under His righteous government, and looked onward to a heavenly family who would gather His mind by the Spirit couched under these outward shadows.

It may suffice for the present that these remarks be made as to it — that the essential condition in the land animals at any rate allowed for food consisted in this,

that there should be a clean and firm walk, and along with it mature digestion. If there was failure in either, it was not fitting food for an Israelite (verses 2, 3). Hence the camel, the coney (or daman), the hare, and the swine, failing in one or other of these conditions could not be eaten nor their carcases touched without defilement (verses 4-8). Thus, if we apply this practically enough to show its bearing, let us suppose a person ever so clear in apprehending truth, but without conscience as to his ordinary walk, all is good for nothing; or again let us take a person ever so blameless in walk, but his walk in no way flowing from the truth, all is good for nothing. For what can be right that is not the effect of revealed truth received into the heart, and becoming a part of one's vital system by the Spirit's application of it to our souls? Only then surely will the walk be firm, conscientious, free, and holy; such as suits the communications of God. But it is plain that the two things, not merely one of the two, are absolutely necessary, and are the fruit of the Spirit's dealing savingly with the conscience. It is a miserable thing to deceive ourselves on one side or the other. Let none ever content himself with being hoped to be a Christian in what people call the judgment of charity. Let us look well to it that our hearts be open to the searchings of the word by the Holy Spirit, and let us not shrink from suffering the word of exhortation. Others will look for the resulting fruit day by day in our ways and spirit. But it is only where both these features are combined that there can be communion according to God. This seems to be the lesson for us typically couched under eating of that which was clean.

The Israelite was not to partake of each animal which he might meet with. What was monstrous in one way or another was forbidden; what was according to divine order was lawful to him. Thus animals in the waters without fins and scales; winged insects without springing hind legs distinct from their four legs; the ravenous and nocturnal among birds; the carnivorous among beasts were of course excluded; but there were others also in divine wisdom and with a typical regard. When dead too, their touch defiled, even to a vessel or raiment, etc. (verses 9-35.) Not so a fountain or pit, or gathering of water, which cleansed instead of contracting uncleanness (ver. 36); not so sowing seed (ver. 37). The power and life of the Spirit are incontaminate. Reptiles which did not fly or leap were all unclean. Jehovah laid all this on His people, who were to be holy because He was.

In Leviticus 12 comes in another remarkable type, namely, the condition in which sin has plunged men and women. Every child of Adam suffers from the defilement of an evil nature. In case there was a manchild, as we are told, there was such a result, and with a female child still more manifestly. The Lord never forgets how sin came into the world. His righteousness takes account of the first temptation to the end. So it is remarkable how the Apostle Paul turns this fact even for a matter of practical guidance in the question whether a woman ought to teach in the church. Assuredly our thoughts ought to be formed by the word of God. It is a question of government on earth, not of heaven nor of eternity in all this.

In Leviticus 13 leprosy is set forth with much detail as a general defilement of the person, also in the head or

beard; and in divers forms. Here we have the most characteristic type of sin under the sign of that foul and hopeless disease. There might be other maladies wearing its evil appearance, but in fact only suspicious symptoms. Hence there was this important provision: — a man is not made the judge of his own sin. It was laid down in the law that the Israelite should submit his condition to the inspection of another, and this other the type of a spiritual man, for a priest means that. It is really one who is called to have title of access to God, and who therefore should have his senses exercised to discern both good and evil according to the standard of the sanctuary. As such he is bound not to be carried away by conventional opinions, or traditional thoughts, or what men call public opinion — one of the most mischievous sources of depraving the holy moral judgment in the children of God.

The leper then, whether so in reality or in appearance, submits to the priest, whatever might be the fact. The spot looked ill; it might be only a rising in the flesh, some passing evil. On the other hand a very trifling symptom in appearance, the least bright spot, with the hair turned white in it, and the plague or sore deeper than the skin, might have real leprosy lurking under it. The priest judges seriously. If these active and deep indications, however small, are there, he pronounces the man unclean. If he has a doubt, the suspected person is shut up, and remains to be seen again. If there are hopeful symptoms, they are noted; if there be no raw flesh, no fresh effects of active disease, but on the contrary the return of vigour, they are cherished, and if continued and increasing after a week’s remand, the priest pronounces the man clean. If the hair turned

white, if the evil lay deeper than the skin, and if it tended to spread, uncleanness was there. A boil or a burn might issue in leprosy. Nothing is trifled with, nothing passed over, nothing left without watch to work its own unimpeded way of evil. After a certain definite limit the priest looks again. He still perceives evil somewhat deeper than the skin. If it is a well-defined case of leprosy, he pronounces at once on it; if there is still uncertainty, there must be a farther term of waiting.

A plague might be in the head or beard, as well as the body; then if deeper than the skin and in it a yellow thin hair, the priest must pronounce it leprosy; if not so deep, he must delay, when if it did not spread nor deepen, he must delay again, and then if all went on thus favourably, he might pronounce him clean. Other cases are gone through with the utmost care, and I have no doubt that every minute difference is full of instruction; but the proof of this would carry us away from my present object.

The result in one instance (verses 12, 13) is indeed remarkable — the whole person was covered with the effects of leprosy. To the inexperienced eye it might look the worst of all; for the leprosy was all out and over the sufferer. Yes, and just because it was, the priest had warrant to pronounce him clean! Thus, when a sinner has got to his worst and felt it, he is forgiven. It was evil no longer at work but manifest and confessed. Instead of going about to establish his own righteousness, he submits to the righteousness of God and is justified by faith. Jehovah entitled the priest to pronounce clean the evidently and utterly unclean. Boldness of faith becomes those who know such a God. Confidence in Him was what suited so desperate a case; it was only the occasion

for God to assert His superiority. We should count on Him that it must be always thus. When you see a man filled with a thorough sense of sin yet bowing to God, we may assure ourselves of a blessing, and with full measure too. It only hinders the perception of God's grace, and keeps up uncertainty, when a man endeavours to palliate, cover, and correct himself, instead of confessing his sins in all their enormity. Such striving merely perpetuates vain hopes, denies the extent of mart's ruin, and shuts out the full delivering mercy of God. He at least who alone could cure called the leper to omit no sign of misery (verses 45, 46).

The case of the leprous garment does not call for lengthened remark. It refers to leprosy not so much in the nature as in the circumstances — in what was displayed (verses 47-59).

Leviticus 14 is occupied with the wonderfully instructive statement of the cleansing of the leper. There is no such thing as the cure of leprosy named here. This belonged to God alone No ceremony, no rite, could really heal, — nothing but divine power mediate or immediate. Supposing somehow or another the leprosy stayed, the man must be cleansed. This is the ceremonial laid down in the beginning of the chapter. It presents an obvious and striking type of Christ dead and risen in the two birds. When the blood of the killed bird was mingled with running water (representing the action of the Holy Spirit dealing with man), and seven times sprinkled by the high priest on him, he is pronounced clean forthwith. The living bird dipped in the blood of the slain one is let loose into the field (type of Christ's resurrection); and he that is to be cleansed begins to wash his clothes, shave and otherwise cleanse himself

for seven days more; and on the seventh day “he shall be clean.” Not till then could he be, though he was not longer outside the camp.

But on the eighth day we have the types of Christ in the fulness of His grace, and all the efficacy of His work before God applied to the man, so that the soul might realize the place of blessing into which it is brought. There is often a danger of our contenting ourselves with the first part without the last. Of how much we rob our souls by this poverty in the presence of the riches of the grace of God! The chapter closes (verses 33-53) with the leprosy of the house, which is clearly corporate evil, and with a reference to each case (verses 54-57).

In Leviticus 15 we have cases of the evil of nature in the aspect of man’s utter weakness as he now is through sin. If we find such awful but true characteristics of man, may we delight ourselves that God and God alone brings together in the same book the contrast as the rich and full presentation of Christ’s sacrifice in all its variety and perfection! After such an introduction we may well bear to see that dismal picture of man in all his loathsomeness, — leprosy in his person, leprosy in his character, leprosy in his connection, with the antecedent uncleanness and the defilements which follow. Yet “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” We shall find however that it is not bare mercy, but a God who acts in power, and will have us in communion with Himself, while we are in the old scene of folly and evil, instead of having us to wait till we get to heaven. How blessed thus to know Him here! I hope to dwell a little on that which will illustrate this side of His grace, when proceeding with the portion of the book of Leviticus which follows.

Leviticus 16 - 27

We have seen the various forms of the work of Christ, of His offering of Himself to God, whether in all the perfectness of His life, or in His death as the means of our acceptance. We have seen further the consecration of the priests naturally following the offerings and their laws, then the directions whereby the priests might learn to distinguish between clean and unclean, with the various forms in which the total defilement of the people was represented, in birth, disease, and infirmity.

Now we have the great atonement-day. Not more truly does this chapter stand out singly, and in a literally central position of the book, than the atonement itself does in the ways of God. It is evident that, however all may have prepared us for it, and however that which follows too may flow from it, atonement has a place to itself — a place to which there is nothing similar or second — a place that lies at the very basis of all God's ways — the only possible means for the blessing of a sinful creature before God. It is well that we should enjoy all the privileges with which God's grace may invest us, and that we should delight in that which He makes known to us as the revelation of His own nature as well as of His counsels and ways; for He would make us truly happy; and there is no happiness except in communion with Himself. At the same time the atonement has incomparably the deepest place of all truths in scripture, save only Christ's person, in whom all the fulness dwelt bodily. God revealed Himself thus with a view to the atonement, and the atonement itself, besides having this character of centre and foundation-stone, becomes the capital means of bringing the soul out of all its wretched and sinful selfishness (which

indeed is sin and misery) into the knowledge of God, so as God Himself never could have given, had there not been sin to draw out the Son of God to die in atonement. In short the very evil of the creature has given occasion to such a knowledge of God as never could have been enjoyed without it — to its own shame indeed, but to God's everlasting glory.

For this reason then the forms in which God gave the intimations of the atonement have the deepest possible interest for our souls. We must bear in mind however, that here as everywhere we have only the shadow, and in no instance the very image of the thing. We shall always find that which falls short. There could be but one Christ, the only begotten Son; and so but one work in which He has brought out not merely God but God glorified as to our sin — glorified in His own moral being and in His gracious provision that we should be delivered from it.

First of all then we have that which shows us the necessary imperfection of all the provisional dealings. "The law made nothing perfect." We may see indeed how true is this very feature in the beginning of the chapter; for "Jehovah spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before Jehovah, and died; and Jehovah said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not." Now it is evident, that to have the glory of God as the element of our joy — and we are entitled to rejoice in hope of it even as we are to joy in God Himself — supposes nearness to Himself. To keep the soul out of the presence of God is incompatible with real enjoyment of

Him. Nevertheless, though the circumstance of failure on the part of Nadab and Abihu gave occasion to requiring distance on man's part, there could have been none other provision under the law or till the cross.

When Aaron henceforth entered the sanctuary, he must come after the following fashion. He was to bring a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering.` But as for his garments of glory and beauty, he could not bring them into the sanctuary. And this again lets us know how totally all signs fail in consequence of man's condition. Indeed what they showed was not the entrance of man according to the counsels of God into His own presence, but that the first man could not so enter; for whatever might be the forms of glory and beauty represented by that clothing for the high priest, in point of fact he never could wear it in the presence of God. The only time at which he did enter the most holy place was when he wore the linen clothes to be put on expressly on the day of atonement. At other seasons he might not enter there. He was to put on these linen clothes after having put off the others. He was to wash his flesh in water, and so put them on, in aim shadowing the purity of Christ, but in fact confessing the impurity of the first man. Intrinsic purity was found in its perfection in Christ. "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself."

The first thing here to which I would draw your attention is the single offering where Aaron and his house were concerned, and the double one on behalf of the people of Israel. This is evident on the face of the

chapter. When we come to the facts to which these types looked onward, need it be said that there was but one sacrifice — but one comprehensive sacrificial act which met all that was meant, whether in the bullock on the one hand, or in both the goats on the other? But still no serious soul can question for a moment the importance of the truth intended to be conveyed by this typical difference. For in the case of the priestly family, with Aaron at the head of it, there was but a single act. The bullock was slain, and the sprinkling of its blood alone met all the exigencies of God's holiness and nature as regarded Aaron and his house. But in the case of the children of Israel we have a far more complicated system. There was a marked distinction drawn between the two goats, one of which was slain. It was called Jehovah's lot; for lots were cast for them as to which was to be slain, and which sent alive into the wilderness. The latter, carefully reserved till all was. over with the bullock and the other goat, was brought forward at a later moment.

Now what is the prominent truth to be gathered from this marked difference? To me it appears to be of no small moment for our souls. We all more or less tend toward Jewish ideas. So it has invariably been, and there are natural reasons why it should be. I do not mean merely the power of Satan in always seeking to corrupt God's testimony, whatever it may be at any given time. But there is this essential difference between the ways of God with the Jew and with the Christian — that those with Israel are more adapted to the senses and the reason, as well as the working of natural conscience; whereas those addressed to the Christian flow simply and solely from the revelations of God's counsels and

grace, and suppose the faith that acquaints itself with His mind and love. For instance, take the law itself. Every upright conscience feels what may be called the reasonableness of its demands, and the justice of its decisions. Conscience can conclude about it, and feel how right it all is. Of course, when one speaks about its reasonableness, it is not meant in a mere mental way, but so as to satisfy what conscience owns to be due to God and man.

But the Christian has an altogether higher standard, where all depends on the simplicity of receiving what is above nature, and where, if nature presumes to reason, it invariably draws false conclusions. In short the Christian never can form a right conclusion, except in reasoning from what God is as He has revealed Himself in His word, and never from the feelings of conscience, or that which would seem to be just. Now this is invariably true, and therefore it is that, when persons are simply awakened, they are apt to fall into a legal state. It has always for its effect the conscience set in action through the Spirit of God, who brings in the light of the word; and deals with the heart, showing no doubt mercy behind it all, but nevertheless discovering the evil that is within. In such a condition there is always danger of reasoning from what we are to God; and we all know what immense anguish of soul this may produce, and how perfectly the gospel meets all such anxieties; for while it gives conscience the fullest place, nevertheless it brings liberty of heart by the full revelation of God’s grace in Christ. The consequence is that the effect wrought by the truth of God in the full light of grace is incomparably simpler; and for this reason — that by the light of Christianity all that is in or of man is put down

as thoroughly evil. In point of fact the cross entitles us to pronounce ourselves dead before God; and beyond question death settles all questions. Now I do not believe that even in the dealings of God with Israel by and by there will be anything like such depth of dealings; and certainly it was not so in the past. We can see it in the psalms, as well as in the accounts given of the saints of God, making due allowances where there is a type of greater things.

In this respect we may illustrate it by the difference of two well-known characters in the very first book of the Bible. Take Abraham's faith and way, as compared with Jacob. Abraham walks in communion by faith. Jacob has to be chastened; the ground of his heart must be constantly ploughed up, that he may learn what Abraham did not need in the same way, being occupied with what God was towards him and with His word, instead of requiring the painful and humbling, however salutary, lesson of what he had failed to be for God. It would seem that the difference is somewhat of this kind between the provision for the Jewish people in the two goats, as compared with that which is represented by the single bullock, where the whole mighty work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as applied to the Christian and to the church, is found. Of course the word "church" is employed here only in a general sense; for it is granted fully that all types fail to reveal the mystery as such. Certain figures there are connected with the mystery, but there is no type whatsoever which brings out the mystery in its fulness.

In the case of the bullock there is no distinction drawn between the judgment of sin in the vindication of God's own nature, and the dealing with the sins of the priestly

house. All was contained in the one unbroken work that was here represented. The bullock was brought out and offered as it is said as a sin-offering for Aaron and for his house. Afterwards the two goats are taken and presented before Jehovah, and lots are cast upon them; one lot for Jehovah, and the other lot for the scape-goat. Aaron then brings the bullock of the sin-offering, and makes an atonement for himself and his house. He carries incense within the veil, and there sprinkles of the blood upon the mercy-seat and before it seven times. In this manner the whole work is done with extreme simplicity. But for this very reason there is a depth in what God represented by the death of the bullock that is looked for in vain in the more complicated type of the two goats.

The blood of the bullock is brought into the holiest — part sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, part before it; then the first goat having been killed, its blood also is brought in to “make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” In point of fact, as we know, when we come to the reality of atonement by the Lord Jesus, all was contained in His one and only sacrifice. Particular emphasis is laid on the fact that there was no man present; it was all a question between God and the high priest for sin. After this it is said, “And he shall go out unto the altar that is before Jehovah, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the

tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness."

There was nothing at all analogous to this in the bullock for Aaron and his house where we found the representation of Christ's work for the heavenly people. Mark the difference. In their case all was settled in the presence of God. There was nothing more needed. The blood was carried straight into the sanctuary, and all was closed. Undoubtedly a most important inference is intended by the coming out of the high priest, when there ensues the dealing with the other goat, the substantial result of which I deny not to us, viewed as individuals, sinners, in this world; but in the precision of the type, as far as our full place is concerned, it does not directly set forth what is done for the priestly family. This is exceedingly observable. We have to do with the work of Christ as measured by God Himself in the sanctuary. The divine estimate of it all is the ground of our perfect peace with God; and how blessed thus to rest on what God has found in the precious blood of Jesus! — of Jesus going straightway, we may say, after having offered up Himself upon the cross, into the presence of God. It is not denied that for peculiar and important purposes there was a delay of forty days, in which He showed Himself here below. This was necessary, according to the wisdom of God, for reasons

of great moment. But on the ground of His work He goes up into the presence of God and there stands or rather sits down, God Himself in His own heavenly light and glory giving us the full value of what He has found in the cross of Jesus.

There is a marked difference when we come to Israel. There it is not put in the same way. And why? Because of the prominence given to their transgressions. Having been put under law in a sense which was never true of the Gentiles, the law brought out the transgressions of those that were under it, and there the mercy of God provides a special means for comforting them in their necessary trouble of conscience. A specific assurance was given in His pity where their transgressions were made so patent. The Christian learns in short what his guilt was, and the inbred evil of his nature, by the infiniteness of Christ's sacrifice, the glory of His person, and the place into which He has now entered in the presence of God. Of the perfectness of the work for us, these are the great evidences; but to the Israelite there is the type of something else. The high priest goes forth, and publicly stands with a living goat before him, upon the head of which he confesses definitely and distinctly the sins of the children of Israel. They will need it. The special position of Israel, in particular their having to do with the law of God, accounts for the difference. Our place is most evidently that of men who walk by faith and not by sight. In Israel's case the goat which had the sins thus articulately confessed upon it goes away, and bears them far away from the people into a land not inhabited. I do not think the idea here has any link with the resurrection, any more than with heaven which is far from being a desert which none inhabit. It is merely a

connected fact which refers to our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross: only that on one side of it He suffers as bearing our judgment from God, and on the other side there is the full bearing away of the sins of man, of course more particularly of Israel. For the Christian believer all is summed up in Christ having borne our judgment, then going in before God; as here the high priest carries the blood into the holiest of all.

Our portion is where Christ is. It is there that we must in spirit follow Him; The whole of Christianity is bound up with what is transacted within the veil. This is what is peculiar to us as Christians; so that, if we find our true place, it must be in Him who goes into the presence of God. It is not so with the people of Israel. They yet anxiously await His coming out, and when He does appear, they will have the comfort then, and not before, of knowing that their sins are all completely borne away; whereas we need wait for nothing. On the ground of His sacrifice, as estimated of God and made known by His Spirit while Christ is within the veil, we draw near where He is. We know that His standing in the presence of God is the best of all evidence to prove how perfectly our sins are gone. If there were a question of any single one remaining, how could He rest in the presence of God? There He is, the man that bore our sins, but He is now seated at the right hand of God. Consequently the demonstration to us that our sins are gone is not some fresh action. There is for us no distinctive bearing of our iniquities confessed on the scape-goat. Those who believe without seeing do not — ought not to — require this, whereas to the children of Israel it is expressly given. They will need all possible comfort. Accordingly we find in the prophets there is that which answers to

this type, when, if the Lord's appearing in glory will set all their sins, as it were, before their eyes, at the same time there will be the fullest conviction wrought in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, that the sins, though thus brought before them, are borne for ever away. This may serve to make somewhat plainer the difference between Israel's destiny and what concerns Aaron and his house in the one bullock that was offered for them; as it seems to be the reason why in the types of the sacrifices for the priests and the people there is an undeniable distinction.

Another thing may be observed. There is care taken to show that the high priest made an atonement for the holy place, and for the tabernacle of the congregation. For this we are not left to our own thoughts. The word of God is plain that, when our Lord Jesus effected reconciliation, it was not only for those that believed but for the universe of God — for all things in heaven and on earth. This is clearly what is represented by it.

Further, observe the beauty of the type in another respect. Although in point of fact what was set forth by the two goats did take place in the offering of Christ, nevertheless the bringing forward of the scape-goat, after the high priest leaves the sanctuary, seems not obscurely to indicate that the application would be after the whole business of what was represented by Aaron and his house is completely over. The Christian follows the Lord into the antitypical sanctuary — into heaven itself; and then, when He comes out, Israel will learn the blessed truth to which they are now so blind. They will know that on His cross atonement was made for their sins, completely borne away, but borne away by the One that shed His blood before it was a question of

Christianity at all on earth; for I speak not of divine counsels.

Consequently this chapter has an immense comprehensiveness of meaning; and that which might seem irregular in its parts is most explicable when we come to leave room for the various dispensational dealings of God. It involves a certain difficulty at first sight, which is very often the case. The most obvious meaning is rarely the true one; but when the truth is once seen, it commends itself to the heart and conscience by its self-evidencing force, simplicity, and harmony with other truth.

Afterwards follow certain communications in the rest of the book grounded on the atonement.

Thus, in the next chapter (Lev. 17) we have a very serious and solemn injunction, spoken to Moses in the first instance, but set forth in a very comprehensive manner. “Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them; This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded.” A most jealous care as to blood was insisted on. The reason of this is given: “The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your soul; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”5 It is clear that this is the deep truth which lay under all the ceremonies of the day of atonement. It was an ancient requirement, pressed in Noah’s day, when death first furnished food for man, and now bound up with man’s ordinary life of every day. Whatever may be the blessedness of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for God and heaven — whatever our own satisfaction and rest and joy in looking through it to

eternal hopes — we deprive ourselves of much, if we separate it from our work-a-day life and common-place duties. Undoubtedly it has an efficacy which brings us into the presence of God. There is nothing that we ever can have by and by which, in a certain sense, exceeds in moral depth what we are brought into now by faith; but at the same time we have to bear in mind this other aspect of it — that is, namely, the way in which it mingles itself, and is intended to mingle itself, with everything that comes across us from day to day. It ought not to be apart in daily scenes and among men. Take for instance the commonest matter of our daily food and raiment. Ought we to exempt from Christ any one matter of our personal or relative life, or any one earthly duty? Be assured it is our joy and privilege to share all with Him. I am sure it is also our duty — that whatever we do we should do in His name. Nor can we do aught in His name except as having before our souls that wonderful work which accounts for every blessing which God has given us even now.

Hence it was then that God would not permit the life of any creature that was needful for the food of His people to be taken, unless there was the witness of that which had its most solemn testimony on the great day of atonement. But this was not enough. Every day and every day's wants were to witness the same truth of God, to render the same confession of man. This is the reason, it appears to me, why we have the ordinance of the blood following the great atonement-day; and most properly after it, and not before it. That is to say, we have the truth in its deepest and highest reaches? before we are enabled to estimate it in its common and ordinary application. The blood shed is the witness that

sin is in the world. In the first state of things no such thing was allowed. Before sin came into the world there was no question of blood. Directly after sin entered among men, we hear of life offered, of sacrifices; but man was not permitted to touch the blood, even when after the flood he might eat of animals. Blood was then as always sacred to God and forbidden to man on every ground of nature or of law.

And this gives amazing force to the wonderful difference in which redemption places the believer; for now (and how startling it must have been to a Jew to hear it!) “except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you.” No doubt the one was a literal injunction, whilst the other was an immense spiritual truth. At the same time the Lord could have chosen some other form for expressing that truth, unless there had been particular emphasis laid on the very figure of what was most repulsive to a Jew’s mind according to the law. So thorough was the change that now He enjoins what would have been before the greatest sin. Except one eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of man, there is no life. The sign of His death yields life to us, and is indispensably needful To have life one must drink that which was due peremptorily, exclusively, to God the judge of sin. But now contrariwise Christ has changed all for us. The very blood that it would have been most of all criminal before to touch or taste must now emphatically be drunk by us. Hence the standing testimony to the work of Christ the Christian beholds, as we know, in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. Therein the very same image is ever recurring. We eat His body and drink His blood.

In Leviticus 18 the people being treated now as a holy people, everything that was contrary to the order of God in nature is here strictly and solemnly prohibited. It is important to hold the same principle always. God does not absolve from that which offends His natural order. Grace may bring us into a higher place, where we do not use our liberty as to nature; but God habitually maintains His own order there; and so should we. Grace, I repeat, may withdraw one from the operation of it because of a higher call, as for instance in the service of God. We see this in the case of Paul himself; nevertheless was there any one who more firmly and distinctly held fast the wisdom, the propriety, the holiness of God's order in nature, than that man who through grace had been lifted above it? Hence we have simply the prohibition of what was contrary to God's will here below. Neither Egypt nor Canaan must regulate the practice of Israel: He who spoke to them was Jehovah their God, who, as He laid down the broadest principles, knew how to descend into the smallest details which concerned His people.

And let me take the opportunity of remarking another thing: the chief means by which the devil brings in what is so offensive is by high pretensions, which affect to slight the order of God. This ordinarily is the precursor of an outrage on holiness, as a little experience will prove.

It is beautiful to trace the unbending authority of revelation. Moses was inspired to interdict such a marriage as that of Abraham and Sarah, to speak of no more. There is no apology for the past, though of course the guilt would have been aggravated for the future.

In Leviticus 19 we have again the same principle, though now in its positive form. “Ye shall be holy,” it is said; and this is founded on a very precious reason: “for I, Jehovah your Elohim, am holy.” “Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father,” — beginning with the one that might naturally be somewhat less held in awe, and bringing her unexpectedly for this very reason into special prominence. Not the smallest change occurs in the word of God, whilst having some ground of divine wisdom and beauty as its purpose and its sanction. The precepts here given do not call for any particular delay. Let us never fail to bear in mind, for the principle holds good everywhere, that holiness is and must be according to the relationship in which one stands. Hence the character of holiness varies according to our place. Here it was a people in the flesh, and accordingly the various requirements of God were suitable to their place. Our condition is altogether different. We “are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us.” Christ has Himself brought us into a heavenly position. This is the meaning of what He says in John 17: “For their sakes I sanctify myself.” Not as if there ever was or could be the smallest thought of evil in Christ’s nature, or in any of His ways, I need nor say; nor as if He were here thinking of the mighty work of redemption by which He has set us apart to God. This is not its meaning; but the place that He has taken according to the dignity of His person and the results of His work for us — His place in Leaven, that He might be there as man in that new scene — not only lifted up from the earth, but in the glory of God above, and consequently stamping a heavenly character upon us who know Him there. It is well to make this remark, because Christian holiness is bound up with the place where we know

Christ now, when we come to look at it in its full character according to God's mind.

In Leviticus 20 we have the same thing maintained, with a strong caution against all that was inconsistent with God's moral ways, and this in every kind of natural relationship, or indeed what might be unnatural. It is mainly in view of the enormities practised by the Canaanites.

Leviticus 21 brings in something more special. There the word concerns the priests, the sons of Aaron; and we learn the important principle in it, that what might be quite lawful in an Israelite is excluded from a priest. The reason is of the greatest interest. The whole book is founded on access to God. It begins with this, and goes through with it. Everything is measured according to the tabernacle of witness between God and His people. It is a question here of approaching God in His sanctuary, and of its effects. So here we have those who enjoy the privilege of drawing near to God as far as it was permitted under law. The effect of this is not merely that they were not allowed the excitements which were admissible in an ordinary Israelite, as we learnt in Leviticus 10; but they may not know the indulgence of sorrow for the nearest dead. Thus it is said: "There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people; but for his kin that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother, and for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled. But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself."

Thus a number of different regulations are laid down which are all in view of this — that he who enjoys nearness to God must have his conduct in every particular affected and governed by that master privilege. How sweet and cheering for those who stand in a relationship of grace, not law! At the same time, let us not forget its extreme seriousness; for what the Jew had only in show we have in divine reality. It is impossible to be a Christian without having a nearness to God that is measured by Christ Himself. When He was here, He always walked in this conscious intimacy with His God and Father. He had it no doubt in absolute perfection according to the glory of His person; so that of Him alone it could be said, “The Son of man who is in heaven.” But it was morally true also of the Lord Jesus as He walked here below; and what was true of Him alone personally — I mean true as a matter of fact by the power of the Spirit in Him morally is now our very place, as far as it is possible to be given to a creature. Redemption has brought us to it, and the Holy Spirit seals us in it. We are brought to God; and the consequence of this is, that it goes far beyond the setting aside of what is wrong and what is evil now. We are never right unless we judge things around us that might be quite lawful and legitimate otherwise; the one question for us is, how do they suit a man who is brought to God? Unless we bring in this, we shall find ourselves continually entangled in the conventionalities of men, or in what is possibly even baser — the mere traditions of a corrupted Christendom on the eve of its judgment.

In Leviticus 22 we have this continued, not so much as to matters of conduct, but as to questions of a blemish in

some form or another. Jehovah was more than ever jealous of the personal state and household of the priests.

Leviticus 23 calls for a fuller notice. Here we are on the instructive theme of the feasts of Jehovah — the displays of His ways from first to last with His people. First and foremost the Spirit of God brings in here, as at the beginning of the Bible after His work was done, the rest of God. There is nothing that man so little understands. It will be strange perhaps to many here to know that what the wisdom of this world counts happiness is the unrest of change — the miserable proof that man is fallen and far from God. Yet it is the fact that man so defines his own pleasure — the shifting to which a burdened conscience has recourse in order to lose the sense of what it has lost through sin. For God and His children all is different. The very first word He speaks is the pledge of that rest which He Himself first instituted at the beginning, and into which He will bring His people at the end. This He would impress on their souls, and give them ever to have it before them. He deigns to think of us, and to give us to share rest with Himself; but that rest will be His rest. He will have wrought for it, and will finally bring us into it.

This then was what was represented by the sabbath-day, and the reason why it was put in the first instance. Indeed there is no truth, one may say, more important, as far as these facts are concerned; and no doubt the tendency in man to lose sight of it was one ground why it was the only feast that was always recurring. The sense of need would make the passover felt; but the busy activities of the world demanded special means to keep before the people the rest of God. This done, God

gives us a fresh beginning — I have no doubt with divine wisdom — after the sabbath-day has been mentioned: “These are the feasts of Jehovah.” In a certain sense the Sabbath is one of these feasts, but in another it may be viewed apart. We have looked at the first of them.

Now in those that were strict feasts, which occurred once in the year, the passover necessarily has a fundamental place. The reason is manifest. It is the well known sign of the death of our Lord Jesus. “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is Jehovah’s passover.” Immediately connected with it is the feast of unleavened bread; that is, purity according to Christ, where the leaven of man’s nature cannot be allowed; and this too through the whole circle of man’s day here below. “Seven days,” as it is said, “Ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.” Then comes another and a very distinct statement of the Spirit of God, — not exactly a feast, but what was essential to the next feast. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath” — the evident type of our Lord’s resurrection. On the very day that our Saviour died on the cross the Jews kept the passover. There are none who have made greater difficulties than those who have written most on the subject; but the reason is that

they almost invariably bring in western notions of time, instead of taking their stand upon time as God speaks of it to His ancient people. In short they count days from sunrise to sunset. Such is not the scriptural way. On the one hand our Lord did Himself eat the passover on the regular day. It is not true that it was a different day. He eat the passover on the day prescribed by the law. On the other hand even the Jews that had played their part in seizing the Lord with a view to His crucifixion, according to Jewish reckoning eat the passover on the very same day. Though it was our next morning, it was their same day. Christ died before that day was over. If we hear the law, all these three facts which were severed by a considerable length of time really happened on one and the same day according to God's method of counting the day.

Similar difficulties have been made about the resurrection, it may just be observed in passing. It is only noticed in order to help the Christian in reading God's word. The truth is that the subject has been confused by the very men who ought to be a help. There are none who have more embroiled the subject than the commentators. It would be hard to name a single one that has rightly used the light of the scriptures on this point. To me this seems humiliating; for the true solution lies on the surface of scripture both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. What we need is more thorough confidence in the unerring word of God, all of which if read in simple faith will be found to convey nothing but light.

Our Lord then died on the due day according to the passover regulations. So He rose on the first day after the sabbath, when the priest waved the sheaf of corn

that had been cast into the ground and died and had sprung up again. Christ was as much the waved sheaf as the paschal lamb. In this case you will observe that, when it was offered, there was a lamb without blemish for a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering of two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah for a sweet savour, with its appropriate drink-offering but nothing more: there was no sin-offering. Whenever Christ appears in that which is brought before us, there is none required, He Himself in fact being the true sin-offering for others. The sheaf of first-fruits became thus a type of Him who knew no sin. It was Christ risen from the dead, just as the passover pointed to His death. “And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”

This day becomes the point of departure from which to reckon the morrow after the sabbath; as it is said, “Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days.” And then comes another type of great significance: “And ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto Jehovah.” What is the meaning of this? Perhaps there is scarce one here present who does not know, by the clear light of the New Testament, that it was Pentecost. The new meat-offering on that day ought to call for few words of explanation, not because it lacks interest, but because we at least, all the children of God, ought to know its bearing well. It is the beautiful type,

not of Christ, but of those that are Christ's, — of those called according to that name which was given to Himself, the true sheaf of first-fruits with its burnt-offering and meat-offering and drink-offering. In it there could be no question of defilement; but in the first-fruits which followed fifty days after, when the new meat-offering was offered, another provision tells its own tale: "Ye shall bring out of your habitation two wave-loaves." "The law made nothing perfect." It is not the complete figure of the church, nor could be; nor is there any adequate setting forth of its unity: still there is a sufficient testimony to those that compose the church; and we must always make this distinction in looking at these types. The two wave-loaves may possibly indeed refer to the two houses of Israel, out of which were called such as should be saved, and in an ulterior sense perhaps to Jew and Gentile. At any rate there was no proper sign of that which is so characteristic a feature of the church, namely, the one body of an exalted and heavenly Head. This could not yet come into view. But the two wave-loaves of two tenth deals were to be brought out of their habitation; they were to be of fine Hour, but expressly baken with leaven — a surprising feature when we bear in mind Leviticus 2; and the more as they are said also to be the first-fruits unto Jehovah.

What was true of Christ is true also of those that are Christ's. They were first-fruits to Jehovah. But then there was this difference, that as they were baken with leaven to show the evil still existing in the nature of those that compose the Christian body, so there is the need of a sin-offering to put away that evil, and confess withal the sense and the judgment of it before God. "Ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish

of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah, with their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto Jehovah." There is the full witness of acceptance; but there is more than this. "Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings." There is the recognition of the evil that needed the sacrifice of Christ. At the same time there is the witness of the communion into which we are brought, founded upon the blessed sacrifice of Christ. This was not the case with what represented Christ. "And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave-offering before the Lord, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to Jehovah for the priest. And ye shall proclaim on the self-same day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations."

It is much to be noted that here closes all reckoning of time from the sacrifice of Christ and that new meat-offering which followed it on the day of Pentecost. There is a break. Undoubtedly a quite new set of feasts begins afterwards, and a marked lapse now comes before us.

Thus the wisdom of God provided for a mighty work to be founded on the death and resurrection of Christ, setting forth, as far as this could be without revealing the mystery, a place of association with Christ of the nearest kind, though there is the most careful guard against confounding the Christian with Christ. Whatever may be his union with Him, still there is care to hold up the unsullied purity of Christ. The Christian has Him for his life, as we know; but there is the most distinct

confession that his nature needs the sacrifice for sin to meet it.

Then follows, it is true, a little glance at the harvest before the new course. This is brought forward in a remarkably mysterious way. “And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger: I am Jehovah your God.” All this is left with comparative, and I believe with purposed, vagueness. There will be a peculiar testimony of God in the end of the age. The heavenly people will be taken into the garner, but there will be a remnant in the field left who will be really of Himself. The gleanings are left, as it is said here, for the poor and the stranger. The Lord will maintain His testimony even in the darkest times, and in the most peculiar way. This however is lightly passed over, because it does not belong to the properly economic dealings of God.

The recommencement is very significantly set forth by a new beginning in verse 23: “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, In the seventh month.” Here we come down to the closing scene, as far as the feasts could represent it. “In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.” Clearly it is a fresh testimony, and a loud summons goes forth, sounds unheard before. It is no longer a sheaf waved before Jehovah, but the attention of men is drawn in a most striking manner. The public dealings of God for the earth now openly begin. Though Jesus was presented to man’s responsibility, God knew perfectly that the offer of the

kingdom in His person as Messiah would break down through the unbelief of man; and nothing shows more clearly than these types how well it was known all along. Man never surprises God; nor is there any after-thought on His part. All was known and settled beforehand, while man thoroughly manifests what he is. How the light will burst on Israel when their eyes are opened to it in the day that is coming! How they will beat their breasts in amazement and sorrow for their blindness of unbelief! God will work in their consciences, and they will bow at length to the grace of their glorified Lord. They will sorrow indeed, but it will not be mere unavailing sorrow; it will be holy gracious sorrow, not without shame as far as they are concerned; but none the less will there be the simple enjoyment of the mercy of God toward their souls. In the seventh month then, and on the first day of it, there is the feast of trumpets. No servile work again is to be done, “but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.” And then we are told — “On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement” — that very day which was brought before us already in all its solitary excellence and glory, both in its connection with us and also with Israel. (Lev. 16) But here we have it in sole connection with the earthly people. For the time is now come for man, the Jew, to have his sins covered before God; and therefore, as we are told, “there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day,” etc.

Thus we find two great truths to which prominence is given. It is a day when God will bring His people into a

real divinely-taught knowledge of the work of expiation for their sins — the death of Christ; but for this reason two things are coupled with it: they judge themselves, taking the place of sinners on the day which is the witness of their sins for ever gone. Sense of grace in redemption, which puts away our sins, is the best, truest, and only trustworthy means of making our sins really felt. When it is not so, it is an abominable abuse of the grace of our God and of the work of Christ. It was never done to make us judge sin lightly, but to enable us to look at sin, and hate sin, as God does — not meaning of course according to His depth of holiness, but in our measure on the same principle. And we can afford to do it, inasmuch as Christ has taken all its consequences upon Himself, and has borne it away from us as a matter of eternal judgment.

But there is a second element, besides this moral judgment of self, which is the necessary working of the Spirit of God in every one to whom the atonement of Christ is truly applied. “And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.” There was enough and to spare of work for other days; but for this day there must be none. Man has absolutely no part in the task. None but the Saviour can work for it, and He in suffering for us. “Ye shall do no work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before Jehovah your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.” The soul that presumes to rest on grace without self-condemnation because of its sins before God is trifling with Him, and has not yet learnt to hate its unholiness as at thorough issue with

God’s own character And again the soul that presumes to work shows its presumption in putting itself, so to speak, on a level with Christ and God Himself; for the work which alone suffices as a basis for atonement must be done before God by One who is God’s own fellow.

On the fifteenth day of the same month begins the final festival of the Jewish year — the feast of tabernacles. This does not call for any considerable length of remark. It was the shadow of coming glory, but presented in a singular manner, especially in Leviticus. “The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Jehovah. On the first day shall be an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. It is a solemn assembly, and ye shall do no servile work therein.” God thus shows us by this remarkable introduction of the eighth day here the connection of the earthly blessing with the heavenly glory of resurrection. Resurrection points to heaven, and can never satisfy itself except in heavenly places; and therefore a link is here intimated with glory on high, whilst there is the fullest possible recognition of a day of rest and blessedness for the earth and the Jewish people. As we are told here in the latter part of it, they were all to keep this feast with gladness and joy. “Ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days.” The eighth day is evidently brought in in a mysterious way — not now pointing to those who may be a testimony for God where

all seemed to be removed from the earth, as we saw in the notice of the harvest at the end; but now, when we have the fulness of the witness of glory here below, this finger, so to speak, points upward, showing that in some way not developed in this chapter there will be the connection of the resurrection and heavenly glory with the day of Jehovah for the earth. We understand it now from the New Testament, where all is clearly brought out. In point of fact the testimony of the New Testament is fullest on that which is but an added circumstance here. In short our proper hope is in the heavens; and accordingly the New Testament makes this the prominent truth, as it was according to the wisdom of God it should be. But for the earthly people we find the prominent place given to the earthly part of it, although the heavenly part is not forgotten In Leviticus 24 injunctions and circumstances are introduced in a very peculiar manner. First a command is given to the children of Israel to give “pure oil-olive beaten for the light.” This was to be ordered by the high priest, so that there should always be a candlestick burning before Jehovah continually. Along with this there was to be the keeping up of the witness of Israel after the flesh, though not without Christ and the fragrance of His grace before God. “And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before Jehovah. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before Jehovah continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.” This was to be Aaron’s food. Thus we have provision that there shall be always a testimony, although there may be an interruption, as we know alas! there has been in the

dispensations of God. Still God will infallibly maintain what is suitable to His own character; and, as we know too, a heavenly testimony is precisely what comes in when the course of the earthly economy has been broken. Thus, although this might seem to be strangely brought in here, its wisdom, I think, will be apparent to any reflecting mind. The great High Priest keeps up the light during the long night of Israel's history.

At the same time we have a contrasted fact: "And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp;" and in the strife he blasphemed the name [of Jehovah]. This fact, I am persuaded, is purposely preserved along with the former. Israel themselves as a whole have fallen under this dreadful curse. Therefore what might seem to be a singular connection, more particularly after the feasts of Jehovah, exactly suits the situation. That is, we have the solemn fact that the people, who ought to have been the means of blessing to all others, have themselves passed under the curse, and been guilty, in the most painful form, of blaspheming "the name." We know how this has been; we know how they treated Him who is the Word of God and declared the Father, who was and is Jehovah Himself. We know well how Israel, yielding to thoughts of the world (as it is said here, the son of an Israelitish woman whose father was an Egyptian), having fallen thoroughly a prey to carnal wisdom as to the Messiah, were guilty of rejecting God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and of blaspheming the name. Accordingly they have fallen under the curse, which would be final but for the grace of God, who knows how to meet the

most desperate case. But indeed, as far as regards the mass of the nation, that judgment is definitive. It is the remnant that will become a strong nation in the day that is at hand. On the apostates wrath will come to the uttermost.

The judgment of this evil doer brings in some necessary distinctions, and the solemn truth of retribution is added as closing the rest of the chapter. Jew or stranger, the guilty in their midst must alike suffer.

In Leviticus 25 another trait is laid down to complete the picture; that is, the regulation of the principle of the sabbath, not merely for the people, but for the land; not only a sabbatical year, but the full jubilee — all on the same present principle of a sabbath.6 Accordingly then this chapter brings in a most blessed privilege under the hand of the God of goodness, but a miserable thing when man meddles. The neglect of the sabbath — not only in its weekly form, but on a larger scale for the land — was indicated of God as a matter of fact in the history of the chosen people.

What is the result in God’s hand? Supposing by any iniquity the land passed from those to whom God assigned it, the jubilee was God’s principle for preserving His own rights intact. For in truth Israel were but tenants; Jehovah was the landlord. Jehovah therefore retains the earth in His own possession. “And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound

throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession." Whatever troubles, whatever sorrows, whatever sins might alienate the land from those that were His tenants there, the jubilee year rectifies all. The land must revert to the landlord. He was perfectly entitled to it, and surely would maintain His own right for the blessing of His own people. Such is ever the way of grace. Thus we see that righteousness, so terrible a word to guilty man, when wielded by divine grace becomes the only hope for the ruined. "Grace," as everywhere, "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ." So it is for us who believe in Jesus; but for them it will be found in the vindication of what God promised, when they had sinned away the promises as far as man could. God will maintain them in His mercy, and will use them so for the people in the future day of glory.

The law of jubilee is a remarkable instance of the bearing of Jewish ordinances on moral conduct. Thus a Jew might take advantage of it to exact a price for his land out of proportion to its value, which depended on distance from the fiftieth year. Hence it is written "And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another:

according to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: according to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am Jehovah your God." Sale or purchase they were bound to regulate by this principle.

To the Christian the coming of the Lord is always at hand, and he, if faithful, will measure all according to that standard. So says the apostle, "the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not using it for themselves;7 for the fashion of this world passeth away." If the treasures and prizes of the earth will be worthless in that day, the hope of it burning brightly in the heart gives us present victory; for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. I grant that there is a still deeper and more searching power in keeping Him before us who makes that day to be what it is; but He Himself has marked the danger of saying in our heart "The Lord delayeth his coming."

We cannot then but love the appearing of the Lord Jesus when He will bring in deliverance to man and creation from their long and groaning slavery under Satan's power and the blighting effects of the curse. For the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children

of God. We shall be manifested in glory along with Him, and shall enjoy that mighty and blessed change over the face of the universe to the praise of His name and the honour of the God who sent Him, the Second Man.

Meanwhile the Jew need not be troubled, any more than the Christian now, like Gentiles who know not God. “Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store. The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourner with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land.” What matters the difficulty if God is the guarantee?

It is of the deepest interest to notice how compassionately God in the rest of the chapter (verses 25-55) dwells on all possible vicissitudes of Israel in distress. There is first the brother waxen poor, who sold away some of his possession (verse 25 et seqq.); next, the brother waxen poor, whose hand is lowered and needed strengthening or relief (verse 35 et seqq.); then the poor brother who sold himself either to a Jew (verse 39 et seqq.) or to a stranger (verse 47 et seqq.) with his claim in Jehovah’s name on his brethren in each respective case. May we never forget the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who, though He was rich, yet for our

sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich! Assuredly, if we follow thus in His steps, not only shall we have joy and refreshment in the Lord now, but He will repay in that day.

Leviticus 26 draws out in a solemn manner, not in the form of type now, but of direct statement, the prophetic history of the people,8 and warns of the direct effect of their being tried on the ground of their own responsibility, which is the principle of law. What a contrast, save in the close, with the jubilee! I shall not of course enter on its details. Suffice it to say that God does not close this searching word of His without the remembrance of His covenant, as it is said, with Jacob, and His covenant with Isaac, and His covenant with Abraham. He speaks here in this unusually emphatic way of His covenant with every one of them; so that even from His mouth, against whom they had so long and deeply sinned, there should be a threefold witness for His mercy in that day. “And I will,” says He, “remember the land.” Thus we see the connection with the chapter before, and how perfectly therefore a divine order is kept up even where our dullness hinders us often from perceiving it. “The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths” — another link of the connection with what went before — “while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their souls abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am Jehovah their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of

their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am Jehovah." Thus God falls back on what He is Himself after He has fully detailed the sorrows that fell on the people because of what they were. But whatever may be the necessary changes in the government of God because of a people changing — alas! merely from one form of evil and opinion to another, God, the immutable eternal God, who has given this special name to them — God in His own unchangeableness — will show them mercy when He comes whose right it is to reign.

The last chapter (Lev. 27) lets us know what will regulate in fact when that day comes. Little need be said now about it. For the most part it treats of the vow, as showing devotedness to the Lord. This may have various forms; namely, devotedness in person, in property, and in what was given up to the curse (e. g., in the case of their enemies devoted to destruction). The main point insisted on, and the only thing which it is necessary to mention in this cursory notice, is that all is brought under the priest first, but the priest subject to another, according to what in the chapter is called "thy estimation." Thus Moses acts as type of the Lord Jesus Christ in another quality, and not merely as priest. What that is cannot be doubted. In short, it is the Messiah — the one like unto Moses, but incomparably greater than the legislator, when it will not be merely a royal son of David vindicating His claims to the land in favour of His own people, but Jehovah having the only worthy image of Himself and of His glory. That same blessed Jesus who once came down to accomplish atonement for them will then act as the Judge of all devotedness. He will then interfere in every question in His own perfect goodness

and wisdom, maintaining the people not only according to righteousness, but according to the infinite mercy of God Himself for ever.

1 I know not whether some would translate, with sufficient reason marchesheth as “boiling pot.” No doubt among the poor one utensil was made to serve more than one purpose. Certainly sir would seem to express a large pot or cauldron. If boiling be meant here, we should have first the uncooked elements (verses 1-3), which typify Christ viewed in His nature as devoted to God, and tested fully by the fire of trial; next (verses 4-7), the three cases where the oblation was cooked, whether baked, fried, or boiled, representing the blessed Lord viewed as a concrete man here below, and tried as we have seen in every conceivable way, but in all a sweet savour to God.

2 Does not [the Hebrew translated as ‘according to the offerings made by fire’] mean “upon the fire-offerings of Jehovah,” rather then “according to” them? De Wette takes it as “for fire-offerings.”

3 It may not be amiss to give a sample of Bishop Colenso’s critical candour and intelligence in his remarks on Lev. 4:11, 12. (Part i. ch. vi. I quote from the fourth edition revised, 1863.) In his citation he ventures to insert (the Priest) after “shall he” and before “carry forth.” His comment is: “In that case, the offal of the sacrifices would have had to be carried by Aaron himself, or one of his sons, a distance of six miles (!); and the same difficulty would have attended each of the other transactions above-mentioned. In fact, we have to imagine the Priest having himself to convey, — we may suppose, with the help of others, — from St. Paul’s to the

outskirts of the Metropolis the ‘skin, and flesh, and head, and legs, and inwards, and dung, even the whole bullock;’ and the people having to carry out their rubbish in like manner and bring in their daily supplies of water and fuel, after first cutting down the latter where they could find it.” Now even in our language it would be unwarrantable for a man professedly honest or truthful to fix on the words “shall carry” the necessity of personally doing this work in order to cast doubt or ridicule on the record. What shall be said of one ostensibly in the position of a chief servant of Christ so doing by holy scripture? But this is far short of the gravity of his guilt. For a tyro in Hebrew knows that verbs are susceptible of a change in form which gives a causative force. Such is the fact here. The verb originally means to “go forth;” in the Hiphil it means “to cause to go forth,” leaving entirely open the agency employed. If it be sorrowful to make blunders in scripture exposition with good and reverent intentions, what can account for such excessive ignorance as is displayed in this instance? Were it a heathen enemy who thus reproached God and His word, one could understand that the haste to blame what is above man’s mind often exposes itself thus; but what shall we say of one who so comes to us in the clothing not of a sheep merely but of a shepherd?

4 I am aware of the confident statements of Drs. Davidson and Fairbairn on this point. The question is whether they are well founded. The former (Introd. O.T. i. 267) says, “Whosoever wishes to ascertain the points of difference between these two classes of offerings must carefully read Leviticus 5:14-26 and Leviticus 7:1-10, relating to the trespass-offering; and Leviticus

5:1-13, Leviticus 6:17-23, which refer to the sin-offering. He should particularly guard against the mistake of referring Leviticus 5:6, to the trespass-offering, since it relates to the sin-offering alone. The passage says, that if one be guilty in any of the things mentioned in Leviticus 5:1-4, he shall confess that he has sinned, and bring his ashamohas three meanings — viz., guilt, as in Gen. 26; debt, or what is due for contracting for guilt; and sacrifice for certain sins, i.e., sin-offering. Thus the term asham is not appropriated to trespass-offerings wherever it occurs, but is of wider significance. The occasions on which the two classes of offerings were made cannot with truth be pronounced the same; nor were the ceremonies alike, though these assertions have been made."

5 In verse 11 the general principle is elated. The literal rendering seems to be this: "For the life (soul) is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to atone for your souls; for the Mood with (through) the life (soul) atones." The blood had this expiating value in the type as the expression of the life or soul given up to God for the offerer, and this of course judicially, not in a simply moral way, which falls rather under the minchah or meat-offering.

6 Even Ewald (spite of his ingenious folly of the Elohist, junior Elohist, Jehovist and redactor, not to speak of the Deuteronomist,) is struck with the constant recurrence of the septenary numbers in various forms, days, weeks, months, and years, throughout the law as a strong indication that the whole system of its times and seasons was the product of one mind. The truth is that it pervades the Hebrew Scriptures from Genesis to Daniel, in whose prophecy (Dan. 9) we have the same principle

in another and original shape. And this is the more striking, because there was so thorough a change from the pastoral character of the wandering fathers to the agricultural connection of the feasts when fully celebrated by the sons of Israel in Canaan, after they had been impressed by God in the times of the legislator with a profoundly historical stamp, the shadow of good things to come. That one mind could be none less than divine. May we be willing to unlearn in order to learn!

7 Or “not using it in full.” It is not “abusing” the world — which would be παραχρώμενοι, whereas here it is κάταχρώμενοι, using it for oneself, not for the Lord.

8 The characteristic infidelity of rationalism betrays itself in their anxious excision of every element manifestly divine. Thus, as it is one of their assumptions that there is no such thing us prophecy they must lower the age of such a chapter as Leviticus 26 to a date that would put the supposed writer (the pseudo-Moses) on the same level historically with the events he professes to predict. Such a ready imputation of imposture to the sacred writers is a gauge of their moral condition. People are apt to judge of others by themselves. The fact is that the close of the chapter is prophecy as yet unfulfilled, to which the Lord Jesus (Matt. 23:39) puts His seal, as well as the Holy Spirit by the apostle Paul. (Rom. 11:26-31)

Numbers

Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch.

Numbers 1- Numbers 11:1-10.

It is impossible to look at this book ever so cursorily without feeling the difference of the atmosphere from that of Leviticus. And this is so much the more striking because it cannot be fairly doubted by a believer that they were both the production of the same inspired author. Nothing therefore illustrates more clearly the way and measure in which the object of God gives the tone to the book in which He is communicating His mind to His people; for although there is quite enough to show the same human hand that He employed, the fulness of divine wisdom is equally manifest, as also the special forms which it thought fit to adopt for the purpose of enforcing the truth on our careless minds.

Now the specific object of Numbers is to set out the journeyings of Israel through the wilderness, and this typically as usual in scripture. It is no longer access to God. This we have seen in Leviticus, where the tabernacle stood in the foreground, out of which Jehovah caused His communications to be given to Moses, as well as to Aaron, or even to the people through Moses. In the book of Numbers the Spirit of God has the desert before Him, rather than the sanctuary. We shall find of course the sanctuary, but the question here is not one of drawing near to God as far as this could be then, but of the walk of the people of God on the earth. I say the earth, because it does not always set before us the earth as it now is — a wilderness, but the earth even as it shall

be when the Lord Jesus takes the kingdom. We shall find the importance of this remark before we have done with the book of Numbers. Still it is everywhere the earth as the scene through which the redeemed of the Lord are passing.

Hence the first thing brought before us is that we are now to look on and learn the varied trials whereby Israel were about to be proved, where occasional foes met them, where there were always dangers and difficulties, where the people might and as we know did manifest their lack of dependence on God, even to the point of rebellious and flagrant and fatal sin against Him.

It was needful in God's wisdom that the census of the children of Israel should be taken. The primary object that is presented to us in the early chapters is a reckoning of the males that were fit for war; but we shall find that the numbering goes beyond this, and that there are other considerations and objects than for war and warlike purposes. In short, whatever might be the particular aim in various parts of the book, God impresses upon us this — the care and the interest that He takes in everyone that belongs to Him. It is a very simple truth, but certainly full of comfort to the soul; and this, it will be observed, for the earth.

We can all understand the sweetness of being numbered for heaven, and to that the heart of most people generally turns; but even those who have the greatest comfort in looking at the counsels of God securing them for eternity are apt to forget the present interest which the Lord takes in all our movements, ways, conflicts, and trials. This is the first thing with which the book opens.

After this numbering of the people attention is drawn to the exception of the tribe of Levi. Thus it is said, “Thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel: but thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.” The two things are true; and the comfort of both (which at first sight might seem to be so opposed as to be incompatible with each other) the Lord would surely give us to taste. In the one case the census relates to those whom God has put in the place of trial and provocation (not yet, no doubt, the fullest form of conflict, which is reserved for the book of Joshua). Nevertheless conflicts there are, with trial of patience always, in the wilderness for the people of God. But then there is another truth which we need also to apprehend, which has no less consolation for our souls: we are not only God’s own people, every one of us counted up by Himself as those on whom He reckons, whatever may be the march, with whomsoever we may have to fight in passing through the wilderness; but we have to do with serving Him, and, above all, in reference to the sanctuary. In this point of view numbering as of a host would be out of season. The object is to stamp on service an unearthly character; yet undoubtedly it is while we are going through the earth. At the same time the exclusion from this census in the case of Levi was just as important as His interest in reckoning Israel up one by one in the midst of trials. For the Levites taken quite apart are thus viewed as out of all this reckoning and simply exempted for the service of God, without

need of any such method of impressing God's care on them.

Both truths were intended to be brought before us as having distinct and combined meaning in the Christian. Accordingly the very same persons who in one aspect are typified by the numbered tribes of Israel in another are Levites not numbered as yet because they belong to God simply and exclusively. This then is the double aspect. It would not be easy to adduce an instance which shows us more the importance of a right handling of the types, because the natural mind would be continually prone to set the two things in opposition, and to conclude that, as the Levites were contrasted with the other tribes of Israel, so what either represents must occupy each a wholly different position now. As this does not follow à priori, so the reverse is true in fact; and the types indicate different relations of the same antitypical persons. The truth is, when we think of a Christian, we have to remember the words of the Spirit of God in the New Testament: "All things are yours." It does not matter whether it be the numbering of Israel or the absence of numbering of the Levites, both are true of the Christian — not, of course, in the same aspect, but in distinct relationships equally true.

In the second chapter is laid down the arrangement of the camp; and here we have another important principle brought before us. The tabernacle has a central place: the tribes are all ranged in reference to it. "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house." And then we find, "On the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch their armies: and Nahshon the son of Aminadab shall be

captain of the children of Judah." God insists always on His own order. "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. And those that do pitch next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar shall be captain of the children of Issachar. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred. Then the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab, the son of Elon shall be captain of the children of Zebulun." Again we find that Judah comes before us. "On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben," and again of Simeon. After all this we are told, "The tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards" (verse 17). Then follow on the west Ephraim's standard, and on the north Dan's.

Thus the tabernacle is surrounded by the Levites for the purpose of asserting their special and exclusive absorption in the service of God, instead of being left for purposes of war, or any object on the earth other than God's own sanctuary. They hold the central place, with six on one side and six on the other. Such was the order of the march. Indeed the same arrangement appears when they encamp. We shall find however a subsequent modification of this; but I do not speak more of it until it comes in its own place. Then we are told as a summary that "These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers. All those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty. But the Levites were not numbered

among the children of Israel, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And the children of Israel did according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward every one after their families according to the house of their fathers."

In the third chapter we come to more particulars of that which has a still nearer interest to us — not now the general order of the host of Israel, but more especially what concerns the service of the Levites This specially connects itself with our walk here below. Priesthood is just as remarkable in the book of Leviticus as Levite service is in the book of Numbers. In that respect Leviticus is by no means a happy name for the book. The truth is that much the greater part of the detail as to the Levites is found in Numbers, and not in Leviticus. We must remember that the name "Leviticus" is not given by divine inspiration: it is merely a name taken from the Greek version; in short it is a human name. I do not hesitate therefore to make the remark. The Hebrew mode of reference to these books was the mere citation of the first word in each book. In the book of Numbers then, where we have the walk on earth set forth, service finds its capital seat. In the book which develops access to God priesthood is as prominent as here Leviteship. A remark applies as to priesthood exactly similar to what we found true of Leviteship; namely, that the Christian, who in one point of view is of Israel and in another a Levite, is no less a priest. Only priesthood sets forth the drawing near to God Himself in the heavenly sanctuary — no longer the figure, but the true — the antitype; whereas Levitical service has to do with the service of the sanctuary whilst the people of God are passing through the earth. It is clear from this that the priestly

functions of the believer have a very much higher character than his Levitical service, if we would express ourselves in the language of types. In the one case we have to do with God Himself; we draw near in the sense of what Christ is to Him as well as to us. In the other we have that which is a holy duty; nevertheless it is a duty which has to do with man and the earth in our passage through this world. It is of this latter that we are about to hear more particulars.

The third chapter accordingly brings before us the names of the sons of Aaron, who had the highest place among the Levites — “Nadab the first-born, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.” “These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest’s office.” Then the death of the two former, Nadab and Abihu, is mentioned, Eleazar and Ithamar remaining to minister in the sight of Aaron their father.

Next follows the object for which this is introduced. “Jehovah spake with Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.” It is clear that gospel service is not the point; and the reason is manifest. Service in the gospel is not merely in but to the world. Here it is service in the world, but by no means the making known to the world the grace of God. The time was not come for this. It is characteristic of Christianity, and could not be set forth fully until the great work of redemption was done. Hence we do not find, except in a mere vague and general principle, anything that could properly set forth the service of the gospel; but there is a vast deal of other service which has and ought to be

rendered while we are passing through the earth. This is represented by the different families of the tribe of Levi.

But the first and chief point to lay hold of in the type is the connection of the service with the High Priest — with Christ Himself. Separate ministry in any form, divorce the service of the saints from Christ, Himself in the presence of God, and it is falsified and degraded. Even were this not complete, the precious spring of comfort is weakened. Thus the all-important point is what the Spirit of God first of all brings before us; that, although priesthood and ministry are in themselves essentially distinct, we must always bear in mind that ministry is a gift of God in the closest connection with Him who is the type of the great High Priest. It is for His honour, and for the accomplishment of what is connected with Him. What has to be done on the earth can only be rightly done in subjection to Him, and depends on His place as High Priest. The false principle which has ruined service here below is that men have naturally connected it with the church, instead of with Christ I do not hesitate to say that this is always fatal, though not in the sense that there may not be good done, as men say, by those that minister. Neither would one deny refreshment to souls. Also we must particularly bear in mind the remark already made, that proper gospel ministry is not contemplated here.

But when we think not merely of man, of souls getting help, etc., — when we think of the glory of God, the severing it from Christ, the One to whom it really belongs and to whom it is given of God, and the putting it in subjection to the church, completely ruin all testimony to His will and glory here below. Consequently service becomes either a selfish thing, turned perhaps

into a mere worldly profession, or a matter of corporate sectarian vainglory. It allows of the love of a great following, or the desire after power and influence — all of them abominable forms of flesh or world to which it has been perverted by the wiles of the devil In any case, to say the least, ministry deprived of its relation to Christ is stripped of its own proper dignity, as it ceases to subserve His glory.

When cut off from Him and connected with an earthly stock, it is taken out of that which alone secures its true, holy and heavenly character. It becomes more or less dependent on the world by ceasing to be immediately linked with Christ Himself, the One to whom God has given it. Even if it be placed under the church, instead of kept in the hands of Christ, it invariably opens a door for pleasing self or pleasing others; and thus for worldly motives or selfishness in every possible form. Hence we see the all-importance of the truth as here typified: “And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given to him out of the children of Israel And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest’s office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.”

But there is a further truth from the 12th verse: “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am Jehovah.” That is, we find them in a very special manner taken by Jehovah as

the formal substitute for the firstborn of Israel who were spared when Egypt was visited by the destroying angel. They were redeemed by blood, and counted emphatically to belong to Jehovah. In lieu of Israel's firstborn He accepted the Levites "They shall be mine." They are thus made the standing witness of the firstborn due to Jehovah from man as well as beast. The grace of God had exempted those to whom they answered in the time of judgment. Consequently the Levites, being thus identified with mercy — the great distinguishing mercy which rescued Israel from the doom of Egypt, were so much the better fitted to do the service of the sanctuary. Who can presume to undertake the service of God without knowing that God has accepted him on the ground of redemption? Salvation precedes ministry, if we listen to God and dread the solemn warning of the Lord and His apostle. (Matt. 7:22; 1 Cor. 9:27)

But there is something far more precise than this. "Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them. And Moses numbered them according to the word of Jehovah, as he was commanded." Now we have their special numbering for the place assigned to each family. Here they are numbered (apart from Israel, but still numbered) from infants of days, designated to service long before it could begin. (Compare Gal. 1:15) Strength is given before service is claimed; but from their earliest days they are reckoned apart according to the grace and intentions of God. There were three principal houses — Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. They with their sons have each a line of service given into their hands in Numbers 4, where they are afresh numbered from thirty years old

and upward. This also is of great moment. There is nothing practically more important than that each servant of God should know the work He has given him to do; and that when known he should stick to it. Be assured also that it is of no small importance never to interfere with another's service. The Lord is sovereign in this. He divides according to His own will. This on the one hand we are bound to respect; while on the other there is nothing more lovely than mutual subjection according to the grace and in the fear of God. This very principle ought to make us jealous of trenching on that which we ourselves could not properly enter into. I hold it to be a certain truth, that every saint of God has a work to do entrusted by the Lord, which nobody else can do so well. The great business is, that we should find what it is, and that we should cherish unqualified confidence in God in carrying it out as now redeemed to Him. After all, this must be a secret between Him and ourselves, however we may be helped perhaps by the wisdom of others to find it out; for there are many ways in which we arrive at the conviction of the work God has given us to do.

Real Christian service cannot be settled in the simple external fashion in which it was appointed to Israel. Like all else in Christianity, it depends on faith, not on family, or birth-connection, as was true of Israel, a people after the flesh. But what was true of them in a fleshly sort is no less true of us in a spiritual way. Now we have to bear this in mind; and I believe that you will find the great value therefore first of all of settling between your souls and the Lord what the work is in which you prove His power with you, and His blessing on you. Surely now is the appointed time, the time of labour and of service,

while you are passing through the world. Thanks be to God, we have a still better place, even the sanctuary where all is founded on the mighty work of redemption, whereby we rest in peace with God and in the communion of His love, as we draw near in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In virtue of this we have our true worship while here below; but with this, as we have seen, Leviticus has more to do than Numbers.

But besides the privilege of worshippers, we have our work, and it is of the utmost possible moment for the glory of God that we should be found simple-hearted, devoted, respecting each other, not hindering but helping on in brotherly love. Grace no doubt teaches us what is due one to another, while earnestly and sedulously seeking that we should each discharge that in which God is with us. This seems very plain in the expressed directions which the Spirit of God lays down as to the sons of Levi. And we shall see how careful He is in His own sovereign choice; for man's will has nothing to do with the matter. It was no question at all of picking out those who might seem best for carrying the boards and the curtains, or the vessels of the sanctuary. God arranged it all, taking it completely out of man's hands: He chose suited men Himself. Where is anything happy unless in the simple carrying out of the will of God? Nothing else is so sweet. Our Lord Jesus has shown us this. It was His meat to do the will of His Father, and it should be ours.

These Levites then show us the special service framed, and the instruments arranged, by the will of our God: we find also certain positive directions laid down for all. "These are the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers. Of Gershon was the family of the

Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites. Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them were seven thousand and five hundred. The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward. And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the-son of Lael. And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation shall be the tabernacle (the outward frame) and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof."

Then we hear of Kohath. "And of Kohath was the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the Kohathites." Their number is given; and these were to be on the side of the tabernacle southward. All was laid down with the greatest possible care. God would avoid confusion in the service of the tabernacle, and also room for human will. He would make it to be the humblest thing on earth — a matter of simple obedience. Their charge we gather was to be a most honourable service, even "the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary."

Then come the Merarites, under whose guardianship were to be the boards of the tabernacle (ver. 36). “And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto.” Thus it is plain all was fairly portioned according to God’s mind.

What has been here pointed out it is of all possible consequence to apply practically. You will find that in the service of the children of God — in those, for instance, that minister in the word, without confining it to them — these distinctions turn up constantly. There are those whose blessed place it is to dwell on Christ Himself, who delight in dwelling on His grace, who have the deepest admiration for His person, His divine glory, His perfect devotedness to the Father. I need not say there is no ministry possessed of a higher character than this: what indeed has one so high? On the other hand there are those who are more particularly occupied with that which displays the Lord to men. It is clear that the curtains, the tabernacle, all the outward part, do not so much set forth Christ before God as before man. The former sort of ministry contributes largely to a spirit of worship. The latter is adapted more to the wants of man. The difference may be better understood by this, that in the former it is a question more of the value of Christ, in the latter of His ways; in the one more what He is and does for God than what He appears before the eyes of man below, the means of a meeting between God and man, and consequently of a gracious supply for man’s necessities.

It is evident that those who drove in their wagons the tabernacle, with its tent and coverings, had the

Gershonite service, as compared with those who carried the precious vessels of the sanctuary. And again there was somewhat between the two — namely, what maintained the curtain. This therefore did not seem to represent so external a work as the Gershonite service; on the other hand, it does not suppose such intimate communion with Christ and His offices as belonged to the Kohathites. All this may serve to show that what is set forth in the service of these different families of Levites has an obvious bearing on different forms and shades and characters of ministry in the word here below.

But the same thing is also more widely true; for we must not limit ministry to the word, although this comparatively has the highest character. But there is also ministry in prayer, in watchful love and care for others, in lowly interest in all that pertains to the Lord and those that are His. These things must not be forgotten. There is many a soul that never appears as a workman in man's eye, but who, I am persuaded, carries on a most important function for the good of those that do appear, bearing up and strengthening before God those who have to do more with the din and brunt and fag of the war that must be carried on as long as the enemy is in force here below.

All these things then we may well seek to understand. Above all, when we do understand, let us not content ourselves with this; for what is the value of truth, if we are not walking in it to the glory of the Lord? Is it not rather for such the deepest condemnation? Therefore there are none for whom one may justly dread so much as for ourselves — for you and me, if careless. The more simply God has led us outside the mere reign of dreary

tradition, with all its darkening and blinding effects, the more He has brought us in presence of His own word, and given us to bow to the free action of the Holy Ghost, that we may enjoy the grace and truth of Christ — the greater the danger, shame, and pain, when we either act unworthily in our own persons, or take lightly in others that which dishonours the Lord Jesus. Such indifference, if it exist along with a better knowledge of the word of God, makes all the more sad the contrast with that precious expression of His own grace. Nevertheless be sure that there is not only the same danger of slipping as for others, but when those who have the better knowledge do trip, they are apt to fall lower with less shame than such as know less with more conscience. When such unseemliness appears, many not understanding this are scandalised. They wonder how it can be that those possessed of better knowledge of God's word can so grievously turn aside. The truth is that the cause is painfully simple. Not a few go on decently in the religious world through love of reputation, and a desire to stand well one with another. With little power of godliness, they have the highest value for position and their interests. Can any one doubt who knows the general state of things that this exercises immense power of a low kind? But it is not so where the Lord has distinctly led them out into a platform practically Christian. There nothing is allowed of God to pass in the long run but the power of the Spirit; and the danger is like Peter's, when he was no longer in the ship (where he was safe enough comparatively), but went out to Jesus walking on the waters. Then it is Christ who sustains, one way or another, or sinking is inevitable. Undoubtedly it was the place of true honour, but faith alone could avail itself of the divine power; for that

reason the lack of it exposed him the more because of his ardour, though the Saviour was immediately in sight to extricate from peril and sorrow. Nothing but dependence on Christ can rightly keep the Christian — I do not mean from drowning so much as from dishonouring the Lord.

In order to this the sovereignty of God in service must be felt, learned, applied, and walked in. And the same feeling which maintains it as a matter of faithfulness to God will also respect it in others. Be assured that these things always go together. This must suffice for the distinctive service of the Levites in contrast, so to speak, with the common character of the priest's work and position. In drawing near to God all differences disappear. Who and what are we in His presence? The one person that fills the scene is the Lord. And this is more manifestly true and known to us now, because the veil is rent. Hence therefore the immediateness of the presence of God is incomparably more felt in Christianity shall even the types of Judaism could possibly express.

The chapter closes with fresh calls from Jehovah to Moses: first, to number the firstborn males of Israel from a month old and upward, and to take the Levites for them; secondly, as the number of the firstborn exceeded that of the Levites by two hundred and seventy-three, to take redemption-money for this residue (five shekels apiece) to be given to Aaron and to his sons.1 In Numbers 4 we come to another important point — the carrying of the vessels of the sanctuary through the wilderness; for now what the Kohathites had to do is taken up particularly. It was the highest form; it was what brought the service closest to Christ.

Outwardly it did not look so well, as we shall find afterwards. It does not at all follow that the service which makes the greatest show or noise among men has the most honourable character in the eyes of God. This is important. We often mistake as to what really has the weightiest place. This is the one sure test of value; it is always Christ. Whatever brings one nearest to Christ, and brings out Christ most, is always the best. This seems to be the case typically with the sons of Kohath in their service. But if we look closer, you will find special ways in which their service is brought before us.

Thus they were told first of all, “When the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of testimony with it: and shall put thereon the covering of badgers’ skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.” This was, of all the vessels of the sanctuary, the fullest and the highest representation of God Himself, as displayed in Christ. The ark, as we know, was for the holiest of all. It was that which set forth Christ, — and Christ not as He met the need of man in the world, but as He is seen in the presence of God — Christ in the highest display of His glory and of divine righteousness on high. In this case the veil was that which covered it. It is not merely therefore the type of the Son of God as such, but as having taken humanity into union with His own person. I trust that my reader believes and knows that the Son of God ‘was from all eternity; but what the ark covered with the veil represented is the Son after He took manhood into union with Himself.

Besides this, there is the covering of badgers’ (or tachash)2 skins — the figure, it would seem, of that

which absolutely shut out all that was offensive. Such repellent power could only be represented thus, not in the intrinsic way in which it belongs to Christ. The form in which the figure expresses this power of moral guard is by a skin capable of warding off what was disagreeable. Badger's skin therefore was fitly chosen in every case when it was a question of representing power that sets aside evil and forbids its smallest contact with the object so covered. Then over this type of His separation from sinners was a cloth wholly of blue, because, whatever might have been in our Lord Jesus Christ as just said, whatever might be the power that rejected evil, there was another aspect of Him pre-eminently presented to the believer: He was "the heavenly" One. (1 Cor. 15) And it is remarkable, too, that several expressions which are used in John 3 combine these very thoughts. "The Son of man," it is said there rather than the Christ. Thus we find Him shown fully as man — the title in which He speaks of Himself here and habitually; but we find also that He is "the Son of Man which is in heaven" This never could be severed from Him when He was here below; it seems to be the allusion meant by the covering of blue. Even John the Baptist was earthly, and spoke of the earth, as did all others; Jesus alone came from above, and was above all He was divine, the Word and Son, whatever He became, and coming from heaven He was above all.

Further, the table of showbread had a cloth of blue, and all the various appurtenances were so covered. Besides this it is said, "And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet,3 and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof." Whereas, on the contrary, with the candlestick there was

simply a cloth of blue which covered all, and then the covering of badgers' skins, but no scarlet cloth. What are we taught by this? Wherein lies the difference? Why is it that the Spirit of God directed that in the case of the table of showbread a covering of scarlet should be between the blue and the badgers' skins? And why not in the candlestick? The reason, I conceive, is that scarlet is the well-known sign of His glory, not so much as Son of Man, but as the true Messiah — as the one who takes the kingdom of His father David after the flesh. I conceive therefore that this is probably corroborated by the fact of its connection with the table of showbread. At that table were the loaves, which clearly bring before us the twelve tribes of Israel. When the Lord Jesus restores the kingdom to Israel, it is not the covering even of purple — I shall show this by and by, — but rather the covering of scarlet. The mistake of the Jews when our Lord came here below was that they only looked for His glory as the Christ. Our Lord Jesus was refused as such; but when it was manifest that unbelief rejected Him, then, as we all know, He brings in this further glory as the result of suffering unto death. His death and unbounded glory throughout all the creation go together. (Comp. Ps. 8 with Ps. 2)

Hence therefore the evidence is plain, and God showed all along, that there never would be the limitation of His glory in connection with the twelve tribes of Israel represented by these twelve loaves, as the Son; He comes of man in all the fulness of power and glory. It would not be merely as of the Son of David, but the infinitely larger glory of the Son of man. But He will not therefore lose His royal rights over Israel as His special people. With this, it appears to me, the scarlet or

crimson covering is connected. I shall show presently how the purple comes in; but for this we must wait till it occurs in its place.

In the case of the candlestick of light there is altogether a different thing. Nothing else but blue appears. There is neither scarlet nor purple; nor was there, you will observe, the covering veil. Why is this? Because here we have brought into close juxtaposition the light of divine testimony, which does not refer to the tribes of Israel, but is specially connected with the heavenly calling. Now it is precisely when Israel disappears that the power of the Spirit of God is given, which is the real means of manifesting this heavenly light. Consequently all reduces itself to two ideas: one is the heavenly link, and the other is the power that rejects all impurity. The church of God, as we know, or Christian body, is especially connected with that testimony. In the case of the twelve tribes there will be, when the due time comes for them, a connection through Christ with heaven, the power of holiness; but their hope is Christ in the glory of the kingdom, which He will take as the risen Son of David. This we have already seen in the foregoing type.

Further, it is directed that the golden altar should be covered with blue and badgers' skins; that is to say, in near connection with the light comes the altar of intercession, the altar of priestly grace. How beautifully this applies to a time when not only there is the power of the Spirit of God in giving a testimony for God — a heavenly testimony and a holy one, but besides also the power of grace that goes forth in Christ's intercession! We know how both ought to characterize the Christian. These two objects are similar in kind, were found perfectly in Christ, and should be in us. Now is the time

to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; now to pray always with prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching “hereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Our God would give us fellowship with Christ in both. As is the heavenly, such are they also who are heavenly. The earthly people will have light arising for them by and by; but it will be for earthly government, and the nation and people that will not serve Zion must perish.

But when we come down to the brazen altar in verse 13, which is the next instrument, it is said, “They shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon.” It is plain that the purple must have a close affinity for the crimson or scarlet: nevertheless there is distinction as well as resemblance. The distinction seems this — that while both colours agree in bringing in dignity, what seems to belong to the purple is glory in general; and I need not tell you that Christ’s royal dignity is connected not so much with His being the Son of man as with the lineage of David. I take it therefore that here we find what belongs to the Lord as suffering on the earth. Here He suffered, and here He is to reign. No doubt He is and could not be other than the means of meeting man where he is, in all his wants, and weakness, and sin, and distance: the blessed Lord never can abdicate that. This is glory pertaining to Him for the earth. At the same time He is and could not be other than the Son of David as viewed here below; as it was said, He was “born King of the Jews.” Looking at Him as connected with the earth, this is in part what belonged to Him — to reign where He suffered. The proper colour to express this dignity is the covering of the brazen

altar. He is more than king, but still He is King, and thus connected with all the earth.

The difference between the brass and the gold in various vessels seems to be this, that, while both show divine righteousness, the one rather looks at man responsible on the earth, the other at God in all His grace who is approached in heaven. Such is the difference. They are both true, both alone found in Christ: nevertheless the one means God's righteousness to whom we draw near; the other means God's righteousness that displays what He is in dealing with man as a responsible creature here below. God can afford to forgive him, but it is simply forgiveness. This takes account, we see, of his responsibility, which concludes by his failure, though divine mercy steps in with plenary pardon on faith. But it is another thing to draw near to God as He is revealed by Christ. This is found in the ark or in the other vessels of the sanctuary, if we did not even look at the highest form.

This was then what the Kohathites had to carry. Accordingly we find the completing of the numbering of the Levites — not merely of the children of Israel. But we have now the same sons of Gershon brought distinctly before us, not mixed up with the warlike houses of Israel; but when their service has been distinctly defined, they too are connected with the work, and summed up together.

It will be observed that here again as in Exodus I scout the notion as erroneous, that the most holy place with its furniture sets forth Christ in contra-distinction to the holy place as directly referring only to the works and services of His people, — the things to be believed

concerning God, and the things to be done by His believing people, — which leaves the court as a place where they might personally appear before God, and hold communion with Him as locally present among them. How poor this is, how it leaves out the true antitypical place into which the believer is now brought through the rent veil to hold communion with Him in the holiest (Heb. 10), does not call for more words. The Cocceian school was wild and vague; but their prime idea is incomparably better than this exclusion of Christ from His rightful pre-eminence and all-comprehensive functions in the mind of the Spirit. Besides, it does not seem consistent to admit, as these same typologists do, that the tabernacle as a whole sets forth the manifestation of God in Him, and then to allot it in this strange way, giving the innermost shrine no doubt to the blessed Lord, then the middle or holy place to His people, and lastly the outer court to the place of meeting or fellowship for the Lord and them. Having already however explained, in speaking of Exodus, what I believe to be the true bearing of the sanctuary vessels, there is no need of repeating it here. I would only point out the different order in this place, as well as the omission of some: both due to the fact that we are here in presence of God’s display of His life in Christ (and consequently in the Christian) on the earth, whether in the days of His flesh or as anticipating His appearing in the kingdom. The golden altar follows the golden table and chandelier, as it again is followed by the altar of burnt-offering. The laver is not mentioned anywhere. It is the difference of design which governs and accounts for all — a striking testimony to inspiration.

In Numbers 5 we enter on another view, on which I must be brief. Defilement, or suspected defilement, is here dealt with; but the principle is always according to the character of the book. It is not now priests, but the camp of Jehovah. He deigns to be with the people, and is there in the very midst of their encampment. They must carefully avoid what was unsuitable for the presence of God. He was dwelling there: it was not merely man's drawing near to Him. This, no doubt, did concern the Israelites, and we find it in the preceding book; but He was dwelling with them, and accordingly this becomes the standard of judgment. So we find the various forms of uncleanness which would unfit for a camp where God dwells. This is the first thought.

In the next place, supposing persons committed any sin, trespassing against Jehovah, and were guilty, the great point insisted on is confession (but more than this, reparation, if possible, by the guilty party); in every case, however, to God Himself. Undoubtedly Christianity in no way weakens this, but rather strengthens it. The grace of God, which has brought in unlimited forgiveness, would be rather a calamity if it did not enforce confession. Can one conceive a thing more dreadful morally, than a real weakening of the sense of sin in those brought nigh to God? It may seem so where there is only a superficial acquaintance with God Where the truth has been hastily gathered and learned on the surface, it is quite possible to pervert the gospel to an enfeebling of the immutable principles of God, ignoring His detestation of sin, and our own necessary abhorrence of it as born of God. Whatever produces such an effect is the deepest wrong to Him, and the greatest loss to us. This is guarded against here.

But there is another case where there was not a trespass, but a suspicion of evil, and this too in the nearest relationship — the husband about his wife Now Jehovah had his eye on this. He would not have one hardened. What is more dreadful than to be carrying suspicions? We ought to watch against it. Still there may be circumstances that bring a sense of evil, and yet we can hardly give an account of it. We may struggle, fearing that we are wrong as to the person; still, somehow or another, there is the sense of something wrong against Jehovah. What, then, is to be done? In this we see Jehovah making a special provision for it. He ordered that there should be the administration of what is called here “the waters of jealousy:” The wife was to be brought to the priest; everything was to be done in a holy way. It was not human feeling, but connection with God Himself, and a judgment of that which was unsuitable for His presence. “then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before Jehovah. And the priest shall take holy water in au earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: and the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman’s head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse.” Then the charge is given to the woman, after which he says, “Jehovah make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when Jehovah doth make thy thigh to

rot," and so on. The priest was to write the curses in a book, and blot them out with the bitter water, and cause the woman to drink the water. The effect of this would be that, supposing the woman was innocent, all would go on so much the better in the family. She would have the manifestation of God's blessing on her.

This I do not doubt to be a type, whether of Israel or of Christendom; but for moral profit individually it is all-important. It may be very painful for us to be suspected, but when we are, let us never resent it in the pride of our hearts. Alas! evil is possible, and it is a good thing to evince by the very patience of whatever may be that which is laid to our charge that we are above it. It is always a sign of weakness at the least, very often of guilt, when there is a restless desire to extenuate and deny; and the fiercer the denial the more certain the guilt as a rule. But there may be weakness which sometimes gives an appearance of wrong where it does not really exist. Where flesh is not thoroughly judged, there will be a tendency to resent the smallest imputation. Now here it is where we have this bringing in of the water of death. What is there which so admirably meets everything as the taking the place of death to all that is here below? It is very evident a dead man does not resent an injury. It is the bringing in the practical power of death into the soul which enables one then to bear it. Whatever it may be, let it take its course — let us humble ourselves to have, as it were, bitter water administered to us; and most assuredly where the heart, instead of refusing or in a fleshly way merely repelling an insinuation out of the pride of our nature, is willing that all should be thoroughly tested in the presence of God, the result is that the Lord espouses the

cause of the one causelessly suspected, and makes all to flourish as never before. Whereas, on the other hand, if there is a trifling with God, with His name, with His nature, then indeed bitter is the curse which falls on such a one. Thus we see it was an invaluable thing, and it is as true now in principle as ever it was in outward type. I do not hesitate to say it is true in a deeper and better sense now than it was then; only it needs faith. It needs self-judgment however; nothing less will carry us through. For although there may be the most genuine faith, still if there is not the willingness to be nothing the willingness to take the bitter draught, the waters of separation or waters of jealousy, it is because there is a power of flesh hindering us — a want of faith to take the place of death. Where we are upright, yet submit to it, who can measure the fruitful blessing which results through the grace of God?

In Numbers 6 comes a type of positive blessing. It is not defilement, but special severance to the Lord. This is what Israel ought to have been, but alas! was not; for Israel defiled themselves for the dead; and this is precisely the place which the godly remnant in Israel was willing to take, as we find in Acts 2. They owned themselves defiled to death; and for what? As it is said here, “When either a man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto Jehovah: he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husks.” It is separation not only from what was defiling,

but from what was the best in nature. Not that nature is condemned; which is never right in a Christian. We are bound to maintain the honour of God in the creature to the last. It is always deplorable where man weakens what is due to God in anything that He has made; yet there is no reason why we should deny the power that lifts us above it.

But this last is what the Nazarite shadowed. It is not an assault on God, or anything He has made. Creation as God made it was worthy of His hand; and natural affection is ever sweet. The Lord looked on a man that enquired of Him, though without an atom of faith in Himself; but his character was lovely, and as such the Lord loved him. This is all right; and we ought to do the same. Depend on it that there is a wrong measure if in this we venture to differ from Christ. Just so the Lord took a child in His arms, put His hands on it, and blessed it. Do you think He had not a special interest in a little child? The disciples were far from His thoughts and feelings. Do you suppose He did not look at what God made, were it but the lilies of the field? Never did the Lord give the least sanction to the pseudo-spirituality some of us have talked as to this. No; from His lips never fell a word of slighting thought and feeling for a single creature. Who admired as He every blade of grass that came from His Father’s hand? Who so delighted in His care of a sparrow? Who so marked and told out to others the interest that tells itself out in numbering the hairs of the head of those who belong to Him? Christ never denies the claims of nature, never weakens the sense of its beauty, fallen as man may be, and the world ruined by him — yes, ruined not by God, but by him who yielded to Satan’s wiles.

Yet that same blessed Saviour in gracious separateness foregoes all enjoyment of what was found here below — severing Himself in special vindication of God from it all. The creature was good. How could it be otherwise, coming from the hands of such a God? He knew better than any the state into which it had fallen, but He did not forget whose wisdom and goodness made it all. At the same time He is separate to Jehovah; He preserved His Nazariteship. Israel understood not, but the godly remnant followed His steps. By the grace of God they took the place of confessing the defilement for the dead. This seems to be the very thing illustrated at Pentecost Those who received the word took the place of repentance. Christ abode separate to God always. The repentant Jews in living faith acknowledged what their hands had done — what they themselves had been — what their fathers as well as themselves and their children. They bowed to God, and owned the ruin and death that had come into the world through sin. This is the only way of deliverance from it. They were set on a new ground of Nazariteship unto God from that very moment. They had begun as the outward people of God, separate from the nations, but their standing had been all spoilt and lost by defilement. The death of the Messiah brought out their defilement to the uttermost; but that very death which was their greatest sin became in grace the sole means by which they could renew their Nazariteship on a ground that could not give way. And there we follow. More than that, the door is left open for the remnant in the latter day. They will be Nazarites too. They will not refuse to own their sinfulness, and look from every other hope to the dead and risen Saviour; and they will close their proper place of separation to

God in the joy and liberty of the millennial kingdom, when the Nazarite may drink wine.

But a few words more as to the Nazarite may be acceptable here. It was not merely that there was the refusal of the best of what God gives (for natural joy here below was represented, I suppose, by the wine); but further, “all the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head.” It is plain that this was not the ordinary condition of a man. Long hair did not become him, though it is in character with the woman. Long hair is the sign of subjection to another; subjection is not God’s order for the man, who is meant to be the image and glory of God. But in the Nazarite the rule was altogether special. There was a giving up of man’s natural rights, of the place of dignity which God gave him in nature. Further, there was the refusal to make himself unclean for his father, or mother, or brother, or sister, when they died, “because the consecration of his God was upon his head:” nothing was more imperative than to beware of defilement by death. It has been already referred to. This is only found in the new creation, we having been sinful men, who turned back to God in repentance and faith; and always excepting the Lord Jesus who stood, but stood alone, in His own intrinsic purity.

Nazariteship is only for a time. This is stamped upon it. “All the days of his separation,” it is said, “he is holy unto Jehovah.” And then we find, either, if the Nazarite law were broken, how he had to begin afresh, or, if the days were complete, how it terminated. For this too was carefully noted in offerings of joy, and gladness, and communion. This is what is found here. “And he shall offer his offering unto Jehovah, one he-lamb of the first

year without blemish for a burnt-offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin-offering, and one ram without blemish for peace-offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings." All these were to be brought; "and the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offerings. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of a ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven; and the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before Jehovah;" and so on.

Again, Nazariteship is never supposed to be permanent, but an institution for the wilderness. It comes in by the way on earth, and is peculiar to Numbers.

Thus I apprehend that whatever might be the special separateness either of Israel in responsibility, of the church now, of the Christian by grace, or of Christ Himself, the only One absolutely and perfectly so, — whatever might be even these various applications, they all terminate in joy and glory. To watch in self-renunciation will not always be called for. There is a day coming when the Nazarite drinks wine — a time of gladness and ease; and thanks be to God for the hope of it! Then all will be changed; no longer must we go forward with girt loins because of passing through a world where not only evil is, but the best may be a defiling snare. The day comes when all things in heaven

and earth shall be only for Gods glory, all regulated and used according to the mind and heart of Christ. In that day Nazariteship shall be no more; even he drinks wine then. We shall dwell at ease; we shall rest from sorrow and Satan; we shall all be glad in the joy of the Lord. Then too it will not be merely heavenly worship and praise, but the earthly ones shall rejoice for ever and ever.

Am I wrong in taking it that this is the reason why the blessing of the high priest is brought in immediately after? It is in strict connection with the conclusion of the Nazarite's vow. "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee: Jehovah make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." Such will be really and literally the fact when the Nazarite's term shall have come in every sense; and it will end in the joy and gladness without bound of the millennial reign.

On Numbers 7 a very few words will suffice. We have here the gifts of love and free-will, of hearty devotedness, which the chiefs of the people offer for the service of the sanctuary. The one point to which attention need now be drawn is an offering, particularly for the service of the Levites; but remarkably enough these offerings did not affect the Kohathites. The Kohathites, whatever others might receive, carry the vessels entrusted to them upon their own shoulders. The sons of Merari and the sons of Gershon are presented with oxen and chariots; the Kohathites receive none. There is no such principle as that of God balancing

matters, and keeping men in good temper by giving all the same portion. If it were, there would be an end of practical grace. On the contrary, what puts faith and love to the test is, that God arranges every one of us in a different place according to His wise and sovereign will. There is no such thing as two alike. The consequence is that this, which becomes an awful danger for flesh, is the sweetest exercise of grace where we are looking to the Lord. What gracious man would feel sore with another because he was unlike himself? On the contrary, he would take an honest and hearty joy in that which he saw of Christ in another, which he did not himself possess. Now this is what seems to me is called into exercise by the provision for the carrying out of the service of the Levites. The least of them had the most oxen and the most chariots. At the same time, those who had the highest and the most precious charge of all had to bear the vessels on their shoulders. They had much less noise and appearance among men, but the best place giving rise to the highest exercises of faith. The Lord make us rejoice, not only in what He has given to us, but in what He has withheld from us and entrusted to others!

In Numbers 8 (where again I must be very brief) we have some final words, after the order about lights is announced, in a very particular way, namely, that the priesthood alone keeps up the lights. It is not Levite service, but the link with Christ in the sanctuary in the presence of God on which they depend. This really, though in secret, keeps up the true light of testimony.

In the next place we find another fact. Although the Levites were separate to the priesthood, and were particularly excepted from the numbering of the people

as belonging to the services of the sanctuary, none the less were they connected in the most interesting way with every Israelite. In short, at the consecration of the Levites, the Israelites laid their hands on the heads of the Levites. Jehovah had clearly shown before that He was the One to whom the Levites belonged; but it would have been a sad loss indeed, if the people had not felt so much the deeper interest because they were Jehovah's servants. Thus, we see, Jehovah maintained His own place and appointment and sovereign disposal of the Levites. If we are His people, let us not forget that the people of Israel signified their acquiescence and joy; took their part in it too by thus identifying themselves with the Levites that were then set apart for Jehovah. How happy, when on the one hand we thoroughly recognise the rights of the Lord, and on the other find our own portion so much the better. We find ourselves not impoverished because it is the Lord's, but so much the richer, because His things are ours.

Then comes in Numbers 9 a special provision in case of any impurity by passing through the wilderness which might hinder the passover to be taken at the right season. It is the resource of grace, and is only found here. It might be acted on, as in fact it was at a later day. The principle of it may be seen in the historical books, but it was a province growing out of the condition by the way. We see Jehovah would not lower His end or His ways. On the one hand the passover must be kept — the remembrance of the death of Christ is necessary everywhere. There is no pathway out of the world without the death of Christ which was kept in Egypt. Nor could they have left Egypt without the passover. They could not have been delivered across the Red Sea

without the blood of the Lamb first. The death of Christ is the necessary and only possible foundation for any blessing from God; but besides, when they are in the wilderness, the death of Christ is just as necessary. Where indeed is it not necessary? When we enter Canaan, there we find the passover meets us in the foreground. (Joshua 5) Everywhere the death of Christ is essential — as for God's glory, so for man's blessing. On the other hand, supposing they were not in a fit condition through defilement, Jehovah here makes a special provision for it. He would not lower the passover by dispensing with its absolute obligation; but at the same time He would pitifully consider the circumstances of the way which might hinder its practicability.

The end of the chapter brings before us another provision of goodness — the people's call to unlimited dependence on the Lord's guidance. This was represented first of all by the cloud, their guide by day, as the pillar of fire was by night. And mark this: no circumstances, no times, no difficulties, lessen the necessity for Jehovah's guidance. Supposing night comes with its darkness: what then? The guidance of God is only so much the more conspicuous. Can we doubt that the light was rather brighter by night than by day? I speak not of it intrinsically, but in the eyes of man. Whatever may be the trial, the Lord will be with us, if we really look to Him; and the greater the need, so much the more manifest will be His guidance. All we want is that the heart be really simple in dependence on Him. At His command therefore they rest; at His command they journey. If it stopped but for a little while, so did they; if it abode longer, so they rested; but they were ever to be at Jehovah's commandment. They were

privileged to expect His bidding continually. Blessed dependence! May it be ours!

There is but one other topic we may fittingly refer to before coming to a proper halt in this book of journeys. Following the directing cloud, we find the prescribed use of the trumpets (Num. 10:1-10). This clearly is a character of testimony of rather more marked features, more loudly dealing with the people than the simple indication of the cloud or the pillar of fire. There are different ways in which Jehovah signified His will. It might not always be with the same emphasis which the trumpets naturally imply. There were two trumpets of silver, and they were to be blown by the priests, as we are told here. The sons of Aaron had this as their task according to certain distinct principles explained to us.

In the first case of direction the people looked to the manifest sign of God's presence; in the latter, as just seen, the signal was given by those who had intimacy of communion with God, for this is clearly what was represented by the priests. Now the Lord does guide in various ways. There may be times, and there are things, in which we have no means which suppose such intimacy as could be represented by the priestly trumpets of silver. But Jehovah is always adequate to guide His people, no matter what the means or the circumstances may be. Even were one alone, Jehovah is superior to all difficulties. On the other hand, surely it is wise and well to avail ourselves of what spiritual help we can procure, of available testimony where the case admits of it; above all, of God's own word to deal with ourselves as well as our difficulties.

So accordingly we find here that on various occasions the trumpets had to sound. The most general use was to assemble Israel together. But the trumpet was not so much a question of the journey; this had to do more particularly with the cloud. But the blowing of the silver trumpets was to assemble the people at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. They were called thus to draw near to the presence of God. Again, supposing the enemy at hand, there was an alarm blown. “When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. When ye blow an alarm the second time,” then the rest were to move. All is carefully ordered of God. “But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm.” Thus, it is seen, that there were in particular these two cases. The trumpets were blown for gathering to the joy of communion; and there was also the alarm trumpet sounded by God’s own testimony in the presence of the enemy. The erect was to be this: the people would be comforted with the thought that, when the silver trumpets blew an alarm, it was God after all that dwelt in the camp. He who directed heard the sound. Not merely were they reminded that God was there, but that He would act for and in them against all adversaries. The trumpets of the sanctuary blown by the priest called them against the enemy. Might they not boldly say, The Lord is our helper: why fear? what can man do?

Numbers 10:11 - 21.

The previous portion of the Book of Numbers, viewed as a history, has evidently a prefatory character, however important and divinely wise. It is in a great measure

preparatory for that which we have now to look at, — the proper journeying of the children of Israel and the instruction which Jehovah gives founded on their path through the wilderness. We have had the numbering of the people, and the ordinances in view of service, special defilement and special devotedness, and other provisions of grace, for heart and conscience, for eye and ear, marked for the journey through the wilderness.

From verse 11 of Numbers 10 the history of the actual journey begins, and a very remarkable fact is at once brought before us, and one that must strike every rational mind, though it ought not so much to surprise the child of God. It may seem somewhat embarrassing that, after having laid down the place of the ark in the centre of the house of Israel (and we can all understand how becoming it was that Jehovah should thus be in the midst of His people whether encamped or marching), now when they go forth there should be a change.4 What drew out the difference was that Moses counted on the kindly help of his father-in-law. Man fails as always: God is invariably true to His word. Nevertheless He does not bind Himself that He shall not go beyond His stipulation. To my own mind this is admirably according to the perfection of God; for it is not a question this of God forgetting what was due to His own name. The ordinance that He had laid down at the beginning shows the affection that He bore to His people, the place that was suitable to His majesty, as having been pleased to come down and be in their midst; but the want of His people, the anxiety of His servants, the failure of what had been reckoned upon to meet the difficulties of the way, at once drew out His grace — I will not say with the cords of a man, but

according to that infinite goodness which bends to the necessities of the way, and which feels for every perplexity, great or small, in the hearts of His servants.

It is this which accounts for the difference. Jehovah felt for Moses and felt for the people too. And so the ark, which according to the strict rule was entitled to the place of chiefest honour in the midst of the host that moves forward, now deigns to do the work of a courier, if I may so say, for the people, not only finding the way for them, but acting as an advanced guard to the host. How characteristically this displays the unchanging goodness of God! On the one hand, the ordinance marked what was due to God, on the other was seen in this the gracious consideration which surrendered ritual for love. What real consistency God maintains with Himself. There is always this where grace reigns. The word of God may seem to be wanting for a little, but God never departs in the smallest thing which has the character of an ordinance, but to bring out His character far more perfectly than if all had been rigidly carried out.

The unerring word of God gives us both facts, by the same scribe and in the same book. There was no forgetfulness of His mind, but a tender solicitude about His people — a fine fruit of the same divine grace which all our hearts can well appreciate. Alas! it was very different with the people. If the need of the people drew out greater grace on God’s part, the people are found complaining with bitter ingratitude in the scene just after. Jehovah heard it: His fire burned amongst them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. The people cried out, but first of all to Moses. And when Moses prayed unto Jehovah, a further scene

ensues; for even divine wrath failed to act permanently on their souls. But here we find the result of that mixed multitude which had come out of Egypt with them. Proof was soon given that there is no departure from the mind of God which does not produce a sad harvest in days to follow. The strangers who were mixed up with them fell a-lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, “Who shall give us flesh to eat?” This was worse than the complaining just before. It was contempt of signal grace. There was utter blindness to the goodness of God. “We remember,” said they, “the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely. But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna. And when Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent, the anger of Jehovah was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.”

This is followed by the remarkable passage between Jehovah and His servant. Moses himself is downcast through sorrow and distress of circumstances, and confesses that he is not able to bear with His people. Then Jehovah bids him gather to him seventy men of the elders of Israel. Was this really according to the full mind of the Lord? or did the Lord not take Moses at his word, and, as the result, share his singular honour with these elders? Jehovah came down, it is said, in a cloud and spake to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass that when the Spirit was upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. And this gave occasion also to the haste of Joshua, who was somewhat indignant for his master. Neither was this well. It was weakness in Moses that he could not trust Jehovah to care for His people; but it was yet more in Joshua to be

over jealous for Moses' sake. The singular distinction with which God had honoured Moses ought to have raised Joshua above such feeling. "Envies" thou for my sake?" said Moses. "Would God that all Jehovah's people were prophets, and that Jehovah would put his spirit upon them."

Blessed anticipation of that which God was going to do another day — the very day in which we are now brought to God, and in which He has gathered us together in one! Do we understand this day of ours? Are our hearts in the secret of it? Are we misled by Joshua's feeling? or do we share the mind of Moses? Undoubtedly it is an hour of feebleness but withal of blessedness, of infinite peace and joy in the Lord. But we find even more.

Jehovah then listened to the complaint of His people in despising the bread that came down from heaven, and gave them what they sought after. How grave a consideration for our souls! Not only a believing prayer may have its answer from God, but an unbelieving one; and a miserable thing where the heart is not humble, and does not betake itself at once to God. Happy would it have been for Israel had they checked their murmuring, and rebuked their own souls before God! Surely, if the answer had brought them on their knees, and into the dust before God, it would have been better with Israel; but they were practically far from God. They chose to be their own purveyors, and distrusted Him who loved them. We shall soon find that this spread still farther.

And is it not a serious thought, my brethren, that we are reading but the starting-point of the journey, according

to this book the very object of which is to show the journeyings of the people of God? Yet, on the one hand, we have seen the incomparable grace of the Lord that has always streamed out to meet the wants of His people, that knows how to exceed, who never gives less, and never will bind Himself not to give more. Such is God. On the other hand, the people were only constant in rebelliousness of heart. It begins too with those who ought to have known better, but too soon fell under the enticements of the strangers who could not appreciate the goodness of their God. Thus, when a descent or fall comes, it is invariably that which is most carnal which carries the day. It was not that the mixed multitude slipped unperceived into the thoughts of Israel, but that Israel sank down to their lowest desires and contempt of what came from Jehovah.

Alas! we find failure everywhere — with the very lawgiver himself. But the fault of his too eager servant recalled him to the grace he felt. He delighted in the goodness of God, even though it might seem to involve somewhat taken away from himself; but he did not think of self but of God. It was right assuredly, when the people greedily fell under the degrading wishes of the mixed multitude of Egypt, that Jehovah should then rise up in His displeasure and smite them at the time when they flattered themselves with His answer to their cry. But His was an answer of grief; it was an answer that brought its own deep penalty along with it — not only leanness into their souls, but an indignant rebuke from God Himself. And it is said, His “wrath was kindled against them ere the flesh was chewed, and Jehovah smote the people with a very great plague.”

But we have not yet done with the painful phases of unbelief. It must be proved everywhere. What is man? “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses.” And for what? Avowedly because of the type of still richer counsels which their hearts never appreciated — “Because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath Jehovah indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And Jehovah heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)” So much the worse for them. Had Moses defended his own cause, I am persuaded God had not so dealt with Aaron and Miriam. Supposing a person were ever-so much in the right, still the want of faith which fights for self always thwarts the activity of grace.

Here therefore as everywhere, when the thing is simply committed to Him, the Lord takes it up; and nothing is more serious for the adversary. “Jehovah spake suddenly unto Moses;” for now it was an incomparably graver thing than the complaints and murmurs and lustings of the mixed multitude, or even Israel. In proportion to the blessings that grace has given is the grievousness of that which is contrary to God, and therefore does He speak suddenly unto Moses and to Aaron and to Miriam, “(dome out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation.” They do His bidding; “And Jehovah came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam:” It was in the presence of Moses; but Jehovah had to do with them. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

“And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them; and he departed.” But not without the mark of His hand, not without the judgment that dealt in the way most painful to her who evidently was the chief in this stroke of insubjection. For, “behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother’s womb. And Moses cried unto Jehovah” — how blessed the place of intercession! — “Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. And Jehovah said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.”

Then comes another incident. It was not merely the working of a spirit of repining and distrust of Jehovah which infected the whole people even to those that were nearest to Moses; but we have grave unbelief as to the land to which they were journeying. Here however it is

clear that Jehovah allowed the wish to be carried out: “Send thou men.” We know from elsewhere how this originated — that it was not in faith, but unbelief. Nevertheless Jehovah, as we have seen, lets them prove the principle. That is, not only does He lay down what is according to His own mind, not only may He in gracious care and consideration for His people go beyond it; but, further, He may allow that to be carried out which was not originally of Himself, and yet everywhere secure His own glory. So here spies are sanctioned; and we shall see the result of it. “Moses sent them to spy out the land of Caanan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward.” And so they did, and came back with one cluster of grapes so large that they bore the branch between two on a staff. They brought also pomegranates and figs. And they returned from searching the land after forty days. And this was the report. “We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.”

Unbelief itself could not deny the goodness of the land, nor ignore the magnificent specimen they carried between them. But they thought of the men that dwelt there, and not of God. And what had God brought them out of the land of Egypt for? Had He said that there were no children of Anak there? Had He represented the land to be a desert region where the sons of men did not

dwell? Never. Jehovah had fully stated who were to be there hundreds of years before. It was a plain forgetfulness of their distinctive glory and blessedness. Is this a strange thing? Let us remember that we too are in the place of our trial. Let us never forget that we have a better salvation, founded on a better redemption, and with better hopes Nor have we a less dangerous wilderness than Israel had to pass through; but for us it is not external power, nor the governmental goodness of Jehovah, but our God and Father, yea, as Jesus knew Him; not only in all the love that rested on Him when here below, but in all the faithfulness to which He binds Himself now to us in virtue of redemption itself.

And how is it that we treat Him — how trust Him? Let us read the book at any rate as the true picture of that which we are apt to be To believe that we are in danger is the very way to be preserved from it. To believe that He is caring for us in love is the surest way to enjoy all through the faithfulness and the strength of His love. It was not so with these spies. Nevertheless there is always a witness for God; there is a remnant even among the spies. “And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.”

All their thoughts were — “God is not.” That which is so sadly true of the unbeliever was evidently yielded to by His own people. “They are stronger than we.” And where then was God? They brought up an evil report of the land. This was an advance in evil; and the allowance of evil always brings in a worse. “They brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the

children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." And what did this matter, if God was for them? Alas! "the congregation lifted up their voice again and cried, and the people wept that night." But they were tears of unbelief, not of sorrow. "And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God that we had died in this wilderness!" They were just as unbelieving about the glory that was before them, the land of Canaan as the type of it, as they were about Egypt which they had left, and about the wilderness through which they were passing.

The consequence was judgment; and no wonder. For they say, "Let us make a captain, and let us return unto Egypt." This is the sure result. The heart that refuses to go on with God goes back to Egypt in its desires. "Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb," the two who had brought the good report, "rent their clothes; and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we passed through to search it is an exceeding good land." Let us not forget this. We owe it to our God to give a good report of the land which lies before us. "If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us — a land, which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against Jehovah,

neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and Jehovah is with us. Fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel." This was Israel — Israel in the wilderness — Israel in presence of the goodly land and of the earnest which had been set before their eyes.

The glory of Jehovah appears accordingly, and then He speaks to Moses. "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed amongst them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." What is the effect now? How does Moses answer this offer? God was willing to begin again — to make a fresh start. As with Abraham, so He would take Moses as a fresh stock to work from. He was willing to make him such a name as Moses otherwise could not hope for. The heart of Moses answered to the heart of God. He.would not hear of it. The offer was to bring out the love that held to what God can afford to be to His people. What He might do for Moses he would not now think of. And Moses said unto Jehovah, "Then the Egyptians shall hear it." How blessed to hear a man feeling for Jehovah's name and glory! — "Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them); and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou, Jehovah, art among this people, that thou, Jehovah, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if

thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken" (verses 13-17).

Thus Moses could not bear Jehovah's character to be compromised, and so he holds Him tenaciously, as it were, to His own word, saying, "Jehovah is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." He cleaves to the word of God and to His ways — to the love that He had so often proved, even to the faithless people whom He knew so well from the first. If He had borne with them before, surely He would not turn from them now. "And Jehovah said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah" (verses 20, 21).

Observe how at the same time that Jehovah pronounces judgment, He acts according to the very word to which Moses had tied Him in his faith. If his faith did not rise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their absolute and unconditional promises, it went back to the governmental pledge of Jehovah, and to this Jehovah adheres. Consequently that generation was dealt with and purged away, according to the terms of His own proclamation. He would surely hold fast His mercy, but

He would by no means clear the guilty. Pardon there was, otherwise Israel had not gone into the land, but He would “by no means clear the guilty;” and so that generation fell. Thus God preserved His character intact, and His hand made good what His mouth had uttered. Another day a deeper evil would make it necessary to fall back, not on what God had said in the wilderness, but what He had promised to the fathers. In the prophets we constantly find that there is a going back in faith, not to what was brought out provisionally during the wilderness, but to what was promised at the beginning (i.e. to the fathers). Thus the end will be the accomplishment of the beginning. The law comes in by the by; and the governmental dealings that accompanied it, instructive then and for all times morally and typically, share in themselves its tentative character.

There is another thing to remark here. In this evil state of things Israel had taunted their children, or rather God about them, as if they were exposed to inevitable death. Unbelief had thus fastened on the little ones, as if it was vain to expect that such as they could pass through the desert safely, and enter the land in face of the enemy. The very people that yielded to such unbelieving doubt of Jehovah’s care did themselves reap the consequences; while the children, who, as they thought, could not possibly be preserved through the horrors of the wilderness, were the only ones brought in with the two men who vindicated «oaf and held fast to His word, Caleb and Joshua. Alas! as we know, even Moses and Aaron passed away. There arose that which needed their removal as the discipline of Jehovah in their case. Caleb and Joshua, who gave God credit for a good land, and for a hand mighty enough to bring the weakest in, entered

Canaan in due time; and so did the little ones, who, if their fathers were to be believed, must surely fall by the way. But God alone is worthy of trust; and we see how perfect He is in His ways, and how sure and good is the end. But we see too how dangerous it is to allow the complaints and murmurings of unbelief, lest the Lord hear and deal with us according to our folly.

If the latter part of the chapter sets before us a burst of courage, it was merely of the flesh, and received a rebuke from Jehovah. The people, heretofore so unwilling to go, are now too ready; but they went without Jehovah, and the Amalekites and Canaanites turned round on them, indicting a severe defeat. They were discomfited even unto Hormah (verses 40-45).

A chapter (Num. 15) follows which might seem extraordinary at first sight. It is a sample of that apparent disorder in the word of God which is only an example of a higher and divine order. God does not arrange things according to man. If we have only patience and faith to believe that He never sinks below His own glory, we shall prove this, and know Him better in due time. We need not wait for it till we get to heaven; we may count on seeing what is according to His will for us here. Impossible that the heart could truly desire from God what He would keep back from it. So, after all this miserable history, universal unbelief working among the people of God, and in presence of this calamitous defeat, to the shame of Israel, before their foes that hated them, Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you, and will make an offering by fire unto Jehovah,” which was duly prescribed — a fresh pledge of

bringing them into Canaan. And this is exactly the force of it. So again it is repeated in the middle of the chapter. “Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I will bring you.” This was His answer to the unbelief which thought that all must perish — a double witness that God would surely bring them in. Unbelief along the way did not turn aside His love, nor unbelief about the end, for they despised the pleasant land. God holds calmly here to His purpose, though only He knew of the rebellion just about to break out and all that was to follow. He speaks of their future offerings of sweet savour with the drink-offerings of wine in the land of promise; and this for the stranger just as for the Israelite. For here the grace of God runs over, presumptuous sin alone being fatal, as we shall now see.

For as the next lesson we learn that God in no way bound Himself not to judge what was contrary to His glory by the way. “And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the seventh day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.” And here comes out a very important principle — what is to be done where we have not a distinct word of the Lord so far as we know. There is always one great safeguard, namely, to wait. Never be in a hurry in devising a remedy, or in exercising a discipline, without the word of the Lord. What is done cannot be undone. It is better to wait and take the place of ignorance, but at the same time of ignorance that is confident that the Lord hears and cares for us. This is exactly what they did. And they were right. “And

Jehovah said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp." Thus, whatever might be the solemnity of the sentence, the children of Israel had a fresh proof that God entered into their difficulties and took the greatest interest in what concerned them. Never can souls wait upon the Lord and be confounded.

But there is more than that. Jehovah speaks again unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel. and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God."

It is not only that God graciously waits on the people that wait upon Him, and appears for them, and knows how to give them what they have never learnt before; but He deigns to use a means, and a very weighty means, of reminding them of His word. And what is this? The riband of blue was a continual means of reminiscence for the people of the Lord. And have we nothing to remind us? Indeed we have, and there is one grand means, I am persuaded, while we are in the wilderness, of putting us in mind of His will and the walk proper to us. There is nothing that better enables us to walk on earth than the consciousness that we are of heaven. Is not this the meaning of the riband of blue?

But after such comforting thoughts as these there comes out something still more tremendous than ever in Numbers 16. It is not complaint now, nor murmuring; it is not merely unbelief because of the difficulties of the wilderness, nor is it the casting of a bad character on God's gift and choice in the land which their unbelief was reluctant to go up and take in the name of Jehovah. There is a conspiracy under the fairest pretensions possible. This does not mend matters. The basest things sometimes put on the most pious guise. No man should be deceived by sound. The Christian is meant to judge things according to God. The men who did so were not by any means such as we should have thought most likely to have joined themselves rebelliously against Jehovah. "Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi" (the most honourable portion among those who had the direct service of the sanctuary), "and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men." That is, there were those who belonged to the ministering class, and those that were chief men in the congregation, generally representatives of what people would call in modern days leading men in church and state. "And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them. Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of Jehovah? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face."

It is a good thing when the haughtiness that Satan knows so well how to excite brings out nothing but lowliness and humiliation of our souls before God. Haughtiness is apt to provoke haughtiness, and flesh to irritate flesh; but it was not so with Moses. “And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow Jehovah will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before Jehovah tomorrow: and it shall be that the man whom Jehovah doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?” Unbelief shows itself constantly in this very form. If God puts an honour on a man, and he does not take it from Him, it is only a stepping stone for despising the God who gave it to him while grasping after that which He has never given. There is nothing that produces such dissatisfaction as the heart’s not estimating aright what God has allotted to us. Whatever is His will alone secures real joy and strength, and happy results to the glory of the Lord. Now in this case these men were not satisfied with their position either as princes of the congregation on the one hand, or as Levites on the other. They sought to be as Aaron and Moses.

What makes this so solemn a chapter is, that the Spirit of God distinctly applies it to the anticipated course of Christendom. We all need its warning. In the epistle of Jude the beginning, way, and end are perfectly brought before us. “The way of Cain” is the great departure at the beginning of this world’s moral history, where brother slew brother, jealous of his acceptance with God, as well as of the righteousness which rebuked his own want of it. “The error of Balaam” is the clerical evil of turning the name of God into a means of earthly honour and gain, not without hypocrisy. The last we have now before us, “the gainsaying of Core,” and here those that depart from God perish. For this is not merely the selfish diversions of the truth to a means of aggrandisement according to the covetousness of the heart, bad as it was, but open, deliberate insurrection against the rights of Christ Himself. Moses was the apostle of the Jewish profession, as Aaron was its high priest. Christ is the apostle and the high priest of our profession; and the assertion and the exercise of a priesthood now for man is a direct invasion of that which can only be carried out exclusively by Jesus Christ at the right hand of God.

There never was a time when such pretensions were put forth more distinctly than at this present moment. Of old it was not exactly so. In earlier days the writings, for instance, of those that are commonly called “the fathers” show that it was rather an insensible slide; but the solemn fact confronts us now that it is on the part of men who have the Bible, and this circulated, read, proclaimed in the very streets — an unexampled propagation of the word of God, and of that which is drawn from the word of God, and this even in what are

called “Protestant lands.” Consequently it takes the shape of an apostacy, accompanied by hatred of the truth of God; and so much the more because there has been in past history the fatal experience of the effects that follow a slip into a human priesthood. But now there is a growing rejection of the truth of God, and despite done to the Spirit who witnesses the grace of Christ. The attempt once more is to return to naturalism from grace and truth, after both have been fairly brought before the minds of men. No wonder therefore the Spirit of God says that they shall perish in the gainsaying of Korah.

But Jehovah acts in His most solemn vindication of His will against the adversaries, as described in this chapter. They perish too. “And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from Jehovah, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.”

And then was marked the choice of God and the value of the high priest that had been despised. For it is said, “Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before Jehovah, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of

Israel. And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before Jehovah; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as Jehovah said to him by the hand of Moses. But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of Jehovah. And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of Jehovah appeared. And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take the censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from Jehovah; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people."

Thus God was not content with an immediate and final judgment executed on the leaders of the rebellion, but the people whose hearts went with it were judged by the plague. We find here Moses and Aaron yet more remarkable for their earnestness of purpose than for the activity of divine affection in the endeavour that the grace of the Lord should appear for the guilty people. "Moses stood," it is said, "between the dead and the

living, and the plague was stayed." Thus was proved doubly what God thought of the presumption of these Levites: — on the one hand the judgment of the presumptuous Levite and his party, with the after-clap of the plague among the people; on the other hand the efficacy and grace of the priesthood whom pride and unbelief had sought to supplant under pretence of due honour to all the people of Jehovah.

But there is more than this in Numbers 17. God would turn it to a practical and a permanent account; and this in a gracious way now, not to call up the remembrance of a sorrowful and humbling judgment. He tells them to speak to the children of Israel that each of them should take a rod "according to the house of their fathers, and of all their princes according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod. And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi." And these were put in the tabernacle, before the testimony, where Jehovah met with Moses when He made manifest His mind. The answer was soon given. "And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded,. and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. And Moses brought out all the rods from before Jehovah unto the children of Israel; and they looked, and took every man his rod." It was not only an indisputable sign of choice of the person, but a most significant token of the true place of priesthood, which was here in type founded on death and resurrection. Plainly there is no bearing of fruit except according to the priesthood which Jehovah chose for them. It was not merely to be the means of staying the plague in the presence of an

evident divine judgment, but the habitual witness that real fruit-bearing fit for the sanctuary of God springs only from the priesthood that Jehovah has chosen. There is the expression, no doubt, of authority; but that authority is by grace, and for gracious ends. The rod was the figure; at first the dead rod, which quickly proves the vigour of life imparted in the grace of God, and brings forth fruit for His sanctuary. Strange to say, the children of Israel are more alarmed, if possible, at the witness of the gracious power of God than at the plague which had devoured them just before. “We die,” say they; “we perish; we all perish.” There is nothing so blind as unbelief. Daring in the presence of a pestilence, which in itself followed an unprecedented judgment, they are fearful even unto death in the presence of the sign of all-overcoming grace in life and fruit-bearing.

In Numbers 18 we have the connection of Aaron with the tribe of Levi, which will not demand more than a few passing words. It is of the utmost importance that the external service should never be severed from the priesthood which enters within. This is exactly what seems set forth here (verses 2, 4). The tendency of ministry, when it does not presumptuously set up to priestly honour, is always to content itself with a place without, and thus to get severed from Christ on high. It never can be so without the deepest loss. Whenever ministry becomes a mere human institution, founded on education and chosen by man, instead of depending on the sovereign call of the Lord Jesus, who uses those called for His own glory, how deplorable the descent to the minister, how dishonouring to the Lord, and how ruinous the result to all concerned! The dependence of ministry then on Christ in the presence of God is what is

taught, as it appears to me, by the Levite, the sign of him that is engaged in the service being given to Aaron. It was a remarkable arrangement, the force of which has not always been seen. God would thus keep up the connection of that which goes without with what passed within the veil.

The priests had all the offerings and sacrifices of which man might partake; the Levites had the tithes from all Israel: the one fed from within, the other from without; but both received from Jehovah, for He was their inheritance. Otherwise they were miserable: what else had they?

In Numbers 19, which follows, we have another most instructive ordinance of God, peculiar to the book of Numbers. “This is the ordinance of the law which Jehovah hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke.” What the great atonement-day is to the centre of the book of Leviticus, the red heifer is to the book of Numbers. Each seems characteristic of the book wherein they are given, which shows how systematic are the order and contents of Scripture.

Thus we have here a provision distinctly for the defilements which are met with as we journey through this world. This is of vital moment in practice. There is many a soul disposed to make the atonement do, as it were, all the work. There is no truth more blessed than the atonement, unless it be His person who gives that work its divine value; but we must leave room for all that our God has given us. There is nothing which so tends to make a sect as to take truth out of its

proportions, treating a part as if it were the whole mind of God. It cannot be too much insisted upon, that the Bible is the book which delivers from all petty exclusiveness. What does it matter to have good thoughts here and right ways there, if there be along with this the essential vice of settling down contented with a part of God's mind to the rejection of the rest? Our place is carrying out the Lord's will, nothing but His will, and all His will, as far as we know it. Less than this gives up the glory of Christ. It is impossible to be sectarian where His word governs all; and there is no way of being unsectarian without it. Our being in this position or that will never make us individually and really unsectarian. The seeds of error go along with wretched self, from which there is no deliverance except by walking in the power of Christ dead and risen. This too applies here, where we have not merely the wrong of sectarianism, but the evil of thus abusing the most precious truths of God. When used exclusively, they will ere long turn into an excuse for sin, whatever the high assumptions of an earlier stage.

It will not do to confine the saint then even to Christ's atoning work, which has for ever abolished our guilt before God; not even if we add to this that we know now that in Him risen we are placed in an entirely new position, a life where evil never enters. Both most true and precious; but are these the whole truth? Certainly not; and there is no course more dangerous than to construe them as the whole truth. They are as precious as they are needed for the soul; but there is really no part of truth which is not needed, and this largeness and openness to all truth is precisely what we have to insist on. Indeed I am persuaded that this is after all what is

most peculiar — to avoid peculiarities and pet subjects, welcoming all truth by the grace of God. Not that one can say much if the question be, How far we have made it our own? but it is truly of God to be in a position where all truth is open to us and we to it, and which does not exclude a single fragment of God's mind and will. It will be impossible, I am assured, save on the ground of the assembly of God, to find a place which will not shut out truth, and perhaps much which is evidently most precious. It is well to guard sedulously another thing — that we do not simply satisfy ourselves that we are on right ground according to God, but that our hearts earnestly desire to turn what He has given us always and only to the account of His glory.

The red heifer teaches the children of Israel on the surface of it that the work of the day of atonement had not so completely dealt with all sin that they might treat daily defilements as immaterial. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of the shedding of Christ's blood for our sins. It does give no more conscience of sins. We are justified by His blood; yea more, with Christ we have died to sin; and we are alive to God in Him. But though this is all quite true (and was then set forth imperfectly as far as figure could, when we look at an Israelite), such grace is the strongest motive why we cannot tamper with what is defiled. The very fact that we are cleansed perfectly before God is a loud call to us not to endure a blot before men. It was to guard His people from soils by the way that God gave here a provision so remarkable. "A red heifer" was to be brought "without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke," a striking picture of Christ, but of Christ in a way not often spoken of in scripture. The requirement

supposes not only the absence of such blemishes as was indispensable in every sacrifice; but here expressly also it must have never known the yoke, that is, the pressure of sin. How this speaks of the antitype! Christ was always perfectly acceptable unto God. “And ye shall give her to Eleazar the priest that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face.”

The blood was taken and put seven times before the tabernacle. It was quite right that the connection should be kept up with the great truth of the blood that makes atonement, and that vindicates God wherever the thought of sin occurs. But its special use points to another feature. The sprinkling of the blood is the continual witness of the truth of sacrifice; but the characteristic want follows. “And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn. And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.” Then we find the ashes of the heifer laid up in a clean place. “And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation; it is a purification for sin.” In what sense? Simply and solely with a view to communion, i.e. of restoring it when broken. It is not at all a question of establishing relationships (that was already done), but on the ground of the subsisting relation the Israelite must allow nothing by the way which would sully the holiness that suits the sanctuary of Jehovah. This was the point.

Such is the true standard as set forth in this type. It is not merely the law of Jehovah condemning this or that. This shadow of good things demanded separation from anything inconsistent with the sanctuary. The form which this ordinance took was in respect of travelling through the wilderness, where they were exposed constantly to the contact of death. It is death that is here brought in as defiling in various shapes and degrees. Supposing one touched the dead body of a man, he shall be unclean seven days. What was to be done? “He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.” It was not permitted to purify one’s self on the first day. Am I wrong in thinking that à priori we might have thought this haste much the best course? Why not at once? It was ordered not for the first but the third day. When there is defilement on the spirit, when anything succeeds in interrupting communion with God, it is of deep moral importance that we should thoroughly realize our offence.

This seems the meaning of its being done on the third day. It was to be no mere sudden feeling that one had sinned, and there was an end of the matter. The Israelite was obliged to remain till the third day under a sense of his sin. This was a painful position. He had to reckon up the days, and remain till the third, when he has the water of separation first sprinkled on him. “In the mouth of two or three witnesses” (the well-known provision in every case) “every word shall be established.” Thus we see he who had come in contact with death must remain an adequate time to show the deliberate sense of it, and must take the place of one that was defiled before God.

A hasty expression of sorrow does not prove genuine repentance for sin. We see something like this with children. There is many a one who has a child ready enough to ask for forgiveness, or even own its fault; but the child that feels it most is not always quick. A child who is far slower to own it may have, and commonly has, a deeper sense of what confession means. However I am not now speaking of the natural character; but I say that it is right and becoming (and this I believe to be the general meaning of the Lord's ordinance here) that he who is defiled (that is, has his communion with God interrupted) should take that place seriously. Of course in Christianity it is not a question of days, but of that which corresponds to the meaning; which is that there should be time enough to prove a real sense of the evil of one's defilement as dishonouring God and His sanctuary, and not the haste which really evinces an absence of right feeling. He who duly purified himself on the third day was in effect purified on the seventh day Thus first of all he has a sense of his sin in the presence of this grace that provides against it; then he has at last the precious realization of grace in the presence of sin. The two sprinklings are one the converse of the other. They set forth how sin had brought shame on grace, and how grace had triumphed over sin. This seems the meaning, and more particularly for the following reason. The ashes of the heifer express the effect of the consuming judgment of God on the Lord Jesus because of sin. It is not simply blood showing that I am guilty, and that God gives a sacrifice to put it away. The ashes attest the judicial dealing of God in the consumption, as it were, of that blessed offering which came under all the holy sentence of God through our sins. The water (or Spirit by the word) gives us to realize Christ's having

suffered for that which we alas! are apt to feel so little if not to trifle with it There is another thing to notice in passing. The water of purification was not merely wanted when one touched a dead body, but in different modes and measures. That might be called a great case, but the institution shows that God takes notice of the least thing. So should we — at least in ourselves. “This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.” “The bone of a man” might be a much lesser object, but whatever defiles comes into notice, and is provided for in Christ our Lord. Thus God would habituate us to the nicest discernment and the most thorough self-judgment. It is not only grave matters that defile, but little occasions, as men would say, which come between us and communion with our God and Father. At the same time He provides the unchanging remedy of grace for every defilement.

In Numbers 20 connected truth appears when they are calling out for water. “There was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.” It was really, as we would say, against the infinite grace of our Lord Jesus. This is what answers to it in the antitype. This might seem strong to say of Christians; but whenever we are tried and occupied with circumstances, are we not doing so? Do you think the Lord does not know what troubles us? Do you think the Lord does not send it for our good? It may be bad in another; but the chief point we have to

look at is to see the good hand of the Lord, no matter what it is. We are not to be “overcome of evil,” but to “overcome evil with good.” The true way to do so is to count on the Lord Jesus regulating everything. All power is given to Him on earth and heaven; and why should we not be happy in His ways with us? He it is who deals with us, whatever may be the instrument and whatever the circumstances.

Here the people, having no water, began to chide with Moses, “and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before Jehovah!” There is nothing too base for one even belonging to God when God is not before his eyes. “And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto them. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.” And Moses did take the rod from before Jehovah as He commanded him; but when he with Aaron gathered the people, he said to them, “Hear now, ye rebels!” Instead of speaking to the rock he speaks to them. He was not told to do so.

It was disobedience if Moses had done no more; but he goes farther than this, as we shall see. “Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And

Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod." Alas! he brought another rod, his own; whereas Jehovah told him to bring "the rod;" that is, the rod of Aaron. It was the rod of priestly grace, with which God wished him to speak to the rock; the rod that told how God could cause life to work where there had been death, and could produce fruit too according to His own marvellous grace; for He knows how to quicken, entirely beyond the thoughts of man or nature. Although Moses brings out "the rod" according to the word of Jehovah, he does not use it according to Him. He strikes with his own rod. What was its distinctive character? His was the rod of authority, and of judicial power. Of old he had used that rod aright (Exodus 17): it was a question of judgment falling on the rock — then only. Just so Christ "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Now He ever lives to make intercession for us.

But here Moses, completely losing sight of the infinite grace of God in this wondrous transaction and provision for His people, and falling back on the principle of judgment, misrepresented the God that he had sought to magnify, and whose grace it was his greatest joy to reflect. It was not so now, and hence a grievous failure. It became sin unto death to Moses, for God most of all resents a grave misrepresentation of Himself on the part of one who ought to have known Him well. It was precisely because Moses and Aaron were so near to God, because they had entered (Moses particularly) into the grace of Jehovah, that now under these circumstances total failure on their part became the occasion for setting aside Moses as a vessel that had done its work. He was not fit to lead them into the land

— the goodly land. It was a sore trial; it was a deep pain, you may be sure, to Moses's heart, though he never distrusted Jehovah after this, I am persuaded, but bowed with beautiful grace to His will, as we shall see in the history that follows. At the same time Moses felt and was meant to feel it all. But it is a sorrow that one who had conducted them so truly according to God, and who had stood so firm in circumstances yet more trying, should have failed, as it were, when close to the very brink of the land — when drawing near to the point from which they were to enter on the Canaan of Jehovah's choice. But so it was. Moses failed, departed from the rich grace of God, fell back on judgment; and judgment accordingly dealt with him. Moses did not act according to Jehovah. He lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice. Jehovah did not withhold the supply. The water came out abundantly; but this was to God's own praise, and in nowise an endorsement of Moses's failure. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

After this (verse 14) we find Moses sending messengers, that they might pass through the land of Edom. Edom refuses; and Jehovah bids Aaron to go up. The time was come for him to pass away, and for Eleazar his son to take his place.

The endeavour to set Deut. 2:29 in opposition to Num. 20:14-21 is due either to perverse ill-will, or to mere inattention and rashness.5 Edom did refuse to let Israel pass through, yet they did pass through at last. The two occasions were quite distinct. The refusal of Edom

recorded in the latter scripture occurred at a different time and place from that in which Israel effected the passage through their territory. The messengers were sent from Kadesh, not the district in general but the city, in their uttermost border, it would appear on the north-west; and this before the death of Aaron. But the passage was actually made some time after his death by the south of Edom by the way of the Red Sea, as indeed we may learn from Num. 21. So Num. 33:36 et seqq. shows Israel leaving Kadesh for Mount Hor, and Aaron goes up into the mountain and dies. From Hor we next hear of their encamping in Zalmonah, when they had turned the southern extremity of Edom, and were advancing northward on the east of the mountainous tract before reaching the border of Moab. Thus, if we compare the previous verses (30-35), we see that the children of Israel first came down from Moseroth in or near Mount Hor on the west of Edom to Ezion-gaber on the Red Sea; thence they went up the Arabah again to Mount Hor (verses 36, 37), when Aaron's death took place; and thence they came down by the same western side of Edom to Ezion-gaber on the Red Sea once more, thus compassing Mount Seir many days before they turned northward. No less than thirty-seven years elapsed from the days in which they came from Kadesh-barnea till they crossed the brook Zered. (Deut. 2:14) The object of that long stay there was in order that the old generation might gradually die off.

It may be added that Deut. 10:6, 7 entirely falls in with the routes already indicated, verse 6 showing us the latter part of their upward journey from Ezion-gaber to Mosera in Mount Hor, where Aaron died, as verse 7 traces the subsequent journey down again as far as

Jotbath or Jotbatha. Num. 33. furnishes us details of this journey southward, but simply the broad facts that they departed from Mount Hor and encamped in Zalmonah on their final northward march by the eastern side of Mount Seir. Derangement in the order of the places named is only in the minds of hasty readers, not in the scriptures when patiently considered.

The only other point that I shall notice, as closing this part of my subject, is given in Numbers 21; that is, we find Israel in the presence of the Canaanite king of Arad, who at first takes some prisoners. Israel vows to Jehovah that he will utterly destroy them, if He will deliver the people into his hand. Jehovah hearkens, and such destruction ensues that the place is thence called Hormah.

Soon after this, however, occurs a very serious scene of warning for our souls (verse 4 et seqq.). It is no uncommon case: a time of victory has to be watched, lest it be a precursor of danger. A time of defeat, on the other hand, constantly prepares one for a fresh and greater blessing from God — so rich is His grace. He knows how to lift up the fallen, but He makes those that are too light with their victory to feel their total weakness and the constant need of Himself. So it was with Israel. They became much discouraged immediately after their great victory, and they speak against God and against Moses. “And Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” They at once fly to Moses, and ask him to pray to Jehovah for them; and Moses is directed by Jehovah to make a fiery serpent. “Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it,

shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

It is important, I think, for our souls to see this — that, as connected with the wilderness and with the flesh, there is no life for man. Life is not for man in the flesh. Death is the Lord's way of dealing with fallen humanity. How then is man to live? "I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me," to quote another New Testament application of the truth now before our minds. "I if I be lifted up" — it is a Saviour no longer on the earth, but lifted up from it: I do not say in heaven, but a Saviour rejected and crucified. This is the means of divine attraction when sin has been thus definitively judged. There can be no adequate blessing without the cross for man as he is; for thus only is God glorified as to sin. This is what in type comes before us here.

But why, it may be asked, the serpent of brass? Why after that figure? For another most solemn reason. It is not only that a crucified Saviour is the means of salvation to man; but, besides, the figure intimates One "made sin," though in His own person He were the only One who "knew no sin." Had He known sin, He could not have been a Saviour according to divine holiness; had He not been made sin, we had never been really delivered from its judgment. He is, and He was made, exactly what God would have Him to be, and what we most needed Him to be. He is all this for us, and, mark, all for us now. We shall have all the glorious consequences in due time; but, even now, having Himself on the completion of His work, we have to faith all things in Him. So here Israel had all things by the

way; they had life, as we see — life won by victory over the power of sin and death.

Thus, as we hear just after this, God gives them joy by the way — springs of joy and gladness, as we afterwards find — the well in the desert which the princes digged. After all not much digging was required: with their staves was quite enough. Such is the goodness of God to us even for the wilderness. The well was not made by dint of hard work on the part of those used to labour. The princes put to their hands with their staves; and they probably did not know much about toil. But it was enough. Over-abounding grace thus gives abundant refreshment for the people as following that which God had before Him — the beautiful type which Christ Himself applied to His own bearing the judgment of sin on the cross: once sin is judged, once life is given, what does God not give because of it and in unison with it? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

The rest of the chapter shows us the triumphant progress of the people, with their victories (often alluded to in the law and the psalms) over Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan. Two references are made in the account of this — one to a book of that day, the book of the wars of Jehovah (verse 14); the other to certain proverbial sayings or legends then in vogue (verses 27-30). This does not, as the rationalists pretend, give the smallest support to the hypothesis that Moses composed the Pentateuch from a mass of previous material floating among the Israelites of his age and their Gentile neighbours. Written and oral, these foreign traditions are purposely cited with the

exceptional end in view of proving from witnesses unimpeachable in the eyes of their most zealous adversaries that the land in debate, when Israel took it by conquest, did not belong to Ammon or Moab, but to the doomed races of Canaan and its vicinity. To the country of the former they had no just claim; that of the Amorite, etc., was given them up by God. The Amorite had taken it from Moab, and Israel from the Amorite, subsequently dwelling in all their cities, from Arnon to Jabbok, in Heshbon and all its villages. A Jewish record of its previous possessors and of their own victories might be disputed as interested by a foe; but a citation from their own current proverbial songs was conclusive; and the Spirit of God deigns to employ an extract to this end. In Judges 11 we see precisely this ground of recognised fact taken by Jephthah in refuting the claims of the then king of Ammon, and his pretensions proved baseless by the incontrovertible evidence that the Amorite had the disputed territory when Israel made himself master of it, spite of Balak king of Moab and all other rivals. On a somewhat similar principle the apostle does not hesitate to cite heathen testimonies in the New Testament, as no mean confession on their part for the matter in hand. (Acts 17:23, 28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:22)

Numbers 22 - 36.

The successes given to the children of Israel alarmed some of their neighbours, more particularly Moab; and this gives occasion for a striking episode in the history which brought to issue as solemn a question as any raised in the book of Numbers. The sending for Balaam on the part of Balak was an altogether new element. We have had the grace of God and His provisions for the

people; we have had the unbelief of the people, with chastenings and judgments, not without the renewed declarations on God's part of His surely bringing even such a people into the goodly land. Grace alone could, but grace would do it.

But there was an enemy not yet fairly brought before our eyes — the power of Satan. It did not appear at first, but ere long it plays a most important part in the great transaction which now begins to open out in this chapter. Satan can take the place of an angel of light and righteousness: not invariably indeed, for he has other phases, but more especially with the people of God. On the other hand there was material for Satan to use, for the people had been notoriously faithless — had dishonoured God often and grievously. The question then was, Would God maintain a people guilty of the infraction of His own law? If so, would it not be a dishonour to Himself? What could He say? or how consistently could He meet Satan? Impossible that Satan should be in reality more careful of righteousness than God Himself. Nevertheless there was no small difficulty in appearances, and such a difficulty as human wit never can solve. How sorely it must have distressed one who loved the people!

But there is one simple and sure means of solving every difficulty. We know it in all its fulness; but even before it was fully explained, known, and brought out, the principle of it was always before faith. While unbelief invariably forgets and even shuts out God, faith invariably brings Him in; and whatever may be the difficulty of unbelief, it is evident there is none whatever to God. Thus then, although the heart may not understand how God is to reconcile His own character

and express word and most solemn judgment of sin with the bringing of such a people into the land of promise, where His eye rests continually, it should not wait to understand but believe. In due season it surely will understand: only it has the comfort of the understanding being spiritual, not natural, the apprehension flowing from God, and not the pretension of man to think for God, and settle how things are to be done beforehand. It is infinitely more blessed to be as it were behind Him; to follow in His wake; to have Himself showing us every step of the way; to have Him allowing a difficulty to come out in its strength, that we may see how gloriously He settles all.

This is precisely what came out in the new trial which is to be brought before us. Balak sent not merely for Midian's help, nor was it a question of the force of the world. He himself had the consciousness that there must be a power brought in superior to man; but he thought only of what he knew — a power that for an adequate consideration would gratify man's lust, and allow of man's will. However the true God enters on the ground unexpectedly; for we must carefully remember that Balak had no real knowledge of God. He no more thought of Jehovah, whatever use he might make of the name of God, than king Saul honoured Him when he consulted the witch of Endor. Besides the witch herself had no thought of the real spirit of Samuel; for I need not tell you, as no doubt you are all well aware that neither man nor devil has the smallest power over the spirits of those who are either righteous or unrighteous. As for the unrighteous, they are kept in prison till the day of judgment; as for the righteous, it need not be said they are with the Lord. I say then that neither man nor

devil has power to produce them. But then we must remember there is a world of spiritual powers, and man is apt to confound with God beings with powers superior to his own. These are that hidden energy which has managed to usurp the place of God with bad consciences — so much the more polluting above all other evils, for it calls itself religion, and has come between the true God and the soul. Such is the source and character of all idolatry. This is its real nature before God. The outward forms are but the blind. The real power is demoniacal; it deceives and destroys.

Now these demons constantly personate whom they please. They may pretend to be the spirit of this person or that, but they are nothing of the sort; being not more than demons and nothing less. They deceive men by gratifying their distrust, lusts, and passions, and among the rest their fancy about friends and relatives, or all the while, it may be, assuming also to be God, angels, and so forth. This is what was from time to time going on then, as it had since the flood. It is no new thing, though becoming more familiar no doubt to men in these days of Christendom's decrepitude — alas! days that are preparing the way for a still more awful power of Satan here below at the end of this age.

But God did not leave it to be a question of demons and deceits; for when Balak presumed to bring in that power above man to blight the prospects of His people, this at once called forth the true God. Balaam in his hypocritical way talks about consulting Jehovah. This too has always been. Those who have least to do with God often talk most flippantly about Him; and so it was of old as it is now. "God," it is written, "came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?" He was not

alarmed, being accustomed to an evil spirit. He did not know but that the power which came to him was the old familiar spirit. God caught the crafty in his own net. This is just where the mighty power of God shows what He is in the face of every adversary that dared to oppose His people. So when He asked the prophet what men these were, Balaam answers, “Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.”

We shall see in the sequel how wondrous was the way of God to turn thus the very effort of Satan against himself, and to make this most wicked wretch Balaam to be unintentionally opposed to all his interests, but held in the mighty hand of God, the instrument for sealing” as far as it could be done by man, the blessing of God upon His people! “And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for Jehovah refuseth to give me leave to go with you.” So the princes returned, and told Balak that Balaam refused to come. Balak, judging according to what man so well knows, according to his own heart and experience, sends princes more honourable than the others who came to Balaam, and they said to him, “Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me; for 1 will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.” Balaam then, partly with the cunning which seeks to make the best terms, partly also held

contrary to his own thoughts by God's hand, says, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what Jehovah will say unto me more." But even here Balaam proves that all his talk about God was a mere pretence, and that there could be no reality of faith, or he would never have consulted again. Faith knows that God does not charge. He is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.

Ignorant of God, Balaam thus detains the messengers; for his heart dearly loved the proffered honour and emolument. He bids them wait that he might consult Jehovah again. Here again he falls into the trap of his own covetousness; for "God came to Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them." Not that this was the course of His holy will; it was God dealing with the froward according to his frowardness. This He does if there is not faith in his mind, and along with it a single eye; He permits that a man shall follow his own blind devices. This is righteous; and God accordingly so deals with Balaam. Where He sees integrity, He graciously. meets the trembling heart and the hesitating mind. But it was no question of hesitation with Balaam. There was self-will, and this too in the face of the glorious expression of God's will. At bottom he makes nothing of God or His word. He had been distinctly told that he was not to curse the people, but to bless them; yet he waits with no other object than, if it were possible, to curse those whom God bade him bless. There was not a particle of faith, nor of the fear of God. Accordingly God now gives

him up to his own devices. If he will join an idol, let him alone, as he would not be warned. That this is the true moral is made most plain; because it is said that, when Balaam rises in the morning, and saddles his ass, and goes with the princes of Moab, “God’s anger was kindled.” Clearly therefore, though God had told the man that was ignorant to be ignorant, and the man that was self-willed to go and do his own will, there was an expressed and solemn warning to the prophet that he was flying in the face of God. (Compare verses 12 and 22)

Then follows that incident of which the New Testament takes notice in 2 Peter 2, which I trust no one here will ever allow the smallest breath of suspicion to sully. In truth the means employed were, as always, exactly suited in divine wisdom to the case. I grant you it is not a usual thing for God to make a dumb ass speak; but were these circumstances usual? Was there not something awfully humiliating in such a brute being the rebuker of the guilty prophet? But this very fact was most significant — that it was an ass which rebuked a man not wanting in natural intelligence, and soon the vessel of the most beautiful declarations on God’s part, but not before the brute that he rode warned him of his folly and sin. On this I need not dilate.

The prophet then was permitted to know in the fullest possible manner, from the angel of Jehovah himself, wherefore it was that all these obstructions were put in his way. How gracious of God thus to make a man who was hurrying on to destruction pause and think, if anything could rouse him! But no, he was committed to wicked ways. Lawlessness must pursue its miserable course to an end no less miserable.

However he goes and he meets with Balak, who takes him to Kirjath-Huzoth. “And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.” (Num. 22:40, 41) “And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt-offering, and I will go: peradventure Jehovah will come to meet me: and whatsoever He showeth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.” And there again Elohim6 meets Balaam, when he says, “I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. And Jehovah put a word in Balaam’s mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.” (Num. 23:1-5)

And wonderful is the word that was spoken. “Come, curse me Jacob.” When he takes up his parable he says, “Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.” This was the word of Balak to him. He replied, “How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” That is, he states in the most explicit manner the great and certainly fundamental privilege of Israel — that they were a nation called out to be alone with and for

Jehovah. This is the basis of all their blessing. They were unlike all the rest of the world in this, that they were set apart to be with Jehovah, the true Elohim.

Afterwards comes another message; for this is comparatively abstract, and the further demand of Balak brings out successively with ever-increasing clearness the special blessedness of the people, as far as God was pleased to make it known.7 He does not say whom he is to meet; and it seems to me that the true force of the verse is best reached by leaving it in the vague mystery which such an elliptical phrase conveys. Balaam knew well whom he was used to meet. At the least he could not but have suspicions, for there never is a person who honours a demon as the true God that has peaceful confidence of heart. Is it possible to confide in a demon? There may be perhaps a hazy dim idea which people do not like thoroughly to grasp or understand. That is in substance what natural religion or superstition amounts to. They leave souls always at a distance from God, with a sort of striving and searching after God, but in fact under some delusion of the adversary. In Balaam's case there was even more than this, because he was tampering continually with secret power in order to gain influence over others, but as deliberately against God's people as for himself.

Where was anything of God? — anything that could satisfy an upright conscience? However Jehovah does meet Balaam. Doubtless that was the reason why our translators put in "Jehovah" They judged that because Jehovah met him, he must have gone to meet Jehovah; whereas he only used the words "to meet," perhaps unwilling to tell out his wonted source of help. But Jehovah gives him a new word, and a word that goes far

beyond the first. “Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: Elohim is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” The language is in the finest style of Hebrew poetry.

Now we have the people of God the object of distinct communications from God. It is not only that they have Elohim as the One to whom they belong, and to whom they are severed apart from all other nations; but now He speaks to them, He communicates, He opens His mind and heart to them; and what is its purport? “Behold,” says he, “I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: Jehovah his Elohim is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. Elohim brought them out of Egypt.” The bold figures that are used and the allusions are all in the strictest connection with the fresh blessing. It is not merely separative grace, but distinct justification set forth.

It is only on the ground of the grace which justifies that God could call them according to that which was not, seeing them even now what He would make them to be through the Saviour. This is what is before His mind. It is plain that justification is altogether impossible for sinners, unless there be the blotting out of what they are, and the bringing in what they are not. How can these things be? It is through another alone that there can be justification. Thus only God “hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob.” It is not that He denies it; nor that there was no iniquity on their part, for indeed there was. “Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.” It is a

question of what He looks at. “Jehovah his Elohim is with him, and the shout of a King is among them.”

Of course the time was not yet come to develop how this could be. Not till long after was the mighty work done by which alone it is possible; but we have the bold announcement, as far as it would have been proper to have expressed it by the lips of one that was an utter stranger to all in race as in heart; and we have it so much the more gloriously expressed, because it is simply given in its great principle by one who could see the ineffable blessedness of it without knowing in the least the experience of its comfort for his own soul. In God’s wisdom he was just the man to declare even to the enemy that it is entirely a question of what He has wrought, not in any way of Israel’s doings or deserts. “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.” (Compare Num. 24:9)

Balak was incensed; nevertheless he resolves to try another time. “And when Balaam saw that it pleased Jehovah,” we are told in the beginning of Numbers 24, “he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments.” This again entirely confirms the remark that was made in the previous chapter as to what he went to meet. “He went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.” Thus when we have

any object completely cleared before God from all question of sin, it is not His way to rest there. As we know, for the Christian there follows freedom, entirely apart from what he was, to enter into positive enjoyment both of the place of blessing in which he stands, and of God Himself now truly known in Christ. Justification is always a taking account of what we were, though a bringing us out of it; but when that is seen in its completeness, then we can go out into all the ways of God's grace. And so it is here. The new word of Jehovah has another character, and is introduced therefore in a manner such as to mark its entire distinctness from the previous words given to the prophet.

"And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are opened hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" It is the manifest preciousness of the place of Israel which drew out from his mouth at any rate (I do not say from his heart) the expression of the beauteous and goodly estate of the people. "As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which Jehovah hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt." In both cases, you will observe, whether it is the comparatively negative side of justification, or the positive side of rich and joyous blessing with which the people are endowed of God, we have their bringing out of Egypt.

Another thought is striking. Balaam does not refer to what they were to be made in Canaan, but what God saw them to be — nay, what he himself was permitted to see them to be while they were in the wilderness. It is a wonderfully lovely picture therefore of what grace does for the Christian and the church now. For in virtue of redemption and Christ's entrance into heavenly glory, and of the Holy Ghost sent down, in spite of all that is in this world, in spite of what has been justly designated the ruined state of the church here below, we are entitled always to take delight in the real beauty of God's children and assembly even now. No doubt it is a vision only for faith; but it is a vision not for eyes shut, but for eyes open, as it is said here. Certainly, it is no illusion, no heated human imagination of what they are going to be. It is what God sees, and delights to give us to see by faith, in His people here below. Of course it was Israel, but the same principle is just as true; I need not say, and really with yet greater force, in the case of the Christian.

The still stronger terms, in the earlier vision of Numbers 24, which Balaam uses in speaking of the power with which God would invest them, bring Balak's anger to a head; and he smites his hands together, and says, "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times." We must remember that in all this Balaam was no more able to resist the power of God which wrought on and by him than Balaam's ass could hold its peace before. We must not suppose that there was the smallest measure of real sympathy with what God was doing. The whole transaction was one of God's power, in spite of all that could be done against His people, and this because God

would confound the enemy which resorted to Satan's power in order to bring a. curse on Israel. This it was to which God in sovereign grace responded in so grand an expression of their blessedness, and from a quarter so unlooked for.

But one supreme effort remains as far as cursing is concerned. Accordingly Balak tells Balaam now to begone, taunting him with the honour and wealth he had meant to give, from which Jehovah, he adds, had kept him back. But the prophet seems neither won by desire for his bribes, nor afraid of the king's power. "If Balak," says he, ''would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of Jehovah, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what Jehovah saith, that will I speak. And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days." It really embraces the end of this age.

Thus in the face of the king's threats, of what might have seemed to be his own interests, Balaam after all was compelled to give another and a conclusive word from Jehovah, and this without going to meet... or Jehovah's meeting him. It is what He said and commanded. Here there is not only the title of Shaddai (Almighty), as in the former prophecy, but of Elion (the Most High), who would dispose of the world as He pleased in view of His purposed judgment of the earth of and for His people; and here the prophet speaks unasked of the king. It is Jehovah all through, though care is taken to show that He is Elohim, and in suited connection Shaddai and Elion. "And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said,

which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh." Solemn words these which pronounce the man's own condemnation of his own soul. How little it was a question of will or heart! "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city."

Even when he looks at Amalek too, he goes farther and pronounces the sure doom of those that had assailed the people in the wilderness. "Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever." Then, looking on the Kenites, he says, "Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive." But what about victorious Asshur? ‘` And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this I And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur." Thus it does not matter whether it be western powers or eastern, whether the adversaries be many or few, with what resources nor from what quarter. Amalek may be the first of nations, and Asshur bid fair to be last; yet affliction comes to Asshur and Eber; "and he also shall perish for ever." It is the day of

Immanuel, not of David or the Maccabees. Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.

Thus the intended curse of Balaam was turned into the most magnificent utterance of blessing ever pronounced on the people of God, stretching down to the latter days when Israel shall be exalted under the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth.

Who would not trust such a God, and such revelations of His mind and will? Who would not have confidence in the One who turns the bitterest and most subtle of enemies only the more powerfully to prove what God's people are to Himself, and how vain the efforts of their worst foes?

In Numbers 25 we see a very different state of things among men, but the same God over all. Snares are set by Moab under Balaam's counsel, yet all their subtlety could not turn God from Israel. Balaam (as we know, although it be not explained here but elsewhere) gives the enemy his cunning advice, and all at first goes on successfully. If he could not turn God from Israel, could he not turn Israel from God? Midianitish women become the instrument of seduction. This sorrowful occasion brings out now, not God causing an enemy to manifest what He is for His people, but Phinehas the priest roused with holy indignation, and executing judgment on the guilty pair in the face of a plague which fell on the people in these very circumstances. Phinehas accordingly has the covenant of an everlasting priesthood secured to him and to his seed because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

There is after this (Num. 26) a fresh numbering of the men of Israel in view of going to war. They were now on the borders of the holy land; and the same grace of God which took account of every one of His people when they entered the wilderness gives evidence that His love was unabated, and His personal interest the same to the end. There was all that could have turned Him aside, had it been possible. Without this there would have been merely the taking in the people as a whole; but here He gives this witness of what they were, every one of them, to Himself; for He loves to convince His people of His unwavering love, spite of failure on their part.

There is only one remark that I need make now on the persons that are enumerated here, but it is one of great interest, as it appears to me. The most solemn judgment recorded in the book of Numbers was that of Korah with his company in the awful scene where Jehovah created a new thing, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up alive. The children of Dathan, Abiram, and the rest, were all swallowed up; but, wonderful to say, there was an exemption. Where was it? some particularly faithful person, who had the unhappiness to be nearly associated with them? Not at all. The exception of grace was in the household of the very worst of them. The people who deserved least of all, as man would have thought, to be exempted from destruction were precisely those for whom God did reserve this special grace — the sons of Korah! — of Korah the leader and organiser of the apostasy, from his position as well as in his conduct, above all others most guilty! The sons of Korah were the objects of a most singular deliverance. Is not this the true grace of God? It is the same God whom we now know, the same God from

first to last. Grace is no new thing with Him; but where can you find a finer sample of its power and superiority to all circumstances than in the distinguishing grace that saved from destruction the children of gainsaying Korah, the most infamous of those who had conspired against the types of Christ's royalty and priesthood; namely, Moses and Aaron? Nothing can be more explicit than the information here: "The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not."

Further, this is, I think, an important key to the book of Psalms. Every attentive reader will have noticed that the second of the five divisions of the Psalms gives us at its beginning psalms entitled, "For the sons of Korah." (Ps. 42 - 49)8 These mean the descendants of the men in question. And who were so fit to have such psalms and songs as the sons of Korah? What state does the second book of Psalms suppose? Assuredly as a whole days of future apostasy and the sorest trouble that the Jews will ever pass through. It is the last and greatest tribulation. It is the time when the mass of the nation will have completely cast off the true God and rejected His grace — will have abandoned His truth, and lost themselves in losing it. To this fiery trial it is that these psalms apply. And no doubt what was at the beginning of their history will be re-enacted, and more, at the end. In the midst of a condition guilty indeed, and in the nearest connection with those most guilty, God will reserve a remnant — not more surely the children of Korah in the wilderness than a band not unworthy of the name, and witnesses of no less grace from God in the last crisis. These psalms will

be suited for those morally in similar circumstances, and delivered by the very same grace of God. Thus, we see, whether it be law or psalms or prophets, whether it be the gospel or the kingdom then, it is with the God of all grace that we have to do.

To the end of this chapter the account is given of the numbering.

In the next chapter (Num. 27) there is an incident of considerable interest which illustrates the tender thoughtfulness of God. “Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against Jehovah in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son?” There was no son left. This was a case which had not yet arisen; but as we see the daughters of Zelophehad counted on God, and not in vain. It is impossible for God to be like poor man, who says, “You expect more good than I am prepared to bestow.” God could not make such an answer. He always gives more. Whatever may be the petition of faith, the answer of grace never fails to go beyond it. And so the daughters of Zelophehad have their place secured to them in the goodness of God, though outside the usual routine of law.

Further, Jehovah after this intimates to Moses to ascend Mount Abarim and see the land, and he is to be gathered to his people. This leads also to the appointment of another. There is this to be noticed in the appointment of Joshua, that he no less than Moses is a type of Christ, but with a distinct difference between the two. Joshua sets forth the Captain of Salvation, and this answers to Christ; but it is no longer Christ after the flesh: He is not viewed as a Jewish Messiah, blessed as this may be. For Christ is a great deal more than Messiah. After His rejection on the earth, when it was no longer a question of presentation to Israel as their King, Christ then acts in the power of the Holy Ghost, being no more present in a bodily manner. Joshua represents this. It is Christ, no doubt, but Christ acting in the power of the Spirit, not Christ in flesh connected with the promises and the hopes of Israel. This type is what we see here; it is developed in detail elsewhere. But even one feature should not be passed by. When Moses was leading the people, he acted alone; but when Joshua leads them, it is said, “He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before Jehovah.” How does this apply to Christ? It might seem a difficulty, but in reality it confirms the application which has just been made; because we know that, while the people are led to take possession of the holy land, their privilege now is to cross the Jordan, and enter into those blessings with which they are blessed in heavenly places. Observe then here is the connection of Christ acting thus by the Spirit with His position as Priest. At the very same time that we are entering into our heavenly blessings by the power of the Spirit, we also have Christ as Priest in the presence of God. With Moses we find no such state of things. He was never told to

stand before the priest. Aaron might speak rather than Moses, for he could speak well. Other duties he discharged, but nothing at all answering to this: so admirably does God watch over and shape and fashion all these types to impress the full truth on our souls. In Christ's case, of course He was Himself head of the church, to work by the Spirit of God in us; but besides He is the great High Priest. He unites the two functions. They must necessarily be two different individuals in the type, but the great Antitype combines them.

In Numbers 28, 29 we have a somewhat difficult and certainly a very different exposé of the feasts and sacrifices from that which we found elsewhere. But all is easy to those who bear in mind the distinctive theme of the book. It is not merely, as was noticed, pilgrimage through the wilderness. This it is, but it comprises the earth also. In short the earth is the scene; and to us the wilderness. But the earth will not be always the wilderness. This is an important remark to make in order to understand Numbers. For there is a time coming when that which is now a wilderness will no doubt still be the earth for the people of God on it, but it will be no longer the chequered place of trial and sorrow which it is now. If we hold fast this fact, the application of these two chapters will be rendered more easy.

First of all we have the general offering. There is the sweet savour of Christ arising continually, in which God regards his people on the earth. It is the Lamb of God who invests all that are His with His own acceptance before God. This is what was meant by the daily lambs, but there is much more than this. It is said, "And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two-tenth deals of dour for a meat-offering." This

clearly goes on to the rest of God of which the sabbath is always the well-known figure. When it comes, the only difference will be that the testimony to the value of Christ will be more widely spread and fuller. God will never fail in causing the testimony to Christ's sweet savour to rise before Him. Christianity has brought it out in its very depths; but then it is a thing only known to the believer on the one hand, and to God on the other. But when the sabbath dawns on the earth, the true sabbath of Jehovah in all its meaning, there will be a public witness of it all over the world that cannot be mistaken. This seems referred to in the doubling of the lamb. It is the idea of the rest of God contrasted with the time of working which precedes the rest (as, e.g., in the present time). "There remaineth therefore a rest (or a sabbath-keeping) for the people of God." The time of the true rest is not yet come. Observe, it does not mean the rest we have got for our souls by faith. We must always guard against that common misapprehension. It is quite true that we have rest now in Christ for the conscience and the heart; but this is not the meaning of Heb. iv. It is rather the rest of glory for the people of God and for the world, when there will be this diffused testimony.

Then comes "the beginnings of your months." This is peculiar to Numbers, being found in no other book of the Pentateuch. The reason seems to be that it is essentially bound up with the wilderness types of Israel — their experiences and changes as a people on earth "In the beginnings of your months," that is, at the new moon, when there was the shining forth again of that which had waned away. Such a type in no way suits the church which is called during Israel's darkness after the light waned and before it shines again. "And in the

beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto Jehovah; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot," with their appropriate meat-offerings and drink-offerings. There is represented here the largest form of setting forth Christ offered to God in the bullock, with the idea of energy of devotedness to God, and this too in that adequacy of testimony which "two" represents. The sheep or the lower forms indicate, I suppose, Christ appreciated after a less measure. The bullock is the fullest appreciation of Christ. Those that had so long despised Him will now acknowledge Him with so much the greater fervour because of their former slight. The Lord graciously takes notice of this. The ram is a type of Christ as an offering of consecration to God; here it is but a feeble testimony — "one ram." The "seven lambs" mean the completeness of Christ's sweet savour before God. There is also, as we know, the necessary sin-offering.

But now we come to the feasts. On the fourteenth day of the first month the passover is noticed, where we have, as it is said, two young bullocks, just the same provision as was laid down for the beginning of months, the new moons. Further, in the case of the feast of weeks, "in the day of the first-fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto Jehovah" (the Pentecostal offering), there is a similar type. "After your weeks be out, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: but ye shall offer the burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto Jehovah; two young bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year."

What brings out the truth more distinctly is the change we find in coming down to the seventh month. This is the acknowledged type of what distinctively concerns

Israel — Israel summoned and brought into the blessing of God. Here we see the difference very marked; for there is claimed but “one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish” It lacks the fulness of testimony to grace which went out to the Gentile as well as the Jew. It is but a single witness to the grace that God is about to display to His people Israel. It may include the largest form of appreciation, but still it is only a partial witness of grace. There is but one young bullock — not the two found in the previous case. So again the atonement-day has just the same figure: “Ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: but ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the Lord for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year.”

But after a few days there is a very different type brought before us. “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: and ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah; thirteen young bullocks.” Now surely this is very noticeable. Why such a change? There is nothing like it before. It is only when we come to the feast of tabernacles that this sudden change appears. Before this we hear in certain circumstances of two bullocks or one bullock: here there are thirteen. Why thirteen? Was this not intended to exercise our spiritual thought as to the truth of God? Are we not to infer that it is the all but fullest expression of Christ known on the earth? It is no longer the preparatory dealings. The first and the tenth

days of the month mean the preparatory ways of God to bring the Jewish people back to their position of witnessing to the glory of Christ in the millennium. But now they are in that position — not in the preliminary processes, so to speak, with God gradually leading them on. Hence now we read, “Ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year.” The thirteen seems to signify that it is all but complete, and the fullest form of expressing this; for clearly two sevens would be the fullest expression of it. Thirteen is only short of this; the figure approaches completeness to the utmost. Such is the type of the millennium among the feasts. The millennium may not be perfection, but it will be indefinitely near it.

This feast gives us a true notion of that great day. It is false that there will be no sin in the coming age. At the same time sin will be quite exceptional. There will be a large effect produced in honour of the work of the Lord Jesus. The reconciliation of all things according to Christ and by His cross will be displayed in a manner only not complete. This is what is represented by the feast here.

But in the details of this feast there is evidence given of another striking fact. It would appear that there is not preserved adequately the sense of the Lord’s grace throughout the millennium. Alas! that age will exhibit symptoms of decline, as we know from elsewhere that at the end of it there will be a vast outburst of rebellion when Satan is let loose for a space. There has been but one faithful witness. Even in the millennium, when Satan no longer tempts, the solemn fact will be found that there is no sustainment of the power of testimony with which they began. Hence, as we find, this feast

represents the whole scene of the millennial day. It is said that on the next day, the second day, “Ye shall offer twelve young bullocks;” and again on the third day eleven bullocks; and again on the fourth day ten bullocks; and on the fifth day nine bullocks, and so decreasing. Surely all this not only has meaning, but the meaning points to the fact that there will not be the sustainment of the same devotedness as at the first. Nevertheless the purpose of God never fails. Hence therefore we find that on the eighth day “Ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah, one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs.” The eighth day brings us here no more than a single witness, indicating what was outside the earth. It might seem extraordinary at first sight that the eighth day should be less than the seven days. During the seven days the number never came down so low as to one bullock. But the reason seems to be this, that in Numbers we have the testimony and service of Christ on earth, and consequently no more than a witness to what is outside and above the earth. It points to another and heavenly scene, which was not properly the subject of the book. It is therefore but a solitary witness to heavenly things, not their introduction in power.

In Numbers 30 there is another and a very different exhibition of the truth of God. It is a question of divers relationships. Here we meet with a very blessed principle. The order of relationship depends on the one to whom we are related. It is He that governs, It is not God’s arrangement in these matters to rest the weight on the weaker one, who is in the place of responsibility, but on the higher, who is expected to have strength and wisdom.

The first case of which we read in the chapter is, “If a man vow a vow unto Jehovah, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.’’ Do we not know who this is? We know the One who never needs to recall a word: indeed, there is none other. His word stands; we can trust it without fear.

But it is not so with the woman, the weaker vessel. “If a woman also vow a vow unto Jehovah, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father’s house in her youth; and her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.” This is our position, as it was that of Israel. They held the place of the woman according to the type of this chapter, as the man was Jehovah-Messiah, no doubt, in its full import. But it was Jehovah that spoke, and His words stood; Jehovah-Messiah was the unfailing One of Israel. Many a rash word they said; many a foolish vow they made. How did He treat all? In two ways. He acted in the power of His own grace, and therefore disallowed what was wrong, not binding the foolish vow on her who spoke so unadvisedly with her lips. He allowed her words to pass away, to be broken, to have no binding efficacy. How gracious is the Lord! On the other hand, dealing in His governmental wisdom, He might allow the foolish to prove her own folly; and so He did. This too has been true of Israel. He has permitted that His people should feel the consequences of what they said in their pride. But assuredly the day is coming when He will act in the fulness of His grace, and all that is foolish

will be as unheard, unregistered, and blotted out for ever.

The same thing is true, viewed in another relationship. Supposing it was not a father with a child, but a husband (verses 6-8): in this case all depended on the husband. How perfectly this applies, whether you look at Israel or the church, need not be enlarged on. All our blessedness depends upon Him to whom we belong. At the same time in His government He may allow us to feel our own want of wisdom and of waiting upon Him.

On the other hand, where we hear of a widow or one divorced, plainly either is a person out of relationship, and there all stands (verse 9). But this is not the relation of the Christian or of the church, if we believe the scriptures. Israel may be a widow, and may be viewed as divorced too, but never the church, the bride of Christ. For us we know the marriage is yet future; and such is the way in which scripture views it. Thus you see the power of full grace remains in the hands of our Bridegroom. We have the position of children, and our Father therefore acts in the fulness of His love. We have the place of being the bride, but not yet married. It rests in His hands to use in perfect grace. It is not so with Israel. Therefore, we find another case of twofold dealing on Jehovah's part — a severity on the one hand which does not forget their folly, but judges it; and on the other hand full mercy in remitting according to His own love. Jehovah, as He has executed the one, will assuredly display the other.

In Numbers 31, on which I may say but very few words, we have a blessed principle already alluded to briefly, but now acted on. We saw that Balaam could not

separate God from Israel. We saw that he did in fact separate to a certain extent Israel from God. God could not allow His servant to pass away before he saw this disgrace completely blotted out. How was this done? “Avenge,” says Jehovah, “the children of Israel of the Midianites, afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.” It would not have suited the grace of God towards His servant to leave a painful thought on his heart now that he was about to be gathered to his fathers or fall asleep. “And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites and avenge Jehovah of Midian.” Is not this perfection? When Jehovah spoke, He told His servant to avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites; but when Moses spoke, he told them to avenge Jehovah of the Midianites. How exactly Jehovah secures His own glory, and in grace to His people! Jehovah thought of the children of Israel, and the children of Israel would think of Jehovah. It was one common interest — Jehovah and Israel had at heart one and the same thing. This indeed was the true and mighty grace of God, altogether reversing what the sin of man was seen to have accomplished. As they fell under the power of the snare, it might have seemed that they must be separated from Jehovah. But no; the link must be riveted, never to be broken.

Accordingly the expedition did not require any great force: it was no question of having all Israel marshalled now. A small body would suffice. It must be a select company, not the bravest chosen as such, but some of every tribe must have part in it. It is a question of avenging Jehovah of the Midianites, and the tribes would share it between them equally. Anything that

would tend to bring in Israel as a whole would defeat this identification with His name by giving prominence to them, even if it did not wear the look of national feeling or personal vengeance. Neither must be now; all must be done holily in His name. It must be Jehovah's vengeance. Accordingly therefore it is ordered after a sacred fashion, as well as with a select band from each tribe. "So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war" — a small body comparatively to deal with a formidable people. "And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and" — whom? A captain? some chosen captain? — Joshua? No; "Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand." The leader must be holy, and with no lack of holy instruments. The trumpets must be there for Jehovah's ears as well as Israel's. The result could not be doubted; and at once the issue of the fight is brought before us.

Further, we see that Jehovah lays down most wholesome principles as to the division of the spoil. A certain reserve is made. The principle is this, that nothing could be used by Israel which did not go through the fire. All for them must pass through the scrutinizing judgment of God. Besides, the people who had not fought were to have their share as well as those who had. It was reserved for David to decide that they must all share alike. This ordinance awaited another day. But here it was not according to the full grace of that day. It was a season of goodness, and nothing more.

From the next chapter (Num. 32) it would seem that this very victory suggested a hasty thought to the heads of some tribes of Israel. They liked uncommonly the land

that was conquered, and desired to remain on the wrong side of the Jordan. Moses was grieved at this. Nevertheless, after consulting, he yields to them; only he insists that they must help their brethren. Meanwhile whatever may be the allotment that they had chosen for themselves (and certainly they must prove how unwise it is to choose thus, instead of accepting Jehovah's choice), they must none the less share the conflicts of the people in Canaan.

Numbers 33 testifies to another and beautiful truth, Jehovah's remembrance of all the past, of all our journeyings, of all the scenes of difficulty through our weakness, and even worse occasionally too, of solemn judgments. And here we have it rehearsed. It was good to think of His ways with them, — good for those who were about to enter on a new scene to look back on every step of the journey. It is thus far from being an unimportant chapter, or, as it might seem to the superficia1, a mere dry list of names. There is no part of scripture which has not a divine as well as moral purpose in it.

The next chapter (Num. 34) presents the persons that were to divide the inheritance. This introduces in Numbers 35 the singular institution of Levitical cities, some of which were reserved for such as might have been guilty of shedding blood. If done with malice prepense, there could be no shelter for the perpetrator in such an asylum. They could serve only as a prison whence he must be taken and judged in due time. But there were many cases in which death might ensue where there was no malice. On the one hand God would not make light of the bloodshed; on the other He would not merge the guiltless in the class of murderers.

The chapter then sets forth in a vivid manner what was ever before God's own eyes — the coming act of blood-guiltiness, and the divine dealings with Israel in respect of it. I need not say many words as to this. Israel have stained themselves with blood, and stand charged before God with the slaying of their own Messiah. The grace of God acts, and the judgment of God also. Both are true, and both true of Israel. As there were those that have slain Him willingly, so they have borne their judgment and will yet more. But there were those for whom grace pleaded, and assuredly not without an answer; for the very One whose blood was shed cried to God from the cross in intercession for them: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." How mighty and how wondrous the reckoning of grace! To this the Spirit of God answered when He led Peter to say, "I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." And thus there were those who found not only shelter, but having found it are there kept of God. Nay, more: in a certain providential sense it applies even to those not brought out of the place of the Jew into that of the Christian, which last does not appear here; for He would not have the membership of Christ's body thus anticipated.

But we have an important type of the Jew's place on earth. The man who was sheltered in the city of refuge, because of the stain of blood, who instead of being put to death for it found a temporary sojourn there, looked forward to the time when he might return. This limitation to his stay is given here. It only occurs in the book of Numbers. The slayer (it is said) "shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. But if the slayer shall at any time come

without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; and the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest; but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession “

This remains for Israel. That people is the slayer of blood now in the city of refuge. As long as Christ is exercising His priesthood according to the type here spoken of, as long as He is the anointed Priest who “ever liveth to make intercession” in the presence of God, so long the slayer must remain out of the land of his possession. The Jew will never return as accredited of God while Christ carries on His priesthood as now within the rent veil on high. But we know well that our Lord Jesus is coming back again. We know therefore that He is going to terminate the form9 in which He now exercises His priesthood, which is typically represented by the death of the high priest that was anointed with oil. The death of the actual high priest of that day typifies the close of that character of priesthood in which our Lord now acts.

Thus it is that, when the Lord will no longer be fulfilling the type of Aaron within the veil, when He will come forth as the great Melchisedek, there will be not a new ground but a new form and character of His priesthood, no longer as now intercession founded on blood only, but what corresponds with the bringing forth of bread and wine, as the priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth (the millennial name of God). When that day comes, the slayer will then no longer require to

be protected in the city of refuge, but return to the land of his inheritance.

In Numbers 36 we have a further point which winds up the account of the daughters of Zelophehad. As the former notice honoured their faith, so this acts as a guard, and stamps order on the matter, securing the glory of God but avoiding confusion among men; for the tribes of Israel must be duly kept. On the one hand it was according to God's goodness that the daughters should inherit if there were no son; on the other hand it could not be permitted that the inheritance should pass out of the tribe of their fathers. This was provided against here as the other was before. Thus the whole book abounds from first to last with the reiterated, continual, and perfect proof of God's loving care for His people on the earth.

1 It is grievous to think how the ignorant or careless statements of good men furnish weapons to the ill-minded against the word of God. Bp. Patrick, if I mistake not, inferred from the ratio of the first-born to all the males that each Jewish family must have consisted of forty-two boys on the average, though he afterwards reduced it more than half. Such a mistake has been greedily re-echoed by rationalists abroad and at home, especially by Bishop Colenso in Pt. i. chap. xiv. But these reckoners, so ready to impugn Scripture, have overlooked several elements which the record itself furnishes, so as to reduce the number to an average of at most eight children, boys and girls, in each family, which no man can pretend to be excessive. For, first, the heads of families — first-born fathers, grandfathers, or great grandfathers — are clearly not included here any more than in the death of the first-born throughout

Egypt, but only those who were unmarried members of the house. Secondly, those numbered were not merely eldest sons, but strictly first-born males. Supposing the daughter to be the first-born in equal ratio, this would reduce the number one half, as the former would to one-third. Next, there is a further reduction necessary when we take the mean number of children who survive to the twentieth year; for ordinarily not a few of the firstborn die before then. Lastly, the first-born under a month must be excluded. Hence, instead of forty-two sons, the first reduces (say in round numbers) to fourteen; the second to seven; the third and fourth to less than four, if we rate the first-born surviving at two-thirds for the whole period, and take the first-born under a month into account. The reader will find the minute proof of this drawn out in "The Exodus of Israel," chap. 6.

2 It matters little comparatively for the typical truth conveyed whether tachash means a seal or a badger. It was certainly an external protective skin, sufficiently strong (as in Ezek. 16:30) for women's shoes to be made of it. The Septuagint translate it by ὑακίνθινα, as Aquila by ἰάνθινα, and understood a peculiar colour to be meant. But Gesenius rightly, I think, decides against this, as do most, though it be not clear what animal is meant.

3 The word seems properly to mean crimson. (Cf. Matt. 27:28 John 19:5)

4 Let me here cite one of those coincidences which are so natural in a writer who was himself an eye-witness, but wholly improbable for a mere compiler, however upright, to think of at a later day; for the more minute, the less is the likelihood that such details would be

noticed. “In the second chapter of the book of Numbers the writer describes the divisions of the twelve tribes into four camps, the number of each tribe, and the total number in each camp. He fixes the positions each was to take round the tabernacle, and the order of their march; and he directs that the tabernacle, with the camp of the Levites, should not set forward between the second and third camps. But in the tenth chapter occurs what seems at first a direct contradiction to this; for it is said that after the first camp had set forward, then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon, and the sons of Merari, set forward, bearing the tabernacle, and afterwards the second camp, or standard, of the children of Reuben. But this apparent contradiction is reconciled a few verses after, when we find that though the less sacred parse of the tabernacle, the outside tent and its apparatus, set out between the first and second camp; yet the sanctuary, or holy of holies, with its furniture, the ark and the altar, did not set out till after the second camp; as the direction required. And the reason of the separation is assigned, that those who bore the outside tabernacle might set it up, and thus prepare for the reception of the sanctuary against it came. Would a forger or compiler who lived when these marches had wholly ceased, and the Israelites had fixed in the land of their inheritance, have thought of such a circumstance as this?” (Dean Graves’ Works, ii. p. 49.)

5 Dr. Davidson’s Introd. O. T. i. 70.

6 The use of Elohim and Jehovah here is very notable, as absurd on the document hypothesis as instructive to the believer in the unity of the book and in the divine inspiration of its writer. This is immensely confirmed by Balaam’s use of Elion (Most High) and Shaddai

(Almighty) in his last two prophecies (Num. 24) when he did not seek enchantments. Are we to fall back on the clumsy device of one, two, or more writers to account for these divine titles, instead of seeking their motive in internal considerations?

7 We must carefully remember that the word “Jehovah,” printed in italics, has no right to a place in verse 16. “And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt-offering while I meet yonder.”

8 Some few follow in book 3 (Ps. 84 - 88)

9 Heb. 7:24 might seem to clash with this; but it is not so really for as no one questions that Christ continues for ever, so the apostle asserts that His priesthood cannot be transferred, like the Aaronical one, from father to son. He has the priesthood intransmissible (ἀπαράβατον). It is a denial of successional transfer, not of change of form according to His grace and wisdom in the age to come.

Deuteronomy

Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch.

Deut. 1 - 16.

In examining Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, we have found what may be called an abstract typical system. That is, we see in them a number of institutions laid down by Jehovah, the pattern of which was shown in the mount. These figures Moses was inspired to give as a whole to the people, entirely apart from the question whether they were or could be carried out according to the letter while passing through the wilderness. I have called it therefore an abstract typical system; for the value of it does not at all depend on the fidelity of the people to it. It is very possible that not a single institution during that time may have been strictly enforced or obeyed among the people.

Thus we know for certain that the most fundamental requirement of all, the Levitical ritual, was not practised; and if they did not prove faithful in that which was most urgent as well as least difficult in point of means for executing it, we can hardly suppose that they carried out their obedience in what was surrounded with immense if not insuperable obstacles. Even before the law from Abraham’s days there certainly was no injunction more solemn or more obligatory than the circumcision of every male child; yet we are assured that no male was circumcised during Israel’s wandering for forty years through the wilderness. This fact appears to be of some importance, because notoriously difficulties have been raised, on the score of

practicability, as to the various ordinances requiring sacrifices and offerings where the means did not appear. We hear of sin and trespass-offerings, peace and burnt-offerings, meat-offerings and drink-offerings, not to speak of the daily lambs and occasional victims. Men have reasoned with great detail, especially in recent years, enquiring how all this could be done in the desert by a people who found it hard enough to pass unscathed themselves, though they had Jehovah their God with them to feed them with angels' bread, and water if need were from the rock. But God, in fact, is always left out of the calculations of unbelief. For although there were flocks and herds led into the wilderness with the children of Israel at the command of Jehovah, and they may have added more from enemies they conquered, the fact just now referred to meets and removes a host of objections raised about it, and proves that the nature of these ordinances has not been understood.

The fact is that, no matter what might be the measure of carrying them out in the wilderness, God was setting forth by them the shadows of good things to come. This was their real object. It is not therefore a question of how far the offerings, etc. were then offered but of a vast body of systematically-ordered teaching by types. What God was displaying by them has now found its meaning, since Christ was revealed and the mighty work of redemption effected. It is a different thing however with the book of Deuteronomy; and this was my reason for remarking it at this point.

Deuteronomy is an eminently practical book. Types are but sparsely presented over the great bulk of the instruction which crowds its pages. We are far from being then on the ground of a mere rehearsal of what

has been shown in the previous books. Deuteronomy, spite of its Septuagintal title, is no such repetition; but the Spirit of God by Moses has given us, along with special moral exhortation, such types as bear on the position of the people on the very edge of the promised land. They had marched round to the eastern side of the Jordan; they were now on that border of the land, after God's long-continued process of dealing with them in the wilderness had come to its full measure. kind this book, while it does not want allusions to what God had said in all the other books, has, no less than the rest of them, its own peculiar character. It is not then a grouping of types, whatever might be the particular scope and aim of those employed, such as we have seen in distinct forms throughout the books of Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers; but here all that the Spirit is using, whether it be direct moral application which forms much the larger part of the book, or whether it be a selection of such shadows as fall in with its. practical object, seems to be from first to last an enforcement of obedience, grounded on the relationship between Jehovah their God and Israel, whom He was just bringing as His people into His land. Accordingly the very large introduction is an address to the people for the purpose of enforcing these claims.

There is another peculiarity in the book of Deuteronomy which it is well to present briefly before we descend to particulars; it supposes the failure of the people. It was after the golden calf, nay more than this; it was after the whole disciplinary dealings of Jehovah had now come to an end. They had had many a sight of their own hearts, and they had had ample experience of God's ways in patient and gracious government. All this was now

closed. This therefore gives its tone to the book. The lawgiver, about to be taken from them, looks back on all the past; but he looks forward also to the land they were about to enter. Hence there is a tone of exceeding seriousness, as well as of chastened affection; there is a solemnity founded on the grand dealings of a God whose faithful and holy hand was now ushering them into His land. Above all the prime object is to press obedience on the people of God, but the obedience of a people who had already found what it was to have utterly broken down on their own assumed responsibility. That generation had passed away no doubt. The question was, did the present generation about to be brought into the holy land profit by the past? The aged lawgiver in these last words was led of the Holy Ghost to speak home to their souls.

This too explains why the book of Deuteronomy is made use of in the New Testament in so very striking a manner, and in circumstances so eminently critical. It is the book which our Lord quotes in His temptations with Satan. He cites from none other. In all the three occasions the Lord Jesus draws His answers from the book of Deuteronomy. Surely this is highly significant. He could have cited from any other, had any other been in all respects so suitable to the occasion. It was not necessarily, I conceive, because there were no words elsewhere admirably adapted to meet the case. May I not venture to think that other considerations entered, and that His citation of Deuteronomy only is in no way meant to disparage fitting words found elsewhere? It is not to be doubted that the words cited from Deuteronomy were the very best — that they were chosen according to divine perfection. But also it would

appear that the deepest wisdom lay in citing from that book, as well as its most applicable words. The book from which they were selected had itself a special appropriateness to the occasion, as we shall see: can it be doubted that the blessed Lord knew this infinitely well when He was pleased to use it?

Now wherein lay this fitness not only in the words that were cited, but in the particular book from which they were extracted? Wherein lay the superior propriety of Deuteronomy to furnish answers at that juncture for Christ, as compared with any other book of scripture? I have no hesitation in subscribing the opinion that our Lord Jesus chose them not only because they were in themselves exactly such as met and confronted Satan's temptations perfectly, but because there was a moral suitability in the fact that they were the words addressed to the people when ruin had already come in — when nothing but the grace of God was afresh appealing to them before they were brought into the holy land. The Lord, by the simple fact that He quotes Deuteronomy, gives evidence that He had before His eyes the condition of the people of God, whatever might be their own insensibility. Not only did the Lord say the right thing, but the ground, the line, and the spirit of the book whence He chose His answers were such as took the becoming place under such circumstances before God. The less that Israel felt they had failed, the more Jesus felt it for them. If they betook themselves to rites and ceremonies as a means of pleasing God, Jesus gave Himself up to unreserved obedience — was Himself the constant pattern of One who never sought His own will. Indeed He found His moral glory in this very fact, that He alone of all men that ever lived never in a single

particular swerved from that which after all is the sweetest, loveliest, highest thing in man here below — absolute devotedness to another, doing the will of His God and Father. Such was the uniform walk of Jesus.

Now Israel had totally failed in their place. The book of Deuteronomy acknowledges this failure, and takes its stand not only on the fact that it was impossible to deny, it but on the duty of confessing it. At the same time there is the gracious bringing in of God, and of what was suited to the people of God, when ruin was there. This supposes a heart that knows God; and certainly so it is with Moses. We know well that, if God made known His acts unto Israel, He made His ways known unto Moses. But Jesus knew God Himself as Moses never did, and by His use of it put honour on the book that makes plain how in a state of ruin the one saving principle is obedience. We shall find more than that before we have done with the book of Deuteronomy, though we may in this lecture not look fully at a special character of it which is presented in the latter part of the book, where it will be proved that the New Testament also uses it in a very striking manner. But inasmuch as the Lord's three answers are taken from the early portion of Deuteronomy, which comes before us on this occasion, I have at once referred to this patent fact. We never can duly understand the Old Testament unless in the light of the New; and if there is anyone who is personally and emphatically "the light," need it be said that it is Jesus? This men forget. No wonder therefore that Deuteronomy in general has been but little understood, even by the children of God; that the thoughts of expositors are comparatively vague in explaining it; and that men are apt to read it with so little insight into its bearing that

the loss might seem comparatively trifling if it were not read at all. In short how could it be respected as it deserves, if regarded as an almost garrulous repetition of the law? Now, apart from the irreverence of so treating an inspired book, such an impression is as far as possible from the fact. Deuteronomy has a character of its own totally distinct from that of its predecessors, as has been already pointed out and will appear more fully.

Let us now look at the details as far as it can be done in so brief a glance as we can afford to give it at present.

The first thing introduced here is the fact that Jehovah had spoken to them in Horeb, saying, “Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount. Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh “hereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them. And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: Jehovah your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.’’ Moses reminds them how he had shared the burden of care for them with others. “Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.” So it was done; but it is added that, when they did depart from Horeb and went through the wilderness, “which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, I said unto you, Ye are come unto the

mountain of the Amorites, which Jehovah our God doth give unto us. Behold, Jehovah thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as Jehovah God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged."

Then comes (ver. 21 et seqq.) the relation of the inner motives for the sending of the spies.1 This it is well to note, as we should not have discovered it from the Book of Numbers. What we have here is not a repetition; it leads us into things secret — what wrought in the people and hindered their blessing. The chief point to observe is that there was not a spirit of obedience in the people, and this they lacked because there was no faith in God. This is clearly shown. Consequently it is not an isolated fact that they wished spies, or that Jehovah acceded to their desire to have them (this we have already seen), but here — "Ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come." Moses mentions how the saying pleased him: here things are stated exactly as they were. He may not at all have understood at the moment what was working in the people; but all is told out. "The saying pleased me well, and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: and they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eschol, and searched it out. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which Jehovah our God doth give us. Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah your God: and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because Jehovah

hated us." Was this their trust? "Because Jehovah hated us, he hath brought us forth out of Egypt." Was it not the pettishness of disobedient children, if ever there were such? "Because Jehovah hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we."

Such was the genuine result of sending the spies. "The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. Jehovah your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that Jehovah thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe Jehovah your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day." Then the bitter consequences came. "Jehovah heard the voice of your words and was wroth, and sware saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land which I sware to give unto your fathers."

These were solemn words to bring before the minds of Israel just about to enter into the good land. We may without difficulty see the admirable appropriateness of such an introduction. They were about to enter it by special grace; for it is of importance to bear in mind that it was not by the covenant which was made at Horeb

that the children of Israel entered the land at all. If God had held to the terms of that covenant, never could the people have found their way into Canaan; but God was pleased to bring in fresh terms by a way which will be shown before we have done with this sketch of Deuteronomy; and it was simply and solely because of those fresh terms of mercy which God Himself brought in of His own grace that Israel entered there. At the same time Moses, though well aware of this, reminds them of the real source of their misery, and of the judgment that had fallen on them from God.

It is evident therefore, that this book has the most sensible difference from all that preceded it. Its moral turns on this — the only possible way of maintaining relationship with God, namely, obedience; what the nature of that obedience is, and how it is modified; how God graciously takes into account the weakness of those brought into this relationship, and how He provides for His own glory in it. At all events, whatever may be His grace, whatever His ways with His people, obedience is that with which He cannot dispense. Hence therefore we see why it is that the first circumstance in their history brought before them was that God told them not to go up to the mountain of the Amorites; but they would go up in self-will and self-confidence, and utterly failed before their enemies. The land was straight before them, and they might, as far as that was concerned, have gone in and taken possession of it at once. Why did they not? The book of Deuteronomy discloses it. Because they had not a particle of confidence in God. Therefore it was that, when God told them to go up, they refused and suffered the consequence of their disobedience.

This then is the crucial test, so to speak, which Moses applies throughout; this is the homily; for indeed Deuteronomy we may call a book of divine homilies in this respect. It consists of moral addresses, and appeals in a tone quite unexampled in all the five books of Moses. Need one point out how suited all this is for the last words of one who was just about to depart? They possess that inimitable solemnity which cannot be so much uttered in words as felt in the general bearing of the book. Moses himself had the deepest sense of the situation, but in no way as one who distrusted Jehovah, for he had well learned to count on His love. He knew fully that Jehovah was doing nothing but what was for His own glory; how could His servant then find fault? There were reasons due to God's character why Moses should not bring the people into the laud. He had compromised Him at a critical occasion, and could not but feel that so it was. Not that this made the smallest cloud between Master and servant. As God loved Moses, so Moses confided in God. Nevertheless the circumstance that he too had failed to sanctify Jehovah their God in his heart as he ought — that even he had misrepresented Him when it was above all due to God that His grace should be clearly seen, all this added gravity to the appeals and style of the departing man of God.

Thus then the circumstances of Moses, as well as of the people, were precisely those suited to impress the lesson of obedience. For a people in relationship with God such is the only possible way, either of pleasing Him, or of tasting that joy of the Lord which is the strength of His people.

Obedience is the real spring of blessing, as disobedience is the sure pathway of ruin. Such is the fertile topic which we find throughout the book.

Hence the story of the Amorites, as we saw, is given. Hence, while he fails not to show that Jehovah was with himself, and how Joshua was to displace him, he does not hesitate to set before all the story of his own shame, so to speak. What love there was in this, if by any means he might impress obedience on the people that were just going into the land! How good are the ways and the words of God! So it is that the New Testament gives us the failure of the apostle Peter, not merely at the beginning but in the very midst of his career. So it is that it does not withhold from us the over-heatedness of a Paul, as well as the weakness of a Barnabas; that it tells out the stumbling both of Thomas and of Mark: all is openly communicated for our instruction. The prime duty for every creature, whether Jew or Christian, is obedience. This then is the leading truth of Deuteronomy. So, after it has been brought before us from the first, we find their failure to trust Jehovah leads to a fresh command. They are no longer to go up and take possession of the land, but to turn back and take their journey into the wilderness. With this they did not at all like to comply; and thus the same spirit which declined to go up in obedience to Jehovah refuses to go back in submission to Him.

“Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned” — “we have sinned against Jehovah: we will go up and fight.” Ah! it is an easy thing to say, “We have sinned;” but how often we have to learn that it is not the quick abrupt confession of sin which affords evidence that sin is felt! It is rather a proof of hardness of heart. The

conscience feels that a certain act of confessing the sin is necessary, but perhaps there is hardly anything which more hardens the heart than the habit of confessing sin without feeling it. This, I believe, is one of the great snares of Christendom from of old and now — that is, the stereotyped acknowledgment of sin, the mere habit of hurrying through a formula of confession to God. I dare say we have almost all done so, without referring to any particular mode; for alas! there is formality enough, and without having written forms, the heart may frame forms of its own, as we may have observed, if not known it in our own experience, without finding fault with other people, For notoriously, in a legal state of mind people are apt to get through the acknowledgment of sin in what they know has grieved the Lord; but even then there is a want of bowing to His will. Here then we have all laid bare. The Israelites thought to settle the whole matter with God by saying, “We have sinned;” but then they proved that there was nothing settled, nothing right; because what really pleases God is this — the acceptance of His good will, whatever it be. Faith leads to obedience: first of all the acceptance of His word brings and secures blessing by faith for our souls; and then, having received it, we surrender ourselves to His will. For what are we here but to please God? The Israelites realized nothing of the kind. The spring of obedience was wanting. This is what Moses is enforcing by every possible kind of declaration and motive; by his own example and by theirs, as well as the example of their fathers. All this is made to converge on the children. He wanted to leave them his blessing — nay, he wanted them to have the best blessing that God could give them. Next to having Christ Himself is the following in His steps. What better blessing after all can be on

earth, except Christ Himself, if indeed it be not a part of Christ, than that life of Christ which walks in obedience?

This is then what he was pressing. But their fathers would not obey at that time. They would not go up when Jehovah bid them, and when He commanded them to turn back, they wished to go forward. They said, “We have sinned against Jehovah: we will go up and fight according to all that Jehovah our God commanded us.”

This is a solemn lesson — that there may be a thorough spirit of disobedience at the very time that people talk of doing whatever God is pleased to command. And it is obvious, beloved friends, obedience depends on this — that we really do what God commands us now — that we are doing what is suitable to our present position and state. What God lays on one He does not necessarily enjoin on another. For instance, it is not everybody that is called to serve God in a public way; nor is everyone called to take a particular step or course which might involve him in trouble and persecution. We have to consider whether we are undertaking it out of some human desire of heroism. How many one has known who would have liked much to be martyrs! I do not regard this as evincing the spirit of obedience, but rather a spice of self-confidence. When such a death is really before one in service, then perhaps the difficulties would be incomparably more felt; for the Lord does not call to such a course or end to gratify human nature, or to give an opportunity for glorifying man, but always for His own glory. In such a case there is no room for will, nor sparing of the heart. Every step in really obeying God puts the man morally to the test, and is more or less attended with severe trial. Where the world or the flesh governs, the trial is not felt. The man who said, “Master,

I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," had no faith at all. The other whom Jesus called thought about his father and mother; he would like to see them first. So it habitually is where the faith is real; but nature is not yet judged root and branch. The heart may be made up to follow the Lord, but the difficulties are still felt keenly; whereas the man who only theorises is ready in his own conceit, in word at least, to do anything; but there is no seriousness of spirit: he does not know himself yet. No matter what it may cost, he assumes that he will at once go through with the will of the Lord. It is exactly so here.

Such then is the early and remarkably striking introduction to the book.

Next we see what was the fact when they did go up spite of the warning of God to fight the Amorites. "Jehovah said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah, and went presumptuously up into the hilt And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do," — there was a most ignominious flight — "and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah And ye returned and wept before Jehovah; but Jehovah would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you. So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there." I am afraid there was not much more in the weeping than in the acknowledgment of the sin.

Then in Deuteronomy 2 the law-giver reminds them how they took their weary journey. But what wonderful

grace! Jehovah went along with them; and of course the faithful turned back just as much as the unfaithful. How good is the Lord! This is now developed. Moses says, “We turned,” not “Ye,” merely. “We turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as Jehovah spake unto me; and we compassed Mount Seir many days. And Jehovah spake unto me, saying, Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward. And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land; no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.” Thus Jehovah from the very first was teaching them that they were not called out on an errand of indiscriminate conquest. It was not in His mind to offer men His law or the sword. They could take possession of no lands whatever of their own will. Jehovah gave them no such license as the right to slay, burn, or plunder others as they liked. It was simply a question of subjection to God and obeying Him, who had from the first a plan for the nations round Israel as their centre. “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.”

It is the same principle here again as elsewhere. Man must not presume to choose. Israel was called in everything to confide in Jehovah and obey. Is there anything so wholesome! I am persuaded that above all the Christian, who has a still nearer relationship with

God, is the very last person who ought to exercise a choice in self-will. How great the blessing of one who walks, as Christ walked, in dependence on God, not consulting Him only if constrained, but of a ready mind, and assured that by His Spirit, through the written word, He deigns to guide every step of your way where self is judged, and to give you to take the right path with a simplicity incomparably better than all the wisdom the world could muster, if one sought in independence to choose for oneself!

This seems to me put to the test in the question of the land of Edom. There was no doubt whatever that Esau had behaved so ill that the children of Israel were not likely to forget it. We know how these traditions linger among men, particularly in the East. But no, God would not have them to meddle. “I will not give you of their land.” Jehovah was most careful exactly where He had least sympathy. The fact of Esau’s pride and contempt of Israel gave them no license to take their land. “I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.” God always holds to His own principles, and He teaches us to respect them in others. “Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. For Jehovah thy God blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years Jehovah thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.” Why should they covet? They must learn not to seek what God would not give them. That is the point — to do God’s will. Jehovah had blessed Israel, and would have them content and thankful instead of coveting their neighbour’s goods. He too it was who had given the Mount to Esau: that was enough. And Israel

bow to the will of their God. “And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Ezion-gaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab.”

Then comes out another instance. Were they to lay hands on the Moabites who were not so near of kin as the Edomites? Not so. “Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.” Thus, we see, the second exhortation contains a lesson about other people, as the first was the danger of disobedience on their own part. What we find here is a warning not to yield to the sight of their eyes or the violence of their hands, guarding against a covetous spirit which pays slight regard to that which God had assigned to others. It is ever the same duty of submission to God’s will. The first chapter takes cognizance of themselves; the second chapter puts them to the test in the presence of other people. It did not alter their duty, if the antecedent history of Moab and Ammon, just as much as that of Esau, was far from good. We know the profanity of Esau; we know the solemn circumstances of Moab and Ammon from their very origin; but for all that God would not permit His people to indulge in what did not become Himself as represented however feebly in and by Israel. This is the plain gist of the book. It is the due conduct of a people in relationship with Jehovah; no longer the bringing out of typical institutions, but the development of the moral ways which become the people with whom Jehovah had a present connection and intercourse on earth. The grand duty and safeguard is evermore to

heed His word, and the consulting Him not only for their own path but in respect to others. The same principle is steadily pursued on all sides.

They were tried after this by another case of forbearance. “So it came to pass when all the men of war were consumed from among the people, that Jehovah spake unto me, saying, Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day: and when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them.” But the same duty abides for them. We see from this that it is mere ignorance to suppose that there is not a divine system in the book; and this is more remarkable, I think, in Deuteronomy, if possible, than in the preceding books. We can all understand an orderly arrangement where there are types all arranged in a consecutive manner; but here in these moral exhortations it is, though in another way, just as sensible. In this case too we have the fact that there had been a great deal of fighting in previous days. The children of Moab had had their wars. Was there any reason in this why the children of Israel should have wars with them now? And as for the children of Ammon, they too had passed through similar experience. Giants had dwelt there in times past, and the Ammonites called them Zamzummims. They were “a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but Jehovah destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead.” But this was no reason why they were to expect Jehovah to destroy the Ammonites now. Both were powerful motives not to dread the Canaanite races, who were destined to extirpation.

Thus was kept up a thorough sense of discipline in the people, and above all dependence on and confidence in Jehovah. They were to be guided simply not by what Jehovah had done in providence by Ammon, Moab, or Esau, but by His will as to themselves. This was a lesson for Israel of prime moment. May we not forget it ourselves! Covenant favour would surely do as much for Israel as providence had done for Moab and Ammon!

All this then precedes another lesson. It is well to remark here that verse 24 is exactly parallel with verse 13; that it is not Moses in verse 13, but Jehovah who commands to “rise up,” etc., in both; and that verses 10-12 are a parenthesis of instructive past history for moral profit like verses 20-23. “Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon.” Now comes another promise: “Behold,” says He, “I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite.” Here then they are called to action. It will be observed that first of all in this chapter, it was not activity but subjection. It might be, and no doubt was, trying enough for Israel to take quietly the unfriendliness of the Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites; but no matter what the provocation given, no matter how they might be insulted by them (and they were), a hand of Israel must not be lifted up against their brethren; for Jehovah reminds them of the connection, and gives those races the closest name possible — their brethren. Edomites or Moabites or Ammonites, — unfeeling and disposed to injure Israel, still God would educate His people in remembering whatever bond of nature there was: if blows came, God would not forget the delinquent. Meanwhile they were not to meddle with their kindred, even though jealous and unkind.

But Israel is called to action. “Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee. And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace.” Is not this very notable? What a difference between God’s conduct of His people, and man’s corruption of it! When we compare, for instance, the way in which Moses, under the direction of God, was to lead on the Israelites, and the way in which Mahomet perverted the word into a fable for ambitious ends, and allowance of human lusts and passions, who cannot see the difference? In the one case there was the thorough sifting and scrutiny of God — with whom most? With the enemies? Not at all, but His own people. In His dealings with them He applied a higher standard, and far more severity. There was incomparably greater strictness of judgment with the children of Israel than with all their enemies put together. Mark the very fact here set before us: not a single man of the congregation of Jehovah that left Egypt passed into the holy land save two individuals, who identified themselves by faith from the very first with the glory of Jehovah. Where else can be found such jealous care as this? It is granted that they did not all perish in the same way, but they all fell in the wilderness. Whatever then the blows which fell on Sihon, or on Og, or on any of the others; whatever the ways of God with Moab and Ammon afterwards, or even

with Egypt, there never was seen such unsparing strictness as with Israel.

When man builds up a society, when he founds a religion or any other scheme, how wholly different his course! What gentle censures, if any, what palpable favouritism towards his own party, where they most deserve reproof and rebuke or perhaps still more stringent measures! On the other hand, there is no mercy but ruthless severity always served out to those who refuse to fraternise, not to speak of ceaseless enmity to those who condemn and oppose. But in Israel's case God enforced a far more thorough and searching discipline in all their ways. No compulsion was used to the nations outside. In special instances judgment to the full took its course. Was anything like this the rule where man even took up the Bible for his own ends? It was otherwise with Mahomet. He might not grant such a liberal concession to others as he left to himself. I do not dwell on this. We all know that it is natural to wretched, wilful man. But there never was a system that more thoroughly pandered to the evil heart of man, and gratified it in its violence against others, and in its corrupt lusts for itself, than that frightful imposture. Whereas, even in God's dealings with a nation after the flesh (and such is the truth as to Israel here), there was an admirable check on man and witness of divine government, though the law made nothing perfect. It was not yet Christ manifested, but man under trial of the law and its ordinances and restraints, dealt with as living in the world, and instructed in view of this present life. Yet for all that, even though it was but the governmental display of God with a nation (not fully as with Christ, but provisionally by Moses), there is not a fragment of it that does not,

when candidly examined, prove the goodness and the holiness of God, as much as it illustrates also on the other side the rebelliousness of man, chosen man, even the people of God.

In this case let us see the principles of Jehovah's discipline. Did He warrant Israel to coerce Sihon with threats of vengeance or win by cajolery? Did He offer him the book of the law with the one hand or the sword with the other? Nothing of the sort. Look at the way in which Jehovah treated even these enemies of Israel. "Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the highway, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet." "But Sihon," it is said, "king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him: for Jehovah thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day. And Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess that thou mayest inherit his land. Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. And Jehovah our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people." Israel kept the path of right and courtesy. Sihon rushed on them to his own ruin; and only so did Israel smite and dispossess the king of Heshbon.

In Deuteronomy 3 it is substantially similar with Bashan. Og the king came out, and as with Heshbon, so with Bashan. "Jehovah said unto me, Fear not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So

Jehovah our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people." All this is brought out to Israel as the fruit of obeying Jehovah.

Deuteronomy 1 lets us see the end of disobedience; Deuteronomy 2 and 3 give us to know as clearly the result of obedience. Nothing can be more manifest than the moral groundwork which Moses is preparing for all the rest of the book that follows.

In Deuteronomy 4 we find another line of things. The law-giver sets before them the manner in which the law dealt with themselves, in one feature particularly, which he presses on them. "Now therefore hearken, O Israel." It appears to be a fresh discourse to a certain extent. "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Jehovah God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you." Surely this again makes it too plain to call for many words of ours to demonstrate what Moses, or rather God Himself, has in view in all these chapters. It is obedience. "Your eyes have seen what Jehovah did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, Jehovah thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto Jehovah your God are alive every one of you this day." So this fact also is used. Jehovah had cut down the former generation for their disobedience. "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as Jehovah my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom

and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

Next, he presses their singular privilege in His presence with them. What nation had such a wonder as God Himself in their midst — God Himself near the least of them? "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day." It was not merely a sight of God, but One who deigned to take the liveliest and most intimate interest in His people Israel. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons."

The point urged here is, that when they came and stood, as far as any then could stand, in the presence of God, they had seen no similitude of Jehovah. What a guard this was against the misuse of outward forms! God Himself did not disclose Himself by an external creature-shape. Jehovah their God did not make Himself visible to them by a similitude. Consequently there is here a heavy blow struck at the tendency towards idolatry. For when severed from Christ then those ordinances only became a snare to men. Still more since Christ: misused ordinances are practically the same thing in principle, as Galatians 4 teaches. This was guarded against from the first by the fact that no similitude of God was vouchsafed. "Ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire in the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds,

and thick darkness. And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words" — because they were called to obey — "but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." And then comes the exhortation to beware of corrupting themselves by idolatries, by the likeness of any creature. This is pursued to the end of the chapter, with the institution of the cities where the manslayer might find refuge.

In Deuteronomy 5 we come to still closer quarters. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them." Obedience is the claim. "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us at Horeb." We shall find a fresh one made in the land of Moab, but first of all they are reminded of the Sinaitic covenant. "Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day Jehovah talked with you face to face in the Mount out of the midst of the fire. (I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to show you the word of Jehovah: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the Mount.)" Then is laid down the memorial that Jehovah, who gave them His law, was the same who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They were a people brought into relationship with God, and the object of His words was to guard them from practical inconsistency with that relationship.

It is remarkable that, even though in this connection Moses gives them what are called the ten commandments, there is nevertheless an express and

manifest difference in the form as compared with Exodus; so little is Deuteronomy a mere rehearsal of the earlier books.2 It is a familiar point to many, but may claim a brief notice here, especially as all do not see its bearing in by no means the least striking of the ten words; I speak of the law of the sabbath. Some wonder why it should be joined with the other commandments; but the sabbath is so much the more important here, because it is not strictly a moral command. This makes the principle at stake to be felt the more. The sabbath law rests entirely on the word of God Himself. It was a question of His authority, not of that which a man might intrinsically discern. What is meant by a moral law is that which one can pronounce on from within even without a prescription from God. For instance, a man knows perfectly well that he has no right to steal. If a person takes what does not belong to him, every man, even a heathen, can judge it. There may be lands where everything morally is at the lowest point, and where therefore a wrong is less severely estimated than elsewhere. But where is the savage even who does not know the wrongness of stealing? For although he may allow himself a dispensation to take from others, let a man steal from him, and it will soon be seen whether he does not condemn the wrong. Plainly then the savage knows quite well that it is unjustifiable to steal. But nobody knows about the sabbath-day unless Jehovah command it. Yet He joins its observance with prohibitions of evil which man could himself judge. It is therefore the strongest assertion of His authority.

This is constantly forgotten when men talk about the moral law. One of the most weighty duties is not properly a moral question at all, but depends simply on

the commandment of God. Not that I doubt the sabbath-day to be of the deepest possible moment, and so lasting in its claims that, when the millennium comes, that day of rest will be in full force again. It is not correct therefore that the sabbath-day is done with: many people in Christendom think so; but I take the liberty of having a stronger view about the sabbath than even those who think themselves strongest. Many count it buried in Christ's grave, but it is not. Far from being done with, we know from the word of God that He will maintain the sabbatical rest strictly, and enforce it in the days of the kingdom; so that, if a man does not bow to His authority, he will assuredly come under divine judgment: so much does Jehovah make of it in itself, and so much will He make of it for the obedience of others in the day that is coming.

We however are not under law but grace. The law of the sabbath is not given to Christians. Grace has brought us out of the condition of a nation in the flesh or of men in the earth. The Christian is not a mere man, nor is he a Jew. If one were simply a man, one must have to do with the place and state of Adam fallen. For a Jew no doubt there is the law of Moses. But for the Christian a very essential feature of his standing is that he is delivered from the status of man or Israel, and called to Christ and heavenly things. His death to the law is not therefore to weaken the authority of the law, but because of the principles of divine grace which are now brought out in Christ risen from the dead, founded on His death, manifested in His resurrection, and maintained by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Such is the reason why a Christian even now on earth passes into a new state of things altogether. Consequently, when

Christianity began, the first day of the week was made the distinguishing mark, the Lord's-day, and not the sabbath. For we must remember that the sabbath does not mean a seventh day, as some persons (I am sorry to say) equivocate; but the seventh day and no other. This is so decided that in the millennial age there will be a strict maintenance of that day with all the authority of God Himself, vested in and exercised by the Messiah governing Israel and the earth.

Let me just refer to this for a moment longer, lest there should be any mistake about what appears to me to be the truth about it. In the commandment to keep it Jehovah the God of Israel speaks to this effect: "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work." But the motive here is not because God rested upon that day, but because they were to remember that they were servants in the land of Egypt, and that Jehovah had brought them out through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: "Therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day." Surely this is very significant, and points out a manifest difference in the character and scope and design of the book of Deuteronomy as compared with Exodus. In the one case there was a remembrance of creation; in this case, of symbolic redemption, the bringing out of Egypt. The fact is that redemption, even in type, is a stronger motive to obedience than creation itself. This seems the reason why it is brought in here, as the time was long past; whereas all was fresh in Exodus, which is the main display of that truth. If we have seen the object of all this part of Deuteronomy to be the enforcement of obedience, there is nothing which

maintains obedience so much as redemption; and if that were the case when it was only an outward deliverance, how much more when it is eternal?

It is freely allowed that the ten words have a specific character of the deepest moment for man on earth, as distinguished from what was judicial and ceremonial. Hence Moses says, “These words Jehovah spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.”

Next follows the account of their fear before God’s solemn words, their promise to obey, and the mediatorial place which the people desired and God sanctioned for Moses.

In Deuteronomy 6 we find the first of those texts which our Lord quotes. Hence, I need not say, there is peculiar solemnity in its character. The passage insists on the unity of the true God. This was a truth which Israel was most prone to disregard. The very point of faith, for which we are especially responsible, is what we are in most danger of forgetting under pressure or carelessness. Whatever we are called out for is what Satan endeavours to destroy. By whom? Our adversaries? No, not merely so, but by ourselves. To apply what now occupies us here, give me the chief, fundamental, and most salient points of Christianity, and I will show you that these are the very truths that Christians are most in danger of forgetting. What is it that characterises Christianity? Redemption accomplished; Christ the head of the church above; the Holy Ghost sent down here below; and all this borne

witness to in the worship and in the ways of Christians and the church. Is this what you feel? Is this what you read? Is this what you hear? Nothing less. The hardest thing to find now in a Christian is real intelligence about Christianity. Commonly indeed we see that Christians understand a great deal better what the Jews ought to have done, than what they themselves ought to be doing. In short, whatever it be to which God summons us is precisely what the devil endeavours to obscure, and so to hinder our testimony.

The point then for the Jew was the one true God. “Jehovah God that hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt” — He was the only God. To what were they always inclined? Setting up other gods in the wilderness. Accordingly this is the solemn and central truth that is brought in here. “Hear, O Israel.” They were about to go into the land to enjoy it; but “Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one. And thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children;” and they were to bind them for a sign; they were to make much of them at all points — outside the house and inside, and always. And this is enforced in the very words which our Saviour employed. “Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.” It was to be a real fealty: it was not merely a dogma pure and simple, but to be known as a fact. It was revealed as the great operative truth, continually impressed on Israel — their one true God.

It seems needless to say that this is altogether short of Christianity; and as we have referred to the difference of

a Jew and a Christian as to the sabbath-day and the first day of the week, so as to this. The essential revelation of God to us is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — the Father displayed by the Son, and made known by the Spirit. This is just as characteristic a truth for us as the one Jehovah was for a Jew. Now notoriously as a dogma it is acknowledged everywhere in Christendom except by heretics; but the moment it is appropriated as a practical fact, people stand back and begin to qualify and mutilate. “Is He then indeed your Father?” “Can you call Him Father?” “Oh, this might be dangerous, and that were presumptuous;” and so men talk on — that is, the moment it becomes a real living truth, and not words on paper. The acknowledgment in a creed is all well; but when it comes to be the truth for one’s own soul, stamping its value on our communion and also on our ways, men at once retreat back into some “dim religious light,” where it is all forgotten and lost, merely owned verbally, but without power for the heart and life.

Before we pass to the next chapter, it would be well to observe for a moment the second answer of our Lord — “Ye shalt not tempt Jehovah your God.” What was meant by this? Not any ordinary fleshly sin on our part, as many suppose. Tempting God was to doubt Him, as many, all of us, are apt to do. Satan took advantage of the scripture that said that He should not dash His foot against a stone. He quotes accordingly Psalm 91, intimating to Jesus that, if He were the Son of God, all He had to do was to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple; and all must endorse His claims. Was not this a positive promise? God would “give his angels charge concerning him;” and what a fine proof it would be that He was the true Messiah, if He threw Himself

down from such a height, and withal the angels preserved Him! But Satan as usual tampered with the plain written word, alike with its letter and its spirit; for after “to keep thee” he omitted “in all thy ways.” This he tried to conceal from One, all whose ways were obedience, venturing to insinuate what a noble demonstration of His Messiahship it would be. And what was the Lord’s answer? “Thou shalt not tempt Jehovah thy God.” The true Israelite does not require to put God to the test. If you suspect a rogue is in your employment, you may test him by marking a piece of money to see whether he steals or not: am I then going to mark something for God to see whether He will keep His word or not? I know God will do it; I do not require to put Him to the proof. This is the meaning of it, and such is precisely the path of duty. He that believes may calmly confide in God under all circumstances. His Father will take care of him. Is not this in wonderful harmony with the rest, following on the confession of the one true God of Israel?

Deuteronomy 7 one may sum up in a very few words. We have the consecration of the people to God. This is the grand pith of the chapter as it appears to me. It is the people repudiating the ways of the heathen, and consecrated to God. And this characterizes the book of Deuteronomy. It is not at all a people or a class kept at a distance by intervening priests. Of course it is a fact that the priests are there; but one of the peculiar features of this book is that, although sacerdotalism existed, the priests are designedly swamped with the Levites, as the whole of the people are gathered round Jehovah. Thus it is not a book which defines strict canonical usage in these matters. The object is quite different. The other

had its place when God was giving the book of Leviticus. There He assigned this as the portion of the high priest and his sons, that of the Levites, this again of the people. But in Deuteronomy the point is to centralize them all around Jehovah Himself. The consequence is that, though all have their place, these distinctions may here seem small indeed. If it is a question of access to God in His sanctuary, priests are definitely brought out, and the proper book for this is Leviticus; but there is a larger truth than this — that God has a people whom He puts in a place of consecration to Himself. Such is the point here in the seventh chapter. We shall find how thoroughly this applies all through the book to the perplexity of poor proud rationalism, but in itself a simple yet very important truth indeed.3 So difficult is it to unbelief that some take the ground of making Deuteronomy belong to an older age when the distinction of priests from Levites was not yet brought in. Still more take the opposite hypothesis and contend that its legislation is of a later character than that of the preceding book. The truth is that the difference is due to moral development of Israel according to Jehovah's wisdom on the eve of introducing His people into the land, and the more settled and social habits He would have them cultivate there. But the tone, mind, and heart of Moses are nowhere more characteristically apparent than in these his last words to the people of Jehovah whom he loved.

In Deuteronomy 8 we have quite a different character. It is not the people's consecration to God, but their discipline, the trial of heart, and exercise by the way to which Jehovah subjected the people; and a most instructive section it is in this point of view.

And this is another chapter from which our Lord quotes when tempted, to which we may refer in passing. “And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.” We see that what has been remarked is just what is expressed in this verse: “And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only,” (what exercise of faith was there in that?) “but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live.” This is precisely what does put man to the proof morally. The word of God tests whether he submits to it, whether he lives on it, whether he delights in it, whether his meat is to do the will of God as the Lord Jesus proved His meat was.

It was by this Scripture that the Lord, as we know, repelled the first temptation of the adversary. None ever honoured God’s word as Christ did.

We need not dilate on the beautiful detail but at the same time simple truth of this chapter. Clearly it traces the discipline of Jehovah by the way.

In Deuteronomy 9 another topic is prominent. It is not the Jewish people in the school of Jehovah to manifest what was in their heart, and what He was towards them; but the people strengthened by Jehovah in presence of a power mightier than their own. It was because of this very truth: Jehovah was with them. What did it matter about all others? They might be greater, stronger, wiser, more than the Israelites; but what of Jehovah? This was

their boast. Could they match with Him? Certainly they could not; this Jehovah spreads in the most forcible manner before His people for their cheer and stay.

But we must not overlook another part of the chapter — not the Lord strengthening the people against the mightiest of adversaries, but Israel reminded of their rebellious heart even under such circumstances against Jehovah.

In Deuteronomy 10 we find the provision of Jehovah's goodness is stated in a very striking way. Thus when the story of their rebellion is mentioned, it leads Moses to go back and to trace how this spirit betrayed itself even so early as at Horeb; for when it is a question of rebellion, we must go to the root of it. We are also shown the astonishing patience of Jehovah, and with that which might be difficult to understand if we did not look to the moral scope of the book — the destruction of the first tables, the writing out of fresh ones, and the place in which they were to be kept. At the same time we are told how the tribe of Levi was separated, after having brought in (in an episodical way) an allusion to Aaron's death. It seems just a parenthesis, and not a question of chronology.4 A fair question arises for those who honour the divine word, why events so long severed in time are thus introduced seemingly together. No doubt the malicious mind of the sceptic takes occasion from it to turn what he does not seek to understand to the disparagement of inspiration. But there is no discrepancy whatever, nor confusion of Aaron's death in the last year of the wilderness sojourn with the separation of Levi some thirty-eight years before. The truth is that the solemn circumstances appear to recall to the mind of Moses the awful lapse of Israel when

“they made the calf which Aaron made,” and Levi, of odd perfidious to the stranger for a sister’s sake, consecrated themselves to Jehovah in the blood of their idolatrous brethren; and Moses hews at Jehovah’s command tables of stone like the first, and put them, written as before, in the ark which he had made. It was not then and there that Aaron died, as he alas! deserved. The intercession of Moses prevailed so far for his brother and the people, that the one lived till near the end of the wanderings in the desert, and the others, instead of perishing as a whole at once, lived to take their journey from a land of wells (Beeroth) to Mosera where Aaron died at Mount Hor, and thence to Gudgodah, and to Jotbath, “a land of rivers of waters:” such was the patient goodness of God to both, as the long interval made the more marked.5 In Deuteronomy 11 is given the summing up of the whole matter, the practical conclusion which the lawgiver keeps before their eyes. They were to remember what rebellion must end in. Hence it is that he alludes to the fate of Dathan and Abiram whom the earth swallowed up in consequence of their flagrant apostasy and fighting against God. “Your eyes have seen all the great acts of Jehovah which he did. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land whither ye go to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey” (ver. 7-9). To the end of the chapter follow the most earnest warnings, as well as bright promises: disobedience or obedience would be the turning point in the land. The mount of blessing and the mount of curse were there on the other side Jordan.

This closes the first part of Deuteronomy. A few words on the next few chapters will suffice for the present.

In Deuteronomy 12 we have statutes and judgments. Thus we come to what might be called the direct charges, having done with all the introductory part. All the previous part prepares the way. Now we find what would test their obedience. “These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which Jehovah God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.” In the very first place is laid down utter destruction of the high places. The reason is obvious. The first of all rights, and the highest of our duties, is that God should have His rights. With this then most fittingly He begins. It is no use talking about Israel: the first object is God. If therefore God was dishonoured by the high places, they must all come down. Besides, if these high places had been dedicated to heathen gods, Israel must not dare to consecrate them to the true God. Such conversion does not suit God, who must have His own.

God must and does choose for Himself — a simple yet most important consideration (ver. 5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26). Will-worship is intolerable. It ought most of all to shock the Christian. If it were merely a question of man, nobody would think of choosing for another. Nobody likes this. If people like to choose for themselves, as mere men, what an awful delusion it is to be choosing for God — to be really governed by your own will in matters of religion! We can all see how very bad it was in Israel; but do we feel that it is still worse in the Christian? He has given no title to adopt doctrines, practices, ways, government, or any one thing that is not His expressed will for His children. Some there are, no

doubt, who assume that God has not in these things expressed any will of His, own. I do not envy them the thought that God has not revealed His mind about what is nearest to Himself, and what most of all is bound up with His glory! It is making God less than a man; for if he could not be content without it, how much less the living God?

Here we see that God had a most deliberate choice in the smallest matters as well as in the greatest; but He begins with what most nearly touches His presence. He sets Himself against the high places; He will not have them. He chose to have a place where He would put His name. This becomes the centre for all; and the book of Deuteronomy is founded on that fact, Israel being on the Point of entering into the land. Consequently it is an anticipation of what was before them. It is not a book for the wilderness, except for their hearts to look back on whilst on the borders before they entered the land.

And the grand principle too we may just notice in passing: Jehovah reminds them by Moses that He had allowed much while they were in the wilderness which could not be tolerated now (ver. 8). If they were going to possess the land, let them remember it was God's land, not theirs. He might and would give it to them, but still He always kept His place. It was "the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee." In fact He acted as the landlord. They were only tenants, and had to pay Him rent. This was the substantial meaning of the tithes and other requisitions (ver. 11). They were the dues He demanded in virtue of His position as landlord of the people in the land. Therefore we can understand it as if He said, When you were in the strange country, when you left it in haste to wander here and there in the

wilderness, there were great difficulties and many irregularities which cannot be allowed now. The greater the blessing of God, the more thoroughly you are put on the ground that God has given you, the more He insists on thorough and constant obedience. This is the point here, and thus we see the connection with all that has gone before.

Then in Deuteronomy 13 there is a similar line, all these early injunctions being what we may call religious statutes. We shall meet with others ere long, we shall come to civil ones, but we are not going beyond the religious charges at present. It is evident that they are somehow or another connected with God, and touch matters of religion, as men would say. Israel must not slight God's claims in common things. For instance, as they must not trifle with blood, because it belonged to God (Deut. 12:16-25), the dreamer must be guarded against a dream (Deut. 13:1-5). It might belong to the true God; but "Thou shalt not hearken" if there was the smallest risk of going after other gods. Power supernatural has not the smallest value, nay, is to be shunned rigorously, if it weakens consciences as to the true God. The same Spirit which has the power of miracle is the Spirit of truth and the Holy Spirit. If truth be abandoned, it indicates the power of Satan as the source, and not the true God. Such is the principle: no sparing friends, relatives, "wife of thy bosom," could be tolerated.

There is then (verses 12-18) pointed out the way to deal with a city guilty of idolatry. "Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; thou shalt surely smite the

inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword," the small things as well as great. To have confidence in God is one of the important points here, to cherish full confidence that whatever He gives us is the very best thing for us. It is as true for us as for them, though not shown in the same legal way or outward manner.

Deuteronomy 14 insists on what became the children of Jehovah their God in abstaining from unseemly maimings or disfigurements for the dead, as well as from any food which He, who knew better than they, pronounced abominable. They are then shown what may or may not be eaten, whether beasts, fishes, or fowls. A people holy to Jehovah must not eat anything that dies of itself, nor accustom itself to an uncomely act, were it with a dumb and dead kid and the milk of its dam.

But there is another point peculiar to this book. Beside the tithe of their increase truly rendered from corn, wine, oil, with the firstlings, which, if distant from the place Jehovah would choose for His centre of worship, might be turned into money, and there spent before Him with a joyful household and the Levite not forsaken, there was to be a tithe at the end of three years, mentioned in the 28th and 29th verses: "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates." They were not compelled to take this to the one place that God had consecrated. It had more of the family character; but a beautiful feature is connected with it: "And the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates,

shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest." Even in the very witness of domestic blessing there must be the largeness of heart that goes out to those who have no friends to care for them. How good is our God, and what a witness of His grace! We know well how the family is apt to trench on generous feeling, and how it is apt to shut itself up to no more or better than a refined selfishness. It is not so where God governs. There, even were it the family gathered in such a sort as this within their gates, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, all have their part. Why should they not rejoice? It was God who made the family rejoice, and they were to go out to those that were strangers to it. Is it not a beautiful indication of what the true God is, even in His least institutions? 6 In Deuteronomy 15 we find a similar principle as to the year of release. On this we need not particularly dwell, but they are reminded of their own place. They had been bondmen themselves; and if they had been delivered of God, they should cultivate the same spirit as He had shown. This was their point of imitating God.

In Deuteronomy 16:1-17 (where I now stop) we have the winding up of all this part — the termination of the statutes which had to do with religion. Let me ask, Why were there these three feasts, and these three only? For a reason given already. These feasts made an appeal to a male Israelite which none besides could make. Others might be optional, but these feasts were obligatory. It is a call to obedience. The book of Deuteronomy throughout pre-eminently brings in the authority of God over a people in relationship with Himself, displayed and proved in obedience. What did not so much manifest

obedience is left out, though it might have an important spiritual meaning in its place; for certainly other feasts (as the feast of atonement, for instance) had. But it was not a question here of truth or its forms, but of obedience: this is ever in view. It is not the tabernacle, nor the priest, not the wilderness, but obeying God as His people in the land.

There is another remark to be made. The obedience spoken of in this chapter, which called every male of Israel up to remember Jehovah at these three feasts, gathered them to the place which Jehovah their God would choose. Then again we have what is always brought out in the book of Deuteronomy. It is Jehovah gathering the people round Himself. In the delight of His people He delights. He would have them happy in Himself, and enjoying all He had given them to enjoy. Consequently we have these three feasts, which set forth particularly Jehovah providing to fill the heart of His people with peace and joy to overflowing Yet at the first of these feasts Israel were not told to rejoice. In a certain sense it might be a season too good and deep for joy. The character of it was so solemn as scarce to admit of this. It represented that death which befell the Lamb, and arrested the judgment of God which had gone out against us because of sin. We may rejoice in the God that has so dealt with us, but is it becoming that Christ's death should be a call to transports? There are deeper feelings in the heart than joy. Times we know when the sense of what we have been, of what we are, and of God's putting all our evil away for ever by the death of His own Son, is too deep for joy if not for tears. I do not mean that there should not be the profoundest feeling of gratitude, and the fullest expression of thanksgiving to

God. Still it is too solemn to admit of what is so buoyant, which has its own proper exercise. But God is very careful, in the face of the passover, that there should not be a forgetfulness of that escape which brought them out together then. Hence, in the first feast, we find they were to eat unleavened bread. “Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.” Then they are told not to celebrate the feast indiscriminately where and as they please. “Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover in any of thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee: but at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents.”

But the second feast brings out joy in a very distinct and delightful manner. “Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto Jehovah thy God, according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee: and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son.” It is not the death of Christ with all its solemn, however blessed, issues. It is founded on the life of Christ in resurrection, when the Holy Ghost brings us into the power of enjoyment. It is

pentecost. Consequently it is that great feast which finds its answer in Christianity more particularly (the passover being of course the foundation); but this is pre-eminently its character as a present fact. And mark this; that it is not only joy in the Lord, but calling others to joy (ver. 11). Besides, “Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.” We were bondmen, and are not. We are to observe the statutes and to do them. Once more obedience is pre-eminently the matter, and this too as delivered men — once bondslaves, but now free to obey (ver. 12).

There is a third feast, that of tabernacles. It is not the liberty of grace, which the feast of pentecost is, but rather the epoch in type when the liberty of glory shall arrive. Mark how very strikingly this is shown. “Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine.” Undoubtedly the gatherings in of the corn and the wine (that is, the harvest and the vintage) are the well known types of God’s final dealings: the harvest when He separates the wheat from the chaff, or at any rate from that which is not wheat; and the vintage when He executes unsparing judgment upon the vine of the earth — upon all religion that is vain and denies heaven. There is no mercy shown in the vintage. In the harvest there is the gathering in of the good and the extinction of the evil; but the vintage knows nothing but vengeance from God. It is after this will come the full time of joy for the earth. Blessing for the world is after God has thus cleared the scene: in the prospect of this the Christian is called to rejoice — to have the joy not only of liberty now but of the glory that is about to displace the oppression,

the sorrow, the wretchedness, the sin, of this poor long-groaning earth, when all shall be put under the only One who is competent to bear the burden and to govern it to the glory of God. Hence the language differs most sensibly even from the joyous scene of blessing of which the feast of weeks was so redolent. It is not merely “thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give, according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee,” but “seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah shall choose: because Jehovah thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the increase of thine hands; therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.”

May the Lord give us hearts to rejoice in all His, grace and truth and glory!

Deuteronomy 16:18 — Deuteronomy 34.

It is clear that a new division of the statutes and judgments of this book begins with the later verses just read from Deuteronomy 16. What belonged to the religious life of Israel was closed with the three feasts which fill the previous part of the chapter.

Now we touch on the instruments and means which Jehovah established for the purpose of carrying out the life of the people in judicial matters. Judges and officers were to abound. They were to be made in all their gates, and with watchful care there is a guard against respect of persons and anything calculated to turn aside the sentence of righteousness. The land which Jehovah their God gave must have justice; loving-kindness, and mercy between man and man, and all pleasant affections among the people must not interfere in such questions.

Along with all this we suddenly find what the spirit of man cannot understand — the introduction of a fresh allusion to religious matters. “Thou shalt not plant a grove of any trees near unto the altar of Jehovah thy God, which thou shalt make thee. Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which Jehovah thy God hateth. Thou shalt not sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil-favouredness: for that is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.”

With this beginning of Deuteronomy 17 there goes a strong warning as to any man or woman that had wrought wickedness in the sight of Jehovah in transgressing His covenant, going and serving other gods, more particularly worshipping the host of heaven. It appears to me that, so far from presenting the smallest real difficulty, so far from being an interruption of the great subject of the judicial life of Israel, we have to face here the important truth that what touches God, what falsifies Him as such, has the closest bearing on the daily life of His people, both in their households and also in matters of public judgment. If we are wrong in what we allow as to God Himself, if there is a tampering with that which sullies His glory, a dishonour allowed (for instance) as to His nature in admitting these false gods, or setting up creatures in the place of God Himself, all the lower part of the life will feel at once the destructive and corrupting consequences of it.

Hence the difficulty which divines have found, in what they supposed the going back to matters of religion, is in point of fact a mere mistake of their own from divorcing that which God has joined together. We have had fully the direct instruction as to what concerned His own glory, but now even when He is touching on that which

bears on man's life, He interweaves religious elements not at all as a repetition of the past, but as connecting it with the present subject. Further, we find that the subject is pursued to show the place of testimony. By the mouth of two witnesses or three it was ordained that he who was worthy of death should die. This was of great value in practice, and is made use of largely in the New Testament — a principle which no man can ever neglect without loss.

At first sight it may seem singular that the Spirit of God should attach so much importance to the requirement of two or three witnesses; but let us remember that we are here learning the ways of God actively dealing with a people on earth, after He had brought them into relationship with Himself. Undoubtedly, if God took no active concern in man or his ways, there might be difficulties. Israel alone, of all the nations on the face of the earth, stood on such a ground as this; and on them God laid the necessity of demanding such testimony. But He is always wise, and besides He would teach His people to trust that He will always give whatever is necessary according to His' own order.

So the New Testament uses the principle with us, who have to do with Him and who deals with us in a far more intimate way than He ever did with Israel. We have to do with One that has deigned to make us His dwelling-place by the Spirit. Hence where He has laid down His word with clearness, as for instance in such a matter as this, we may unqualifiedly count on Him. People may bring all kinds of objections, and say that we cannot always expect such an amount of testimony as this, — that we must look at the circumstances, and, if it be impossible to produce evidence sufficient, we must act on what

seems most probable. But this is neither more nor less than to abandon divine ground for what is human; and I am persuaded that a deeper injury by a long way would be done to the people of God by a single departure from His word and mind and way in such a matter as this, than by failure to convict in ten cases where there might be evil underneath. Our business is never to leave the plain word of God, but to cleave to it, and, whatever the pressure of circumstances, to wait on God. He is able to produce witnesses when we least see how or whence they come.

Thus we are kept in peace while trusting in His word; and what is the spirit of him who in such matters could bear to be hasty, or wish to condemn another before God has brought out the evidence? Thus the heart abides confiding and calm, knowing that He who beholds and knows all is able to bring forward whatever is necessary at the right moment. It may be His way to try the faith of His people and to humble by keeping them in ignorance for a time. Where there existed greater spiritual power, there might be a more ready use of the means that God puts at our disposal; but whatever His ground for withholding anything they needed, our plain call is to cherish perfect confidence that He cares for us not only in what He gives, but in what He with-holds. We therefore can stand to His word — “In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established;” and where this is not vouchsafed, where the testimony fails, our duty is to wait on the Lord.

This brings us to another point. If there arose matters too hard for them, as it is said, they were to get up to the place which Jehovah their God should choose. “And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto

the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment: and thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which Jehovah shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee." Here again the principle is good and valid for the present time; for we must remember particularly in this book of Deuteronomy that priests are used in a sensibly different way from what is found elsewhere, as was pointed out in the last lecture. It is not a question here so much of their service in standing between the people and God, as of their helping the people in what they owed to Him. In Leviticus it is the former, because there it is a question of drawing near to God, and the people could not go into the sanctuary, but the priests for them. In Deuteronomy, which supposes the people about to enter on the land, we have more the family order of the nation, with Jehovah their God; and the priests the Levites help this on, although of course in the sanctuary the priests would still retain their place. The two books are in no way inconsistent with each other. There is a difference made, which consists in this, that the priests are regarded more as a part of the people, not so much as an intervening class between God and them.

Accordingly here we find that in these matters of judgment which belong to the practical difficulties of daily life, where questions were too hard for ordinary men, appeal must be made to them, not so much in their sacrificial capacity, but as those who ought to have greater practical acquaintance with the word of God, and thereby their senses more exercised to discern good and evil. It is granted at once that nothing can be more

ruinous in Christendom than the assertion of an earthly priesthood, based on the notion of some having an access to God more than others in point of title; it is in effect to deny the gospel.

At the same time all must feel the value of a spiritual man's judgment where we fail. There is no one perhaps, unless of a singularly proud and independent spirit, who has not found the want of it; not a few have practically acted upon it, and proved its value when enjoyed. So the apostle James lets us know the value of a righteous man's prayers. Surely this does not mean every believer. Although every Christian is justified by faith, and may be expected to display a just and good man's ways practically; still it cannot be denied that there are wide differences of measure among real believers, and that we all have the consciousness that there are those among the people of God, to whom we could not happily open our difficulties, and some to whom one could most freely; some who have such a spiritual tone and ripe acquaintance with His mind, who therefore help their brethren, not in the least by assuming an authority over the consciences of others, not by claiming dominion over their faith (not even an apostle would do this), but who nevertheless help decidedly by spiritual capacity to give a judgment formed by habitual walking in fellowship with Him, so as to meet others in practical difficulties and trials here below. This seems to be the principle at any rate of what we have here.

But this leads to another step. Jehovah would raise up judges in an extraordinary way from time to time: a fact familiar to all in the Old Testament history. Further, there is the supposition even of a king being called for in due time. But in a most striking manner God guards

against the very snares into which the king, though he were the wise son of David himself, fell away, and so brought shame on God and misery on His people. Alas! the king when raised up among them, though not a stranger but their brother (as it is said) did multiply wives to himself, as we all know, and his heart was turned away. Multiplying to himself silver and gold beyond all measure, the law of Jehovah had not its place in his soul. The consequence was that the closing days even of that wisest and richest King of Israel notoriously became fruitful in sorrow and vanity; which burst out publicly as soon as he was taken away.

In Deuteronomy 18 we have the priests the Levites introduced in another way. It is said that they were to have no part nor inheritance with Israel; but they were to “eat the offerings of Jehovah made by fire and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren. Jehovah is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.” God thus marks afresh their special place of having Himself for their portion, so that what went to Him fell to them. This gave a deep sense of identification with Jehovah; as also it will be found that, all through the book of Deuteronomy, this is sustained and applied beyond all the other books of Moses. We may see before we have done what was the ground of it. For the present I only call witnesses to the fact. Hence it was, said, “And this shall be the priest’s due,” — not only certain parts of the offerings, but also “the first-fruit of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shalt thou give him. For Jehovah thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes to stand to minister in the name of Jehovah, him and his sons for ever.” Then comes the Levite, his service, and his

portion.7 “And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which Jehovah shall choose; then he shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before Jehovah. They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.”

At the same time there is the sternest guard against all curious prying into the will of God that was not revealed, against tampering, as it follows here, with divination or observation of times, against enchantments or charms, against consulting familiar spirits, wizards, or, necromancers. “For all that do these things are an abomination unto Jehovah: and because of these abominations Jehovah thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but Jehovah thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.”

Assuredly this principle is in no way weakened in the present day. I take this opportunity of solemnly warning every soul — more particularly the young — from levity in hankering after that which they do not understand, and very especially in the way of giving up their will to any one but the Lord Jesus. This is the essential point of danger. I do not raise the smallest doubt that there are powers in the natural world which lie quite beyond the explanation of men. It is not my wish therefore to excite a kind of hue and cry against that which may not be yet explained. Let us avoid the presumption of supposing that we can account for everything. But in our ignorance (which the wisest most feel and own) this wisdom at

least ought to belong to the least of God's children, that they know in whom they believe, that they have His word and His Spirit, and can count on infinite love and power as well as wisdom on their behalf. They can well afford therefore to leave what is beyond themselves or any others in the hands of God their Father. They with sorrow see others rush in who have nothing higher, who have no God to count on or look to.

But above all beware. Whenever any one asks you to give up your mind or will to another — were it but for a moment — there is the evident hand of the devil in it. This is no question of physical powers, or of what is naturally inexplicable. What is behind giving up yourself, your will, to any one but God, is plain enough in its character and consequences; it is too easy to understand it. The divine axiom is that the Lord and He alone has a right to you. Consequently such a demand proves that Satan is taking advantage, it may be of what is natural, but certainly of you. Hence under cover of occult laws, there is something deeper than what is natural behind the call. Do not therefore be deceived by the fact that there may be and are properties beyond our ken in the realm of nature. There is also the working of the enemy, which under new forms reveals the same principle of evil which has wrought since the flood. It has changed its name, but it is substantially the identical evil against which Jehovah was here warning His earthly people. Now we, if drawn aside, are far more guilty than they, from the very fact that God has spread out His word with incomparably greater fulness, and given us by the Holy Ghost since redemption the power of entering into His mind and will, far exceeding anything on which even a high priest could draw in times of old. Here no doubt a

divine oracle was looked to, and an answer received in peculiar cases; but there is no possible case of difficulty, there is no point whatever that concerns God or man, for which there is not an answer in the written word, although we may have to wait on Him for profiting by it.

In due order then we find not merely all this curious dabbling with evil peremptorily set aside and superseded, not only now the introduction of priests, Levites, and judges, ordinary or extraordinary, but of the great prophet — Christ Himself. It is one of those striking sketches which the Spirit of God intersperses throughout scripture. Here and there Christ more than usually shines. I admit that the Spirit of Christ (or allusion to Him) in one way or another is found everywhere; but here it is most manifest. “Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” Undoubtedly every word has acquired a force far beyond what could be looked for before this revelation, but each expression now is bright when we see its verification in the Lord Jesus. But not only is their fulness of truth made known by Jesus alone, but also the utmost danger of slighting Him, and thus losing all the more. “It shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he

shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."

Thus plainly we have the true prophet put forward, Christ Himself. For its application to Him, in the face of all the unbelief of men, is affirmed by the Holy Ghost over and over, by Peter in Acts 3, and by Stephen in Acts 7; and in point of fact we do not even need these citations of the passage. The entire New Testament is itself the irrefragable demonstration that Christ is the prophet here referred to, and of the consequent folly and sin of listening to another. For He is come; and God made this fact to be so much the more manifest in a more glorious way still for chosen witnesses. His own voice set aside Moses and Elias, though the one might be the introducer of the law and the other its great restorer. For it was the Son that was now to be heard, and He alone is left, the others disappearing. Unquestionably this goes beyond the revelation that was given by Moses here, while it is the highest possible confirmation of it.

In Deuteronomy 19 we have the order in detail for the three cities of refuge, and then for three more, as in the early part of the book we saw the first set apart on the other side of the Jordan; for God on the one hand would mark the seriousness of blood-shedding; on the other, He would not confound a death at unawares with that which was deliberate murder. In no case however would God have His people to forget that it was His land, and consequently if blood were shed there, that it was thereby defiled. It called for serious thought. Man that

was made in the image of God had his blood shed there. God takes notice of it, but that which had a higher and a deeper reference requires not to be proved now. I have already dwelt upon it. Only take notice of the difference between the allusion here and in Numbers. There we saw it was applied especially to the blood-guilty while out of the land of their possession. Here is not a word said about the death of the priest that was anointed with the oil. The reason is manifest. The book of Deuteronomy applies to the people when they are just on the point of entering the land. Thus the insertions and omissions of the Spirit of God are as notable in the books of Moses as in the Gospels themselves. We may be more familiar with the idea and effect of design in the Gospels, but it is just as true here and everywhere else.

In verses 12-13 the greatest care is enjoined to hinder all abuse through the cities of refuge. No facility must be given thereby for a murderer to find permanent shelter there. If blood was shed intentionally and deliberately, the elders of his city were bound to send and fetch him thence, delivering him over to the avenger of blood that he might die.8 Then we find further care taken as to witnesses, and this affirmed by the great law of just retribution; that is to say, that when a witness testified what was deliberately false, and of course therefore malicious, the punishment which would have been adjudged in case of its truth was ordered to fall on him that raised the evil report. All this is carefully seen to. “And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

Then in Deuteronomy 20 comes in the law of battles. We have the utmost care taken that they should be in no way conformed to the Gentile license. The governing

principle here, as elsewhere, is confidence in Jehovah, the God who had taken His people, brought them out of Egypt into relationship with Himself, and was now placing them in His own land. It would be beneath the honour of God that any should be forced to fight His battles. He would give His people in everything to think of Himself. It was not a question of soldiery or strategy, of force or skill or fraud, but of Jehovah their God. It is evident that no means could more thoroughly purge from those who were to engage in battle what was unworthy of such a God and of such a people. It is referred to now as being not the least striking of the peculiarities of Deuteronomy, and it is obvious how it suits the case in every way. The heavenly land is for us the scene of contest with the enemy. There are no such laws of war in the other books of Moses; they are here only. The wilderness is the scene of temptation. Canaan is the place where the enemy must be fought and beaten. But there is no power by which he can be overcome but that of God. Consequently faintheartedness would be intolerable; for it could only arise from this — that the people were thinking not of Jehovah their God, but of themselves or their enemies. Impossible thus to win the battles of Jehovah. What secures victory is the certainty that our God calls to the fight, that it is His battle, not ours: where it is so, we are as sure of the end as of the beginning. We are calmly convinced that as He does not send us at our own charges, so further He who calls to fight will secure that the enemy shall be vanquished.

Hence it is that God lays down in the most minute manner His consideration for His people. In the case of a new house, or of one who had planted a vineyard or

betrothed a wife, all is cared for: where fearfulness of heart prevailed, such are made to feel that they were unworthy to enter on the battles of Jehovah. Further, there is beautiful consideration on His part for the enemy; for when they came nigh the threatened city, they were first called to proclaim peace to it: a singular way of making war, but worthy of God. He took no pleasure in war, and would accustom His people to go forth, even were it to fight, remembering themselves "shod with the preparation of peace," if I may so say. "And it shall be, if it [the city] make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when Jehovah thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword." There is just as serious a dealing with them, in proportion to the reality with which the offer of peace had been made before. God's ways are not as ours.

Further, "Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee." There was one exception: there must be no peace with the Canaanites; not because they were dreaded as rivals, but doomed to destruction because of their abominations and seductions. It is well known that some find a difficulty in this. Possibly it may interest others, if it do not relieve the first of their difficulty, to know that, typically considered, the Canaanites represent the emissaries of Satan, the spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, — those rulers of the darkness of this world with whom we are called to wrestle now. They are specifically the powers of evil

which continually turn every link of religion into a means of deliberate and ruinous dishonour of God. With such there can be, there ought to be, no terms, no compromise, no cessation of the fight at any time or under any possible circumstances. This is the typical force of what is referred to here.

I may just add the further remark, that of all the nations on the face of the earth, there was no such hotbed for every kind of corruption among men, and for all wickedness and abomination in the sight of God, as the Canaanites whom God devoted to destruction. It was therefore perfectly just, as far as righteousness was concerned, to hold up these Canaanites for a solemn warning to all the world and to all times. If national righteousness was sought, if there was to be the honour of God maintained in Israel, they must be extirpated; and there were the wisest reasons for doing that work by the sword of Israel. In the last lecture we saw that, so far from passing over His own people, God never dealt with any nation with the same strictness as with Israel. We saw that every soul of Israel perished in the wilderness except the two spies who stood for God even against their fellows as well as the multitude, and certainly, if God caused that all Israel should fall in the wilderness because of their sins, if He did not even spare the single fault of Moses which he himself records, where can men complain justly of the doom that befell such corrupters of the race, sure above all to be the moral destroyers of Israel had they been spared? In fact the children of Israel had not the faith to destroy them as they ought; they had not therefore the fidelity according to God’s word to exterminate the Canaanites, and so much the worse for themselves; for they became

the means of dragging Israel into abominations, and thus drew judgments down on them after no long time.

This then will suffice, I trust, to make plain the folly of distrusting scripture, and the wisdom of always setting to our seal that God is true, and that He is righteous. In short God is always good, true, wise, and right.

Remark another thing. When Israel did besiege a city, God showed His care, even if it were only for a tree good for human food, binding it with His own hand on His people in the midst of that which proved His face set against the enemies of His glory in the world. Nevertheless He would not allow them even there to act without consideration where was any food fit for the use of man. “The trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down;” but in case of those that furnished food, it was absolutely forbidden. Such is God, acting in time as He counsels from eternity to eternity, but condescending to speak and to exercise the thoughts of His people about the smallest matters for this life.

In Deuteronomy 21 we have some particulars of a remarkable nature, and peculiar to this book, on which a few words must be said. “If one be found slain in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him.” What was to be done? “Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain.” All was to be done with great care. “And it shall be that the city which is next to the slain man” — God takes care even of that — “And it shall be that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an

heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke. And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown" (a figure of this world), "and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley: and the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke he tried: and all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, Jehovah, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them."

It is just so that Christ has been found slain in this world: God is willing to regard it so. He is found slain among them, among Israel themselves. This appears to be a gracious provision when God shall have cleared the godly remnant in the days that are coming, and these are about to be made the strong nation) and to enter on the land of their inheritance once more and for ever. It is the means by which God will wash them from the taint of blood in the land. He will not excuse them because their hands did not actually do the deed. It was of course done long before; still it was done there. Christ was found in the valley which was nearest to them. Hence, for Israel of that day, God will not pass by the fact. He will neither take excuses for it on the one hand, nor on the other will He judge them as irretrievably guilty. He will provide for them when grace has turned their heart,

that the very sacrifice of Christ may serve in all its expiatory power to clear them of the guilt of shedding His precious blood. We must remember that the death of Christ has two aspects if closely looked at whether on man's part or on God's side. Humanly it was the worst possible guilt; in God's grace it is what alone cleanses from guilt. The man who cannot discern between these two truths, or who sacrifices one or other, has a great deal to learn of scripture, and indeed of his own sin and God's grace Here we have the type. The very principle disputed in a recent and painful controversy seems to me unanswerably decided by the Spirit in this shadow of good things to come.

Further: supposing there was the case of a wife, or the child of one that was beloved. "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated, and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: but he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath." Here too we have in God's ways another remarkable type; for having first chosen Israel, He afterwards (as we know, because of their sin) was pleased to take the Gentiles to Himself. The Jews refused the testimony; and as for the Gentiles, it is said that they will hear. Nevertheless here He gives a beautiful provision to show that He has not done with that which shall come forth as the firstborn son of the apparently hated one — of her he had first. On the contrary this is the very one for whom the rights of the

inheritance will be preserved when repentance will be wrought in their hearts. Thus it is evident that the godly remnant of the latter day will have its rights reserved, according to His own precious word in this chapter.

But another direction follows. There is the case of the stubborn and rebellious son. To whom does this apply? To the people of Israel in their obstinate self-will and irreverence toward Jehovah their God. In all sorts of forms God sets it forth. Alas! when blessing is wrought, when the contrite heart of the remnant desires the Messiah, they will not all turn to God. Contrariwise the great mass of the nation will be more than ever rebellious and apostate. The end of this age will not see united hearts among the Jews, but a people severed and broken — a people with the widest possible breaches among them: some whose hearts are truly touched by grace, as we have seen, who are destined to the place of the firstborn on the earth; most, on the other hand, who will fight to the last against God, and reject to their own perdition His testimony. This is the stubborn son; and as to him it is said, “Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place: and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.” And such has Israel been. “And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.”

But the chapter does not even close with this. There is another scene, and a deeper one than all. “And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall

not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." This may not call for lengthened remark, but assuredly for solemn reflection and profound thankfulness at the grace in which God turns the deepest shame and suffering which man heaped on Jesus to the purposes of redeeming love; for who knows not that Jesus took this place of the curse on the cross, to bear our judgment in the sight of God? He too knew what it was to be hanged on a tree — knew what it was to be made a curse for us. Our souls have already entered into the blessing. But all shows how thoroughly Jesus is the object of the Holy Ghost; for a chapter, which looked somewhat obscure at first sight, is rendered plain and luminous and full of instruction the moment we bring Jesus in and see Him in relationship with His ancient people. Its substance and its spirit of course are equally true of the Christian, and in a higher way. It is entirely a question of whether we use the true light, or overlay the word of God with our own darkness. Unbelief not merely fails to see, but excludes and denies the only light of men.

In Deuteronomy 22 we have a group of different institutions as to questions of righteousness, care, love, tenderness — the smallest matters as well as the greatest — but they are so numerous, in themselves purposely the minutes" as well as the most momentous, that to dwell on them one by one would occupy much too long for the present design. All can understand however how the great object here is that God would form the heart of His people in this relationship and measure according to His own affections. God would give them

not bare righteous but holy thoughts, and not this only, but mingled with tenderness when called for. This will be found true if the contents of the chapter be duly weighed.

But there is another consideration. In Deuteronomy 23 He would teach us differences in our Judgments and thoughts of others, and consequently in our conduct towards them. There are few things that men so much dislike in general as to be taunted with partiality — specially those who may have a sense of righteousness according to God. Yet we must distinguish (though without partiality, which is always wrong); but if we are wise, we shall not be driven out of the painstaking and conscientious appraisal of all the circumstances which require to be taken into account; and we shall weigh also what God may give us to judge of each particular case and person, — for He makes differences, though no respecter of persons. Where it is a question of His grace, difference there is none, but a dead level. On the one hand sin is a great leveller in presence of His eternal judgment; on the other hand grace is no less so in an opposite way, but there it is a question of the value of Christ and His work for bringing souls into His presence in favour and in peace. Alike lost in sins, we are alike saved from them by the faith of Jesus. But then in saying this we have said all here, and come into a host of differences on either side. This seems to me most clearly shown in our chapter.

For instance, see how this applies to those forbidden to enter into the congregation of Jehovah. And here note that it is His congregation; for this is the great subject-matter of the book: all finds its centre and its spring in Him. It is not merely the congregation of Israel; and this

is an important thing to bear in mind as a matter of practical dealing. One will never act right in the church, if he looks at it merely as the church of saints, though in itself perfectly true. It is the church of God; and although we know many shrink from this as high ground, it is just so much the better. If it be the truth, can it be too high? We want all that can lift us above our own littleness and our own lowness. We are apt to get low enough without abandoning the only leverage calculated and adequate to give us the elevation we need. We want and have God; but giving up the place and relationship His grace has conferred on us through redemption is not the way to make us lowly. On the contrary the very fact that we bear in mind that it is God's church is the best and divine mode of making us most sensible of our shortcomings. If we regard it as merely an assembly of the saints, well we know that saints are poor creatures for the matter of that; so that we easily slip from poor thoughts into an excusing of sin; just as, on the other side, the flesh professing the highest theory will the sooner make itself manifest. If it be God's church, it becomes a serious matter how we act and how we speak.

In this case then we find that Jehovah lays down certain things as irreconcileable with their place and relationship to Him. They must carry themselves in a way suitable to His congregation; and amongst the rest "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of Jehovah; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of Jehovah for ever; because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt." Jehovah does not forget where it is a matter of

government. He does forget (and it is precisely what He does) when it is a question of grace. Further He says, “Thou shalt not seek their peace, nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.” But it is remarkable too that when speaking about the Edomite — and I am not aware that it is ever said that He hated either of them as He hated Esau; but when speaking of the Edomite — He says, “He is thy brother.” So with those that once opposed them, “Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land.” Thus, we see, it is not a question of hatred on our part, but of subjection to God, of taking the direction of our thoughts from His word, and of forming our judgments and our conduct according to it. I have no doubt at all that, when we weigh scripture, we shall in due time see the wisdom of it all. But it is not a question of how far we can appreciate the wisdom of God. Our business is to believe and obey Him; and there is the way in which He cares for the least of us. The simplest child of God may follow and be subject to His word.

Very probably the wisest have a difficulty in entering into all His wisdom — nay, I am sure that they have. It is only a matter of very gradually growing up into His truth and infinite mind; but still it is open to us in the written word. We are invited to read and understand; for He has revealed what was wholly beyond man to His children by the Spirit, and the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God. It is our privilege to say “we know:” who can then put limits to the gracious power of God in giving us really to understand His ways? But understand or not, the word of God is imperative in its authority, and there is the greatest comfort too when we have done a thing simply because it is the will of our God. Then we

begin to learn how blessed it is, how good and wise. This is far better than slowly coming to a judgment of our own and then acting. If we gave up faith for such guidance, how deep and irreparable the loss! In the first instance if we accept His word with simplicity, the wisdom given is a fruit of His grace instead of being ground gained to our credit. In the one case we glorify ourselves because we count it wise for reasons we think good; in the other case we are subject to God because it is His own will in His word. There is nothing so good as this, nothing so holy and humble as the wisdom of faith.

In the chapter before us various regulations of this kind are laid down. There is also the prohibition of anything that was uncomely and unbefitting for the camp. What camp? The camp of Israel? Of course, but much more. It was natural that there should be infirmity in the camp of men. This is not the question, but whether it be not the camp of Jehovah. Whatever the allowance when we remember that we are men, God would have His people trained up in the feeling that they have Him in their midst, and that all must be decided by what suits His presence.

So again in Deuteronomy 24 the question of divorce is treated, where we must say that a certain allowance was made them for the wilfulness of man in this respect. This is no matter of opinion; for our Lord Jesus Christ has ruled in this. Nobody can understand the law aright, or the Scriptures of the Old Testament in general, unless he bear in mind that in it God is dealing with man as such. Consequently, though there is wisdom and goodness and righteousness, it is man in the flesh under trial, and hence it is not yet the perfection of the divine mind displayed. This last is only found when Christ

comes. The first Adam is not the Second; and it was with the first man that God was then at work. No part of the law lacks the wisdom of God; but, Christ not being yet revealed, He did not as a fact go beyond man as he then was. To have brought in what was suitable for the Second man could not have applied to Israel in their then condition.

And God, it seems to me, has distinctly marked this in Scripture even in an outward fashion, inasmuch as He has not been pleased to give us His word even in the same tongue. The standing witness against the folly of confounding the two Testaments finds its rebuke in the patent fact that the Old Testament is in one language, the New Testament in another. So plain a difference on its very face one might have thought it impossible to overlook; but even believers accept shortsightedness in divine things, and just so far as tradition influences them; for people scarcely think about Scripture, and thus they do not know how to apply the clearest and surest facts, as well as God's words, before all eyes.

But there is much more than the use of different languages — there is the difference between the first man fallen into sin and the Second man who first descended into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended above the heavens after accomplishing the mighty work of redemption. Assuredly this is all the difference possible, and it is just what reigns between the Old and the New Testament, not in the hearts of saints, but as a state of things. Consequently the relationship is altogether of another sort. Hence the provisions that were suitable and appropriate, when God had as an object before Him the first man, could not apply to the Second, under whose revelation and

redemption we find ourselves. This must be borne in mind if we would judge rightly about these types, or the law in general which made nothing perfect.

Again we find in the rest of Deuteronomy 24 as well as in Deuteronomy 25 a number of precepts of mercy and goodness as to the people even in the most ordinary matters of household life — not the wife only but one's fellows, servants too, strangers, harvests and vineyards, down to the care of the cattle. The poor man who was in fault and got beaten was not forgotten. There must be no over-passing a certain measure, nor be anything that would make one's brother vile. Stripes may be due and needful; but there must be nothing to destroy respect. Jehovah finds His own interest in all the belongings of His people, and He would train up in His own nurture and admonition — an important point for us to consider betimes.

Further, we find that anything like an advantage taken where feelings were raised against another is rebuked in the sternest manner. A righteous and equal measure is insisted on. But Amalek must not slip out of mind. "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when Jehovah thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." Now, who will dare to say that this was wrong? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do and say what is righteous?

And this gives me occasion to press a few words from the New Testament, often forgotten in its spirit when its words may be remembered. It is the part of a Christian to abhor evil as much as to love what is good. Beware of the smallest sympathy with him who counts it good to be indifferent, lukewarm, not zealous, who likes no doubt what is pleasant and kindly in itself, but without detestation of that which dishonours God. There is a total defect in the Christian character which (to speak typically) has not the badger's skin as well as the covering of blue. Our Lord Jesus felt strongly against evil. He alone is perfection, and has shown this for our profit and example. Here we see the same principle inculcated in Amalek's case.

The truth is quite contrary to the spirit of the age, entirely different from what people call a sweet tone, or the spirit of Christ. They know little of Christ who talk thus. The fact is that had they heard Jesus denounce religious forms and men who walked not in faith, had they or their friends fallen under the censure which filled His soul — say in Matt. 23 — it is to be feared that a similar strain of thought and feeling would have condemned the Son of God. This is of the more importance for those who, like us Christians, have to walk in communion with Christ and His cross at the same time that the power of evil reigns in the world We cannot escape trial of a serious kind, and to take it in grace — such exactly is Christianity in practice. The millennium will be the overthrow of the power of evil, and consequently righteousness will govern. But what brings in the difficulty now is the perfection of God's ways in Christianity, whilst outwardly evil remains. God permits, but lifts the Christian above, the very worst

evil. It rose up against the Son of God Himself; and the Christian follows Him and His cross. Accordingly this is precisely where and how he has to walk. The evil God permits to rage to the uttermost, but grace and truth in Christ in the power of the Spirit is brought into his heart and governs his ways. Hence he is called to abhor evil just as much as to love that which is good; and the heart which does not show divine hatred of evil has really but scant love for what is good. The one is the measure of the other: they are inseparable from Christ, and should be from the Christian.

In Deuteronomy 26 we arrive at a brighter scene: we anticipate Israel entering on their own land. Here we find a relief from the numerous exhortations which suppose dangers on every side. On the contrary blessing flows richly in prospect; for God is seen accomplishing what He had promised His people of old. If He has brought them into the land, they come in grateful acknowledgment of His grace. “And it shall be when thou art come in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possesses” it, and dwellest therein, that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to place his name there. And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God.” Here then is the full confession that God’s hand had accomplished what His mouth had promised. This in a higher atmosphere is the characteristic of the Christian. It is the same principle, not of promises only, but these made good in Christ. The Christian is not merely a man

that is passing through the wilderness, but already blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Both are true. If we have our march through the wilderness, we have also our portion in the heavenly land.

Now what becomes of him who is conscious of this place? For what does God look? Remember, it is the place of every Christian, and a part of the ministry of Christ to put every Christian into the consciousness of it. He cannot worship God fully unless he have in his soul the certainty of his nearness to God through Christ and His work as the ground of his relationship. As to his body, he is no doubt in the earth, still surrounded with what is far from God; but when he looks up into the presence of God, he knows that his home is there. It is not merely that he will find his home there, but that his life and righteousness being there, the Holy Ghost has come down to give him a present link with Christ in glory. The consequence is that there is that in him which corresponds with the Israelite's here bringing of the fruits of the land before Jehovah. His praise of God is to be founded on the Spirit's leading him to worship according to the new place of blessing, but with a far deeper sense than ever of his unworthiness in the light of such grace on God's part.

"Thou shalt speak and say before Jehovah thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the Jehovah God of our fathers, Jehovah heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our

oppression: and Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land." He had been brought into Canaan, as it is said, "which thou, O Jehovah, hast given me." "And thou shalt set it before Jehovah thy God." In whatever form the most important exercise of life in the Christian is worship. "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which Jehovah thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." This is another trait; that is, the heart going forth towards those that are poor, despised, miserable in the earth. This is supposed to follow afterwards.

Then, further, we find a peculiar direction as to the giving of tithes. "When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite" (it was a special tithe), "then thou shalt say before Jehovah thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite." It is not only that the heart considers what God has done for it, but it is brought also to regard those that are outwardly friendless in the world as the special object of our care. Are we learning such a duty before our God, and caring for them according to that which His bounty has given us? This is what is next introduced. Thus the Israelite was called not only to an expression of praise, but to the confession, in an exercised conscience, how

he used the place of blessing into which he was brought; how far he diffused the sense of the blessing around.

Last of all is a prayer; for no matter how God may bless us, to whatever extent He is pleased to make us a means of blessing to others (and both these are clearly the points we have had), there is this further consideration — that we are not taken out of the place of dependence. Worship does not weaken prayer. “Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us.” Now we desire a blessing for the people of God, suitable to the position of grace in which we stand. This makes us feel the need of God moment by moment. “This day Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments.” Again, obedience, instead of being in any measure enfeebled, is strengthened by the sense of the nearness to God into which we are brought. “Thou has avouched Jehovah this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and Jehovah hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto Jehovah thy God, as he hath spoken.”

Next we come to another and a very important division of this book. The first remark I would make is that we must beware of confounding Deuteronomy 27 with Deuteronomy 28. The two chapters are distinct in principle. It is not merely a question of form, but they are altogether distinct in character. A scripture which

will help much to put this in a clear light is the use that the apostle Paul makes of Deuteronomy 27 in citing it in Gal. 3. He does not quote from Deuteronomy 28. One may boldly say that it would have been incompatible with the object of the Spirit of God to have there cited anything hence but from Deuteronomy 27. Certainly such is the fact; and in scripture, if not in nature fallen as it is, whatever is is right.

Now this calls for our notice. In the 9th and 10th verses it is said, “So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” This is a quotation from the last verse of Deuteronomy 27. Of what is the apostle treating? Not merely of that which pertains to the present life. He is looking at law as that which brings in the curse for ever. Using this light then, it is not a question of present things, but of a curse in the sight of God. This gives the true key to the passage as compared with the next chapter. We shall see that the blessings and the curses of Deuteronomy 28 are strictly those that pertain to the actual curse of man here below.

In Deuteronomy 27 we read, “And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day,” and he directs that when they passed over Jordan they were to set up great stones. “And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which

Jehovah thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the Jehovah God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. And there shalt thou build an altar unto Jehovah thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of Jehovah thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto Jehovah thy God: and thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before Jehovah thy God." But further he says (verse 12), "These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: and these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali." Thus the charge is given that half the tribes were to stand on one mountain to bless, the other half on another mountain to curse. Here we find how it is carried out. "And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, Cursed," and so it was through every verse to the last.

How comes this? Where are the blessings? Nowhere. Nothing remains but the curses. Is not this solemn? The point is, as the apostle puts it, the bearing of the law on souls before God. By Moses' word half the tribes are directed to take one mountain to pronounce the blessing, the other half to pronounce the curse; but when all has been carried out, scripture has nothing to record but the curse, without a word of the blessing whatever. It is impossible for man to find blessing from the law in the presence of God when we come to its

positive application. No matter what may be the call, when we stand before the fact, there is nothing but a curse to speak of. One scarcely knows a more solemn scripture, or more characteristic of this book.

It is not that there is the least unwillingness on God's part to bless, far from it; and the charge was given to bless as much as to curse. But alas! the creature, the first man, was under probation by the law of God; and the result is, and can only be, that if it depends on man, the only thing he gets when we come to the fact is the curse. The curses were pronounced, and not a word about blessings. There was a call and due preparation to bless; but in result there were no blessings to pronounce, nothing but the curse. And what an awful thing it is that in this Christendom of ours, after the gospel itself has been brought in at the cost of the death of Jesus the Son of God, this is what is thundered out still — the curse and not the blessing! Is it a legitimate excuse, that an entire want of spiritual understanding prevails? Why should it exist with Deuteronomy commented on by the apostle Paul to the Galatians? There is no want of divine light there. What we see in both is the perfect matchless wisdom of God. In the one Moses speaks of the awful issue, himself full of love to the people, and of fervent desires for them; in the other, the light which the gospel gives by Paul confirms it: on the ground of law there remains nothing for man but the curse. Blessings may be held out, but there is no hand that can take up the blessing, any more than a mouth here to pronounce them: there is a dead and ominous silence as to the blessing. The curses sound out from the mountain of cursing, and are recorded in all their minute sternness; but there is no blessing here reported

from the mountain of blessing. Not a hint of these is given in Deuteronomy 27. In order to eke out an appearance of blessing, men have confounded the chapters and their wholly distinct bearings. They have looked for the blessing in the next chapter. They are quite wrong. There is not the slightest ground for such a connection.

Let us turn to Deuteronomy 28 and the distinction will be seen with singular clearness. “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.” It is merely national It has nothing to do with the soul in the sight of God. “And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.” This is not what a poor soul wants. It in no way meets a sense of guilt or a dread of judgment. The sinner needs something which will stand for ever. He wants what will be in heaven, and not merely in the field or in the city. He wants acceptance for himself with God, not merely to receive in his basket and in his store; there is nothing of that sort here. Thus the distinction is radical and quite plain. What shows that these are not the blessings which were to have been pronounced on the mount of blessing is that we find at the end of the blessings these analogous curses follow after verse 15. “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and

overtake thee: cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field." In the previous chapter it is no question of where we are cursed, but rather of the person cursed. Here it is a particular curse which falls on a particular sphere.

In Deuteronomy 27 it is an absolute and a personal curse; it is not in mere circumstances, however great the change. Such is the difference. In short then in this chapter we have the profound intimation of what the law comes to in man's — the first man's — hands. Whatever may be the goodness of God, man is ruined. The consequence is, there is only a curse and no blessing.

In Deuteronomy 28 we have law, not looked at in its own nature as a question between God and man, but regarded as the rule of earthly government, as having to do with the circumstances of man. And here accordingly we have the blessing on the one hand and the curse on the other. Nothing can be plainer than the teaching conveyed when the idea is once seized.

It is in vain to say that we receive the blessing which belongs to Deuteronomy 27. We do not. There we get the curse and no blessing. But in Deuteronomy 28 we get certain blessings and then curses. Thus as a part of this chapter we have the state in which Israel was to be found to the present day. "Jehovah shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies. Jehovah will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. Jehovah shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart," and so on. This is detailed. "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither

Jehovah shall lead thee." It is not a question therefore of dealing according to God's nature, but a matter of His dispensational ways with a nation in this world, and nothing more.

In Deuteronomy 29 another important point comes up — a change still more manifest. We have the fact that "These are the words of the covenant, which Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb." Now it is important to bear in mind that, if it had been merely the covenant made in Horeb, the children of Israel could never have entered the land at all. It was necessary, according to the far-counselling wisdom and mercy of God, that there should be another covenant. I say not the new one, but that God should bring in fresh terms, and not merely insist on the strict application of the law that was pronounced in Horeb. He brings in governmental mercy. Thus God now as it were says, Here you are on the very borders of the land, and I will bring you in. You must take care how you behave when you are there. Hence it is God making fresh terms for the very purpose of putting His people in the land without compromising Himself. This is here shown with care.

The end of the chapter gives us even more. When the people had altogether and publicly failed, grace can bring out from God Himself the only suited remedy. Now Israel take their place before God. They are called to keep the words of the covenant; the very children are brought in and put before Jehovah, with solemn warning against idolatry, as well as other acts of rebellion. But the point lies here: "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God, but those things which are revealed

belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." The character of this has been often noticed before; but it cannot be too much insisted on always; that grace, though in a distant and enigmatic manner, alludes to an unrevealed secret, whereby, when the people have utterly failed, as we have seen, on the ground of law, God will not fail to find ways and means of justifying them by faith. It is not merely words by which He can bring them all provisionally into the land, but means as yet secret by which He can justify them in the face of all their faults, and work in their hearts according to what is in His heart — in short, His secrets of grace.

Accordingly all is strongly confirmed by that which Deuteronomy 30 reveals. Jehovah takes them up where they are. He supposes them driven out of every land under heaven; yet that in their low estate their heart, no longer haughty but circumcised, turns before Himself. "Thou shalt return and obey the voice of Jehovah, and do all His commandments which I command thee this day. And Jehovah thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand," etc.... "if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto Jehovah thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it."

Now these words, it is notorious, are applied by the apostle Paul in Romans 10; and we never can overlook the applications of the New Testament without losing a

deeply interesting and weighty key for understanding the Old. For what does the apostle use them? For the very purpose which has been already hinted in the close of the last chapter. The children of Israel had completely ruined themselves under the law. They had failed before God. The righteousness which the law claimed had only proved their actual unrighteousness. What was to become of them Christ is brought in — "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Hence therefore the apostle by the Spirit gives the passage of Deuteronomy this admirable turn, that it is no question of going up to heaven to find the Saviour, nor of going down into the bowels of the earth to bring Him from the dead — that the gospel brings the word of salvation near to the very door, "in thy mouth and in thy heart." It is only to believe and confess the risen Lord Jesus Therefore, in virtue of the gospel of God, let them take the full everlasting blessing of His grace, once wicked, defiled, lost, but now "washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," if I may quote another scripture.

On this principle will God surely bless His ancient people Israel, scattered and broken among the Gentiles, when it becomes impossible therefore, as far as their state is concerned, to carry on their Jewish ritual. What will become of them? Their heart bows to the word of God; they look up to the Messiah, and God will work in grace. Powerless, sensible of past wickedness, full of darkness (for I have no doubt that they are those described in the end of Isaiah 50 as the servants of Jehovah who walk in darkness, and see no light), nevertheless their heart turns to Jehovah, and they stay on their God — a condition that may not suit the

Christian now, but which grace will open to a Jew then. Such is precisely the happy turn furnished by the apostle in Romans, only of course with a fuller application to the Christian; but it is on the same principle that God will deal with the remnant of the Jews by and by.

After this, in Deuteronomy 31, we find Moses about to close his ministry. He had given, so to speak, his last discourse, and addresses to them a most solemn warning, telling them that he knew the rebellion of which they would be guilty. Joshua is charged, and the Levites also.

But Moses does not end without a song (Deut. 32); and this song is grounded on the secret things of God's grace, though it also embrace the judgments of the latter day. Not ignorant of the evil, he looks onward to the blessing that would surely come to them. He deeply feels what they would do against Jehovah in their stiff-necked folly and ingratitude; but he beholds in prophetic vision what He will do for them.

Accordingly he says, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." Because he would publish the name of Jehovah, they were to ascribe greatness to their God. He is the rock abiding in unshakeable strength for His people. Not they but He is this tower of strength. "His doing is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth without iniquity, just and right is he." As for the people, it was manifest what they were. The corruption was theirs, not His; it is that of His children, theirs is the spot — a perverse and crooked generation The lawgiver indignantly reproves their ingratitude and clenches it

the more by reminding them that it was no new thought on God's part. Their place in the world to His glory was no last resource that would be taken up in the last days. "When the Most High (Elion) divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."

This, it is true, has not the eternal character of our election as Christians. (Eph. 1) The difference is just and appropriate. When God reveals His counsels in Christ touching His children, His choice is declared to be before the foundation of the world. Not so with Israel. It is always said to be in time, though just as sovereign as in our case. Eternal election would not suit that of a nation. The choice of Israel is strictly connected with the earth. The speciality in His choice of us is that it is outside creation; it attaches to the eternity of God Himself, and is altogether apart from the created scene that was about to be ruined by man and Satan. God would have saints to share His nature morally and to enjoy Himself, no less than angels to do His pleasure as His servants. What had that to do with creation? It is a question of God forming according to His own wisdom and love those who would be able to share His mind and enjoy His love. And this is done by Christ His Son, and made known by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is altogether above a question of creature condition. Nobody doubts that those who were to be so blessed did in fact form part of the creation, yea, in its deepest ruin and guilt. We had our part in that world which rejected and crucified Jesus. Then comes in the triumph of grace. It was necessary that there should be not merely eternal life given us in Christ but redemption. Life would have

been enough, had we never been sinners. But we were guilty and lost, and therefore Christ comes to die in atonement. He took our judgment on Himself and suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. The consequence is that He in His death on the cross conciliated what was otherwise irreconcileable, and made it righteous for God to deliver us, as well as free to bring out withal those eternal counsels which He had in Christ before the world was. With Israel the case is different. There, as we have said, the election is in time, the people separated to Jehovah in the midst of the bounds assigned to the other nations among the sons of Adam; for it is no question here of the divine nature, but of the human race. “He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For Jehovah’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”

Then Moses sings of His wonderful love and goodness and patience to that people and their falling into every kind of iniquity, sacrificing even to demons (“he-goats” they are contemptuously called), not to God, but “to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.” Alas! Jehovah then has to prepare arrows against His people, has to pour out His vengeance even on His loved Israel — more guilty than any other, and in fact to leave them for a no-people (the Gentiles), by whom He would provoke the Jews to jealousy.9 Then the heathen take advantage of God’s indignation against His people, till He at last in mercy: to Israel will rise up to deal with their enemies. “For Jehovah shall judge his people, and repent himself for

his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left. And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection. See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon10 the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." Then not only will God deliver His people Israel, but He will cause the very nations themselves to rejoice with His people in the enlarging circle of His grace; for though the principle apply under the gospel, it is only in the millennial reign that the full import of their predicted joy together will be realized.

In Deuteronomy 33 we have a blessing pronounced on the various tribes of Israel. This may be entered into rather more closely just now, though one cannot hope to do so with satisfaction in so small a space. Let me only just say that it is altogether in reference to the land which the people were on the point of entering. This is perhaps the chief difference as compared with Jacob's blessing. In the latter case notice was taken of the tribes

from the beginning of their history to the end, and apart from their possessing the land or not; whereas the blessing that Moses pronounces here is in the strictest subordination to the great object of Deuteronomy. from first to last the point of the book is God's bringing His people into the land, and putting them into a relationship as immediate with Himself as was consistent with the first man. This we have systematically and always: so the blessing here is suitable to it. Moses does not therefore show us historically the course of things as when Jacob prophesied, but a more specific benediction of the people in view of their place in relation to Jehovah in the land.

The song opens with the vision of Jehovah coming from Sinai and shining forth from Seir as well as Paran. It is His judicial manifestation to His people, His saints, around Him in the wilderness: from His right hand [went] a fiery law for them. "Yea, He loveth the peoples: all his saints are in thy hand; and they sat down at thy feet, each receive thy decisions." The special place of Moses is then named as commanding a law, the possession of the congregation of Jacob; he is king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people, the tribes of Israel, gathered together.

As to the first-born, the word is, Let Reuben live and not die, and his men be few.11 The next, though a singular choice in appearance, is ordered in divine wisdom so as to bring forward that tribe which would take the place of Reuben, politically soon, but eventually according to the counsels of God. For of Judah Christ was to be born after the flesh. "And this is for Judah; and he said, Hear, O Jehovah, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his

people: let his hands be numerous for him, and be thou an help from his adversaries." We know that the Jews have long had a separate place; but the day is coming when Judah and Israel shall be joined in one people according to the expressive symbol of Ezekiel, which may illustrate the language of Moses.

His own tribe has then his blessing. "And of Levi he said, Thy Thummim and thy Urim are for thy holy [i.e. pious] one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said of his father and of his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his own children; for they kept thy word, and guarded thy covenant. They shall teach thy judgments to Jacob, and thy law to Israel: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-offering upon thine altar.12 Bless, Jehovah, his force, and accept the work of his hands: strike through the loins of those that rise up against him, and of those that hate him, that they rise not again."

The blessing of Benjamin13 alludes to Jehovah's dwelling there; for Jerusalem was within the limits of that tribe which Judah just skirted. Joseph has his full twofold portion in the land. Zebulun's blessing14 is rather without, Issachar's within. Gad's haste to get rich appears, though he shared the trials of the people, Dan's warlike impetuosity is noted; and Naphtali's peaceful satisfaction with his portion; and Asher's acceptance among his brethren, and abundant resources and vigour.

Nothing can exceed the grandeur of the closing words of Moses; and they will assuredly be fulfilled in the future brightness and glory of restored Israel. He has dealt with His people according to the fiery law in His right

hand; but He has not exhausted the resources of His tender mercy; nay, the best wine is kept to the last, to be brought in by Him whom they knew not in His humiliation but will own to theirs, yet in the end with exceeding joy when He returns in glory to change the water of purifying after their manner into that which gladdens the heart of God and man. “There is none like the God of Jeshurun, riding the heavens for thy help, and for his excellency the Skies. The God of ages is a refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms; and he shall drive away the enemy from thy presence, and say, Destroy. Israel dwelleth in safety, the fountain. of Jacob on a land of corn and new wine; his heavens also drop down dew. Happy thou, O Israel: who is like thee, O people saved by Jehovah, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thy enemies shall lie to thee; and thou shalt tread on the15 high places.”

Moses (Deut. 34) goes up to the top of Pisgah, and there Jehovah points out to him the land in detail. It was impossible that the fault of Moses could be slighted without weakening the authority of law. There was surely righteousness in the ways of God; but this did not in the smallest degree hinder the perfectness of His love to Moses. It was part of His government to chasten his fault: His grace to Moses remained entire. Had it been possible, consistently with the ways of God (which it was not), that Moses should have entered the land, what grief to Moses to have beheld the unfaithfulness of His people, their slighting of His law, their imperfect conquest of the enemy, their readiness to turn back to iniquity and idolatry even in that land! Can this be compared with the blessedness of looking down on it from beside Jehovah — not seeing it in the hands of man,

imperfectly rescued from the Canaanites, but God Himself calling it already the land of this tribe and of that, and thus giving His servant's heart to look to the time when no Canaanite should be in the land?

Faith has always the best portion.

1 Dr. Davidson (Introd. O. T. i. p. 235) ventures to set portions of this chapter in juxtaposition with two from elsewhere, in order to show that God's speaking to the inspired writer was simply his own mind and conscience enlightened from on high. He and other sacred authors are to be regarded as nothing more than representatives of the intelligence of their age in relation to the Deity. "The Deuteronomist, writing at a later period of the same arrangement [the mission of the spies in Numbers], represents the people proposing the measure to Moses, who on consideration resolved to execute it, because it approved itself to his heart and conscience: 'Ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land; and the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe.' (Deut. 1:22, 23) In the same manner an important social arrangement is declared to have been made by Moses at the suggestion of Jethro his father-in-law, who says in prophesying, 'If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able,' etc. (Ex. 18:23) But in Deut. 1:9, etc., Moses speaks of the same institution as his own without any reference to Jethro, or the divine command of which Jethro spoke." Such is the sceptic's puny effort to lower the character and credit of scripture. But the believer sees wisdom and grace in comparing the first historical statement with the solemn use the legislator makes to

the generation about to enter the land, and the added information is of grave import.

Numbers 13 gives the fact when God warranted Moses to send the spies; Deuteronomy supplies the motives which wrought in the people to desire them. For he had himself told them to go up into the land; but they begged spies to search it first. The wish emanated neither from God nor His servant but from the people, though Moses, at God's command, did send them to the ruin of that generation, as it turned out And it has been well remarked on the one hand, that he graciously omits to repeat God's offer to make himself a fresh stock after their destruction but for his intercession; while on the other he confesses how he, no less than their fathers, had grieved Jehovah, so that he was not to lead them into the land any more than they, but to give that place of honour to Joshua. Conceive the state of mind which could say that "in Deuteronomy Moses repeatedly lays the blame of his expulsion on the people (Deut. 1:37; Deut. 3:26; Deut. 4:21); but according to Num. 20:12 God punished him thus for not believing Him, while in Num. 27:14 his punishment was occasioned by the legislator's own disobedience"! (Dr. D.'s Introd. O. T. i. 367.)

Again, what can be more simple and appropriate than that Moses at the close should omit the name and counsel of Jethro, and bring the people into greater prominence than himself in the choice of rulers? This he had fully shown in the history. Now he dwells chiefly on their part in the matter, confessing his own inability to cope with their great increase, which ho touchingly entreats God to swell a thousand times, but withal urges on the rulers to judge righteously.

2 It is distressing that any man bearing the Christian name should write as does Dr. Davidson. (Introd. O. T. i. pp. 226-228.) “On comparing the decalogue as recorded in Ex. 20:2-17 and Deut. 5:6-21, it will be observed —

“1. That it is said of both, ‘ God spake all these words.” (Ex. 20:1; Deut. 5:22.)

“2 Notwithstanding such express declaration, the following diversities occur. In Deut. 5:12 the term keep corresponds to remember in Ex. 20:8, and the last clause of the former verse, ‘as the Lord thy God hath commanded,’ is wanting in Exodus. In Deut. 5:14 is the addition, ‘thine ox nor thine ass,’ as well as the clause, ‘that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.’ Again, in Deut. 5:16 two new clauses are supplied, ‘and that it may go well with thee,’ and ‘as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.’ The copulative conjunction is prefixed to the last four commandments in Deuteronomy. In the ninth and tenth the terms ‘falsehood’ and ‘covet’ are not the same as in Exodus. The tenth has also the first two clauses in a different order from that in Exodus, and adds ‘his field.’

“3. The above diversities show that the ipsissima verba spoken by God cannot be in both, because both do not exactly agree.

“4. It is possible, however, that the ipsissima verba may be in one or other. Accordingly the majority of expositors take the record in Exodus for the exact one, supposing that, as Moses was speaking to the people in the latter case, he recited from memory, not from the tables of stone, and therefore there is some variation of terms. A few, however, think that the record in Deuteronomy is the more exact, because when Moses recorded the

words in Exodus he had heard the decalogue pronounced; whereas, when he repeated it in Deuteronomy, it was in his hands, inscribed in permanent letters.

“5. If the rigidly literal meaning of the phrase ‘God spake these words’ is not adhered to in the case of the one record, it need not in the case of the other. Or, if the cognate clause used in both books, ‘that God wrote them on two tables of stone,’ be not literally pressed in one case, there is no necessity for doing so in the other. It seems probable to us that the record in Exodus is the more exact. That in Deuteronomy has an amplification corresponding to the style of the book.

“6. We suppose that the record in Exodus is the older one. Yet it would be hazardous to assert that it is the exact original. It is very improbable that both proceeded from one and the same writer, because on the principle of strict literality of language he contradicts himself. Both are substantially the decalogue; but Moses did not write both. Indeed he could not have written either in its present form, because that in Exodus is Jehovistic, and older than the record in Deuteronomy. If we have,” &c.

In the same sceptical spirit follows Dr. Colenso. (The Pent. pt. ii., pp. 364-366.)

Now I affirm that on the face of the scriptures no candid person can deny that Exodus is professedly given as the history of the matter; Deuteronomy as a subsequent recital to the people, without the least aim at reiterating the words, which would have been the easiest thing in the world; for even these free thinkers do not pretend that the Deuteronomist did not possess Exodus. Hence, if darkness had not veiled their eyes, they would have

seen that the latter clause of Deut. 5:12 cited could not be in Exodus, and that its existence in Deuteronomy proves that we have here a grave and instructive reference to the commandments formally given in the second book of Moses. Such moral motives as are added are therefore as appropriate in Deuteronomy as they could not, ought not to, be in Exodus. The remembrance of their own estate as slaves in Egypt till delivered by Jehovah is most suitable in verse 15; but it is certain that this is an appeal to their hearts, not the ground stated by God in promulgating the fourth commandment. All is perfect in its own place, and the imputation of self-contradiction as baseless as it is malicious and irreverent. But one must only expect this from men whose aim is to reduce the inspired writers to their own level, and who think that piety can co-exist with fraud, yea, with fraudulent falsehood about God.

3 Nothing can be weaker than the harping on the phrase "the priests the Levites," as in the writings of Davidson and Colenso (following the superficial scepticism of foreign authors, who themselves followed the old Deists of our own country). The broader character of the book, with its aim of bringing forward the people, and consequently the tribal divisions, rather than particular families, fully accounts for this. Lad the phrase been inverted to "the Levites the priests" (which never occurs), there would have been some force in the argument: as it is, there is none. The priests were Levites. It is the design of the book which governs the description in each case.

4 Dr. D. (Introd. O. T. p. 65) says: "From Deut. 10:8 it is plain that the Levites were not appointed at Sinai but later; whereas we learn from Num. 8. that their

institution took place at Sinai." A disgraceful perversion; for Deut. 10:6, 7 is manifestly a parenthesis. Bearing this in mind, any reader can see that "at that time" in verse 8 really coalesces with "at that time" in verses 1-6, and therefore is in perfect accord with Num. 8; and yet is it repeated in p. 336.

5 See Dr. Lightfoot's Works, ii. p. 136 (Pitman's Edition).

6 The effort of rationalists to show that "the Deuteronomist" wrote long after Israel were in the land of Palestine is mere ill-will and want of depth. At the same time it is in no way opposed to the strictest views of inspiration to hold that the law was edited by an inspired man, whether Ezra (according to the Jews, as Josephus, etc.) Jeremiah, or any other prophet. The inspired editor may have given later names, and added "as it is in this day," or explanatory remarks.

7 Verses 1 and 2 bring forward "the priests the Levites, the tribe of Levi," giving emphasis to the priests, but joining all the tribe to which they belonged with them. Then in verses 3-5 the priest and his sons are specified, as in verses 6-8 the Levite. There is no ground for the rationalist dream of another age and state from that contemplated in Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers.

8 People must be hard set for a fault who can, like Dr. Davidson (Introd. O. T. i. 96), array this chapter against Num. 35:14; because the latter, written before the former, speaks of six cities of refuge, three on either side of the Jordan, whereas the latter book speaks only of three at first, to which three were to be added after Moses' death. It is a ridiculous inference that the same writer did not compose both books, or at least the passage respecting these cities. The second is the

general law of the institutions, the second gives the more minute ordering of the details. And this is confirmed, not weakened, by Deut. 4:41-44 where it is said Moses set apart three on the east side, just as Num. 35 enjoined; while Deut. 19 shows us not these only but three more, if Jehovah enlarged their coast as He had sworn to do. Only an evil eye could find want of order or harmony here.

9 It is hard to imagine a greater lack of spiritual intelligence than is displayed in the remarks of Dr. Davidson (Introduction to O. T. i. 391-393) and the German authors he controverts. The choice lies between deeper or shallower pits of error. “The thirty-second chapter as far as verse 43, contains Moses’ song referred to in 31:19, 22, 30. It is pretty clear that the song was not written by the Deuteronomist himself, who never appears as a poet, and from whose style it strongly differs. Neither can it have been written by the Jehovist, for the difference of diction and manner is too great. It proceeded from some unknown poet, whose historical allusions and linguistic peculiarities show that he lived after Moses (!) and even after Solomon (!!). Thus the fifteenth verse presupposes that the Israelites had passed through highly prosperous and peaceful times; and in the twenty-first the people referred to are the Assyrians, who had attained to the height of their power, and are described in the thirty-third chapter of Isaiah All internal evidence tends to the last quarter of the eighth century as the period when the song was written, as Ewald has proved (!!!). The Deuteronomist, thinking it worthy of Moses, though it was not written for the purpose of passing as Mosaic, adopted and put it into his mouth. We cannot agree with Ewald,” etc.

“These observations show that we differ from Knobel, who assigns the song to the Syrian period. Instead of referring verses 21, 30, 31, 35, to the Assyrians, he supposes the Syrians to be meant, chiefly because he thinks that the former would have been spoken of in stronger language, and that the captivity would have been announced. But Knobel relies much on the seventh verse [there is confusion here: it must be of Deuteronomy 33], which relates to Judah, as evidence that the chapter belongs to a much earlier time than is commonly (!) assigned to it. He takes the allusion in the verse to be to David’s living at a distance from Saul in banishment; while the twelfth verse he applies to Gibeon, whither the tabernacle had been brought after Nob had been destroyed by Saul. These are precarious allusions to rely upon. We do not believe with Knobel that the poem belongs to the time of Saul, and are surprised to find the critic asserting that the writers of Genesis 49. and Deuteronomy 33 were independent of one another without perceptible imitation on the part of either.

“The verses immediately succeeding the song, viz., Deut. 32:44-47, belong to the Deuteronomist himself, as the allusion in verse 46 to all the words of Moses plainly shows. The remainder of the chapter, viz., 48-52, is Elohistic, having been taken from the Elohim-writer and put here by the Deuteronomist. It is partly a repetition of Numbers 27:12-23, as Bleek has pointed out.”

I have given this long extract as a specimen not only of the speculative mania that characterises the school, but also of their readiness to impute the basest dishonesty to the holy men of God who spoke from Him as they were borne on by the Holy Spirit. They think little of

imputing to their imaginary Deuteronomist the fraud of putting into Moses' mouth what, according to them, Moses never uttered. Such an imposture God's word! But enough of this. The apostle Paul refutes them all beforehand in a few words which carry the force and light of truth, as theirs do of clashing inanities. He declares that verse 21 is the language of Moses, and that the allusion is to the Gentiles called while God counts Israel Lo-ammi. (Rom. 10:19) Neither Syrians nor Assyrians are in view then, but, during the temporary exclusion of the ancient people, the call of those not a people to move Israel to jealousy. Compare Romans 11.

10 Literally, "from the split head of the enemy."

11 There are cases, in Hebrew as in other tongues, where the negative particle may and must be understood from the context; and so our translators took the passage before us. But this should never be, unless it be implied from the chief clause, which is not the fact here.

12 Thus, if Simeon disappear, Levi gains a good degree by fidelity at the severest crisis in the desert history of Israel. No doubt the word in Deuteronomy 33 is supposed to be after that in Genesis 49; but there is not the smallest ground for the assumption of incredulity that the writer of the one lived after the other. As the representation of Scripture is that Moses wrote both, so the differences in the view taken on each occasion are perfectly compatible and indeed remarkably verified. Levi is involved in the sentence with Simeon according to Genesis 49. But Deut. 33, though it omits Simeon, does not reverse the scattering predicted of Levi by Jacob; but it turns that very circumstance into a blessing

for Israel and an honour to the tribe which covered over their old fault with the truest zeal for Jehovah's honour and a burning love for the people at all cost to their own feelings and appearances. Ability to plead for man is in proportion to faithfulness for God. The priesthood was within that tribe, and the service of the sanctuary, and the teaching of the people.

13 "Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of Jehovah shall dwell in safety by him; he shall harbour him all the day, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." The prophet alludes to Jerusalem as the place of the sanctuary and throne, the city of the great King. But the notion that the language savours of the reign of Josiah or near Jeremiah's day is wholly unfounded. There was anything but safe tabernacling then for Benjamin. This is yet more evidently refuted in what follows.

For on Joseph the inspiring Spirit dwells largely. "Blessed of Jehovah be his land for the precious things of the heavens, for the dew and for the deep couching beneath, and for the precious things brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things driven out by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and the good pleasure of him that dwelt in the bush: let it come on the head of Joseph, and on the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. The first-born of his herd is honour to him, and his horns the horns of a buffalo: with them he shall push peoples together to the ends of the earth; and they are the myriads of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." It is absurd to suppose such a blessing written, I will not say under Josiah's reign, but even in the earliest days of the rent kingdom of Israel.

14 ”And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. They shall call the peoples to the mountain; there they shall sacrifice sacrifices of righteousness; for they shall suck the abundance of the seas, even treasures hidden in the sand. And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lioness, and feareth the arm, also the crown of the head. And he provideth the first part for himself, for there is the portion covered for the lawgiver; and he came with the heads of the people; he did the righteousness of Jehovah, and his judgments with Israel. And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion’s whelp; he shall leap from Bashan. And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with good will, and full of the blessing of Jehovah, possess thou the west and the south. And of Asher he said, Asher, blessed among sons, let him be acceptable to his brethren, and dip his foot in oil: thy shoes iron and copper; and thy strength as thy days.” Will it be seriously pretended that all this was put forth as a prophecy after the most sweeping storm had fallen on all these tribes, and the last blows were about to fall on Judah and Benjamin? The credulity of infidels is proverbial, and can alone account for such senseless theories, even if one lays aside for a moment their one point in common — opposition to the revealed truth of God.

15 Literally “the eye” of Jacob.